



**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MID-WINTER MEETING
SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

February 22, 2020

**American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters
3450 Founders Road
Indianapolis, Indiana**

MEMBERS PRESENT

National Officers

National President	Nicole Clapp
National Vice President.....	Kathy Daudistel
Central Division National Vice President	Ruth Gott
Eastern Division National Vice President.....	Carolyn Baranowski
Northwestern Division National Vice President	Rhonda Larkowski
Southern Division National Vice President	Noemi Burgos de Paneto
Western Division National Vice President	Cheryl Park
National Chaplain.....	Mary Anne Casadei
National Historian	Peggy Monroe
National Secretary	Linda Boone
National Treasurer.....	Sara Riegel
Executive Director	Kelly Circle

Past National Presidents

Linda Boone
Linda Newsome
Virginia Hobbs
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan
Desiree Stoy
Carlene Ashworth
Peggy Thomas
Nancy Brown-Park
Janet Jefford
Sharon Conatser
Mary E. Davis
Diane Duscheck
Kathy Dungan

National Executive Committeemembers

Alabama	Judy Daughtry
Alaska.....	Penelope Mazonna
Arizona.....	Cynthia Queen
Arkansas.....	Patricia Murray
California.....	Linda Workman
Colorado.....	Ann Ritacco
Connecticut	Debra Knickerbocker
Delaware	Carol Feeley
District of Columbia.....	Lauren Lloyd
Florida	Michele DeGennaro
Georgia.....	-
Hawaii	-

Idaho	Toni Gimpel
Illinois	Debra Lewis
Indiana	Betty Slagle
Iowa	Ann Crawford
Kansas	Debra J. Haas
Kentucky	Jerilynn Kabel
Louisiana	Mary Cauthen
Maine	Veronica Gurney
Maryland	Patti Lach
Massachusetts	Donna Blattenberger
Michigan	Deborah Williamson
Minnesota	Raleen Tolzmann
Mississippi	Tina Hurst
Missouri	Marsha Mooney
Montana	Kathryn Long
Nebraska	Kathleen Mazur
Nevada	Glynis Seeley
New Hampshire	Carol Maynard
New Jersey	Linda Stadtlér
New Mexico	Cecilia Martinez
New York	Deborah Morris
North Carolina	Janice MacLeod
North Dakota	Tammy Ryberg
Ohio	Kristen Little
Oklahoma	Nancy O’Leary
Oregon	Pam Seelye
Pennsylvania	Melissa Hrinya
Puerto Rico	Noemi Burgos de Paneto
Rhode Island	Karen Panzarella
South Carolina	Patricia Jarvis
South Dakota	Laura “Susie” Clyde
Tennessee	Kathleen Leedy
Texas	Christine Trahan
Utah	Nancy Aerts
Vermont	Corrinna Colson
Virginia	Sallie Rossman
Washington	Eva Wallace
West Virginia	Rhonda Best
Wisconsin	Laura Calteux
Wyoming	Vicki Paddock

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2020
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

VOICE: Welcome aboard ALA Flight 1919, nonstop service from here to there.

MS. SHUMATE: Welcome aboard, ladies and gentlemen. The captain has turned on the take your seat sign. So if you haven't already done so, please take a seat. Stow your personal items, and your egos. Set your cell phones to silent and power up those laptops. Because we're headed to Destination Learn Something.

VOICE: If you have any questions about your flight today, please don't hesitate to ask a crew member.

MS. SHUMATE: There are multiple emergency exits on this aircraft, the stairs to your right and behind you through the double doors. If we need to evacuate, look for the illuminated signs to guide you towards the exits. Doors can be opened by, well, opening them --

(Laughter.)

MS. SHUMATE: -- just like any other door in the world.

VOICE: It took me a week to figure that one out.

MS. SHUMATE: Of course it did. Please take a few moments to locate your nearest exit.

VOICE: This aircraft is equipped with emergency window exits and ladders. If we need to do an emergency window evacuation in case of fire, a member of our flight crew will deploy the ladder and assist with evacuation. So please, be nice to us.

(Laughter.)

VOICE: And during an evacuation, do not use the elevator.

VOICE: In the event of a severe weather emergency, please follow crew instructions. They will direct you to an interior part of the building.

VOICE: Because the airplane is just a ridiculous metaphor for the building, we will never experience a loss in cabin pressure. However, if we did, oxygen masks will appear before you. If you are traveling with a child, we ask that you secure your own mask, then turn to the kid and ask them to leave as we didn't invite any children.

(Laughter.)

MS. SHUMATE: A life vest is most definitely not located under your seat. So if we see you remove an imaginary life vest, place it over your head and start pulling on the imaginary tab, we will escort you to the nearest health and wellness facility. Maybe we can be roommates. Please make sure to ask another passenger to take good notes for you.

VOICE: Flight attendants will not pass through the cabin to offer hot and cold drinks. And as much as you may need one, alcoholic beverages are never permitted.

VOICE: Oh no!

VOICE: But we do offer a variety of self-serve drinks and snacks. Please remember to clean after yourself and let a crew member know if you have any questions.

VOICE: Excuse me, stewardess? Is there a movie on this flight?

VOICE: This aircraft is equipped with several lavatories, two upstairs and two downstairs. Please be sure to flush only toilet paper and what nature provides.

(Laughter.)

VOICE: We remind you that this is a nonsmoking flight and smoking is prohibited within eight feet of the building. However, we do have designated smoking areas located on the west side of the building.

VOICE: Smoke 'em if you've got 'em.

(Laughter.)

(Music.)

VOICES: This concludes our in-flight orientation and now for a final word from our captain.

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain. We're set to land shortly. So as we start our descent, we ask that you throw away any trash in the receptacles conveniently located around the aircraft. Whew, look at all these buttons and knobs. We know you have many choices when you fly, and we appreciate you flying with the ALA. Your attendance is evidence of your strong commitment to the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Music.)

VOICES: Have a great meeting!

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. We will now turn the meeting over, the real part of the meeting, to our National President Nicole Clapp.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Good morning. Let's give the staff another round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I think as you know me it is a year of celebration. And that is a perfect example of enjoying what we do with each other and the company that we have. Today, I just want to encourage as we start this process, we have a lot of important actual governance items, discussions that I want you to have. Sometimes at our NEC we don't have a lot on the agenda. Well, you've got 60 pages worth, right? So let's do our due diligence in the best way we know how. And as the flight attendant said, we're going to check our egos at the door and we're going to always focus on what's in the best interests of the organization versus the individual.

And so, I would now like to call the NEC meeting to come to order. And I don't think I have the gavel, so there we go. Please dismantle all of your devices, electronics. Put them in silent mode. And Chaplain Mary Anne Casadei will please come forward to give us our invocation this morning.

MS. CASADEI: Dear Lord, as we gather for this meeting, give us the gift of understanding so that we may work with the members here to further the goals and principles of our organization. Let us approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just hearts. May you watch over us and guide us, guide our actions and our tongues, so that we do not offend or hurt our friends. Keep your eye on us as we work to further the principles on which we were founded. This we ask in your name, Amen.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Mary Anne. And now the Chair calls upon Americanism Chairman Denise Conrad from Ohio to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ALL: (Singing.) Oh say, can you see by the dawn's early light what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming? Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight o'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our Flag was still there. Oh say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Denise. And now Constitution and Bylaws Chairman Trish Ward from Kansas will lead us in the Preamble to the Constitution. And we all remember the change, correct? Okay.

ALL: For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during all wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishments of the aims and purposes of The American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Trish. I will have to say that is the most beautiful rendition I have heard with no pause and no abrupt Great Wars, all Wars. Good morning. We are within a couple of days of six months into our year of celebrating a century of service. It has been a wonderful ride thus far. I wake up every morning and I'm laughing when I wake up. And those of you that know me, I don't sleep much. So if you look at some of those Facebook posts, you might see that they are in the wee hours. And I go to sleep and I wake up the next morning smiling once again. And it's all because of you and every one of those veterans who we honor, why we are members. So I just wanted to say thank you. You'll hear my report later. But today we have a lot of important business to do, as we know.

And obviously, how many have been to, this is your first visit to Headquarters? What do you think?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I think, we were talking in Finance yesterday, the beauties of home ownership once again. The highs and the lows. But you realize that it's something that's ours. And every time an Uber driver drops me off, and I say, "Oh, the red brick building." And they go, "Oh." It is a very stately, it is a very appropriate building structure that has a little bit of our personal touch. And as the building continues to evolve, and we continue to add to our Cavalcade, and we add, I think take time today to meander around. The staff would be more than glad to give you a tour when you have a break. But take time to appreciate the 99 years that came before us.

I know I got a little teary eyed already this morning. I was talking to my good friend, the 75th National President, the Diamond Jubilee, the Queen of Diamonds. I think we all know that's Linda Newsome. And I was looking --

MS. NEWSOME: They should know.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I was looking up at the pictures on the wall, and those beautiful faces smiling back. And literally, if the walls could talk out of those frames, what would they be saying now with it being the 100th Anniversary? And so, we have to keep to a timetable today. But we do have, if there's reasons you need to, as nature provides I think was in the video, if you need to take care of that, there's multiple bathrooms on this level and the lower level. All right?

So for us, as we proceed, the Mid-Year NEC, as I said, is now convened. Again, welcome to Indianapolis, our National Headquarters. And I think as we look at your role as the NECs, did anybody pick up on something a little different this morning? The tables. That was Sam. I think it makes the room actually look bigger. Yeah. Okay. Is there anything, NECs, that you picked up on? Yeah. Wyoming is not always in the back.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You know? That was I think Kelly's doing, Kelly Circle, that was her idea. Staff? Okay. So no, that was the first thing this morning. We're like, oh, it's alphabetical. It's fun to sit by somebody else. Get to know somebody. So use the time to network. When you have it, bounce those ideas. See what those other departments are doing and why. Okay?

So as we look at your governing board, you have a very important fiduciary responsibility that your departments have entrusted to you to now be representing the national organization. Some call it caretakers, caregivers of an organization. And so as a caregiver, you do have that really big word, fiduciary, responsibility and obligation to act on behalf of the organization. And as I mentioned at the beginning, check the egos. What is what we need to do for the next 100 years of this organization? Again, realizing that decisions of the governing body are there to be informed decisions. We know not everyone will agree with everyone's thoughts.

That's healthy. That's okay. I need you to think what is in your heart, in your head, and what is best for our organization.

So as you take on these roles very seriously, as I have, I know today it's going to be fun, it's going to be interesting, and hopefully it's going to be an active dialogue so that I don't look out and have to do something really silly or have Cornelius do something very silly to keep you awake. But as we work on the business at hand, it is a privilege and a responsibility to do the best we can for our organization.

Past National Presidents, National Chairmen, committee members, I welcome your support in being a part of this team. NECs, you are in the middle. They are in the periphery. They are to support you as we're looking forward to getting a job done today.

Be sure to remember, those of you that are eligible to speak, that means members of the NEC, please approach the microphone. I guess we only have one? Okay. Or you can come up to this one, if you prefer, but the one over there, to stand to be recognized so we can have appropriate protocol and dialogue with Robert's Rules. And realizing that you would be recognized by the Chair before you begin speaking.

Remember and remind everyone that to want to make a motion or amendment, we do have I'm told motion forms in the back of the room. Angie is holding them up in the corner of the table, Angela Graham, thank you, Angie. And if there are no objections, the debate will be limited to two minutes for each speaker, and each speaker can only speak twice on the same subject matter. Is that understood? Comfortable, NEC? Thank you. I also remind you that we do, and let's underline do, have a timer in the room so that there's not a monopoly on the conversation. Any questions? All right.

So and finally in lieu of having the National Secretary do the roll call for the NEC, the staff have been checking off your names as you debark the bus and got here. And it was a great way for some of our newer staff to put names and faces together. So the room, if there's any questions, they will confirm. But they can see the vacant seats, and it looks like we have a houseful. So thank you all for making the effort to come to our Mid-Year NEC.

So what I would like to do is, I'd like to do some introductions. My right hand that when you get the nod to become National President, you're always wondering who your National Vice President will be. And it is one of the sweetest and most gracious individuals I've ever met, Kathy Daudistel from the Department of Kentucky.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We have five hardworking Division Vice Presidents. We have Ruth Gott, I think they are kind of in a line there, okay, Central Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Carolyn Baranowski from Eastern Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Rhonda Larkowski from Colorado, Western Division, Northwest, excuse me.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Noemi, where is Noemi? Noemi has a birthday today, Happy Birthday, Noemi.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And say a prayer for Puerto Rico, they are here today, Amanda and Noemi are here today. Cheryl Park, Western Division from Oregon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You've already met our Chaplain Mary Anne Casadei, New York.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Our National Historian with that deep drawl, Peggy Monroe from Tennessee.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Our National Secretary, Past National President Linda Boone.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Our new Executive Director that I hope you'll have a chance to interact today with, Kelly Circle.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Our National Treasurer Sara Riegel.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And also we have in our midst Chris Dickey, who is our professional Parliamentarian. So thank you, Chris, for coming.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. And obviously, staff, I'm not going to have every one of them introduce themselves. But there will be times and opportunities that you can put the stars of the video names and faces together.

The Chair now recognizes National Vice President Kathy Daudistel to bring greetings.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. DAUDISTEL: National President Nic, National Officers, Chairmen, and NEC members, welcome to Indianapolis. What a great beautiful day outside, right?

ALL: Right.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam President, can you believe this is actually, like you said, six months into your, almost your halfway time? I'm going to speak for members across the nation when I say that we have truly, truly enjoyed your escapades.

(Laughter.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: And we're really excited that you, for just learning Facebook, you've really taken to it and we love watching you on Facebook. From trying on a prosthetic leg in Colorado, to checking out an exo walk skeleton, and putting on, or putting from an adaptive golf cart in Washington, how cool is that? We have truly enjoyed seeing the different adaptive equipment that our veterans use every day.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: So I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the tons of cake you have eaten across the nation in honor of our 100th celebration. Madam President, we are proud of your unending commitment to our veterans, our community, our children, and our Auxiliary. Thank you for your dedication to the mission of the Auxiliary. We wish you a successful NEC meeting and a successful rest of your year.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Kathy. It is indeed a pleasure.

I would now like to welcome Past National President Kathy Dungan from Mississippi to the podium to bring greetings on behalf of the Past National Presidents this morning.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: I just got my instructions to be kind to them. I have to be kind because I'm the newbie on the block.

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNGAN: But anyway, good morning. How are y'all?

ALL: Good morning.

MS. DUNGAN: And as the newbie in this group, on behalf of the Past National Presidents I have the privilege of bringing greetings and welcoming you to the Mid-Year NEC meeting. We hope that you have a great meeting today, learning lots and in turn taking that information back and sharing it with your departments. President Nicole, with your permission I'd like to present the Past National Presidents that are here today. And I'd ask that you stand and be recognized.

1992-1993 Linda Boone.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you. 1994-1995 Linda Newsome.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: That's the bossy one.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: I heard that.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Wait till our next meeting.

MS. DUNGAN: I know it. 1998-1999 Virginia Hobbs.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2007-2008 Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2008-2009 Desi Stoy.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2010-2011 Carlene Ashworth.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2012-2013, another one that I'm scared of, Peggy Thomas.

(Applause.)

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2013-2014 Nancy Brown-Park.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2014-2015 Janet Jefford.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2015-2016 Sharon Conatser.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: 2016-2017 Mary Davis.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Mary Davis is out of order in her seating.

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNGAN: Anyway, 2017-2018 Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: And of course, I was 2018-2019 Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies. And President Nicole, I wish you a very successful NEC meeting. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Past National President Kathy. Again, that's what it's all about, time, love, patience, and laughter. Before we begin the consent agenda, I would like to remind everyone that the Minutes Approval Committee is responsible for approving the NEC meeting minutes. This year's committee consists of NECs from Mississippi, Kentucky, and Florida. You're all in the room, correct? Perfect. Thank you. The Chair has received confirmation that the 2018-2019 and the 2019-2020 Minutes Approval Committee duly met and thoroughly reviewed and after making the necessary proofing edits approved the proceedings from the Pre- and Post- 2019 Convention NEC Meetings. The proceeds are posted on the American Legion Auxiliary national website. Thank you, ladies, for your assistance.

We will be utilizing a consent agenda in lieu of multiple motions to handle many of the basic business practice items. These items are listed on your agenda and they include charter cancellations since August of 2019, and appointment changes since National Convention. But please note that there was an updated version on your chair this morning when you arrived for the appointment changes. We had filled a vacancy in the meantime.

There are also three National Finance Committee policies that have been reviewed and updated: the Confidentiality Policy, the Investment Policy, and the National President's Special Project Policy. Please also note there was a revised

copy of that on your chair as well this morning. There were grammatical and pronoun changes, is all, in that policy, no contents of substance change.

There are also eight National Audit Committee policies that were reviewed and updated: the Accounting Principles Policy, Tax Filing Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Fraud/Whistleblower Policy, Emergency Action and Disaster Recovery Policy, Record Retention and Disposal Policy, Social Media Policy, and Whistleblower Protection Policy. I think that covers the gamut of everything we talked about. I think those committees have been hard at work.

So each of you received the information on all of these items prior to the meeting in your packet, and I hope that you've had time to thoroughly review the information.

So this is how the consent agenda typically works. The Chair entertains a motion to adopt all items as presented, with no discussion necessary. If a member of the NEC wishes, though, to discuss any of the items or make corrections to an item, the Chair will entertain a request to remove that item from the consent agenda prior to voting. Voting on the consent agenda will then proceed, and the item that was removed from the consent agenda will be handled separately. Please remember that if you are eligible to speak, to proceed to the microphone and to be recognized by the Chair before continuing on with discussion. Are there any questions?

Does anyone wish to have any items removed from the consent agenda?

The Chair would recognize and entertain a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

MS. CRAWFORD: Madam President, Ann Crawford, Iowa NEC. I move to accept the consent agenda.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. There's been a motion. Is there a second? Second. The motion has been made and seconded. The motion is adopted for the consent agenda. There is no debate needed on a consent agenda. All those in favor of adopting the consent agenda, please say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Those opposed, no. Motion carried. Thank you, ladies.

All right. On with the show, as they say. The Foundation. I now call on Board Chair, I know her better, instead of Doris, I know her as Dorie Hammeke from Kansas for the Foundation Report. Thank you, Dory.

MS. HAMMEKE: Good morning, ladies. How are you?

ALL: Good morning.

MS. HAMMEKE: Good. I'm thrilled to be here today to share some of the ways in which the Foundation has served veterans, military, and their families in this past year. One accomplishment is a large increase in the Mission Endowment Fund.

Through the generosity of individual donors, our Mission Endowment Fund grew from just under \$1,080,000 at the start of 2019 to nearly \$1.6 million by the end of this year. That's an increase of over 30 percent or about a half a million bucks.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: So kudos to all of you. The interest from the Mission Endowment Fund supports ALA programs like Girls Nation and is used to award Mission in Action Grants to departments and units.

The ALA Foundation also granted funds to support some incredible veterans projects this past year. In Kentucky, two units applied and received Veteran Project Fund grants to work together on a project to transition an old elementary school, that's Trapp Elementary, into a veterans housing center. Combined, the units received \$16,000 from the Foundation to install showers in a restroom and a security system throughout the building. The transformation will soon be complete. I think they are going to open their doors in March or April. And 32 homeless female veterans will be able to receive the care that they need. It's just really a great project. It's an incredible display of what units can do when they work together, and how the Foundation can assist them in serving the needs of our nation's heroes.

That was just one example of 121 grants that have been awarded to 36 different departments since the Foundation's inception. In total, over \$804,000 has been awarded in support of some incredible projects just like this all across the country. That includes over \$189,000 in Veterans Project Fund grants, \$48,000 in the Veterans Creative Arts Festival grants, \$17,000 in Mission in Action grants, \$178,000 in sub grants, and over \$370,000 to other ALA programs, which would be like Girls Nation and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

We'd like to say thank you to those departments who have received a grant and continue to pay it forward with financial gifts to the Foundation. This year, every department that received a grant also donated to the Foundation and I really thank you for that.

If you have not received a grant in your state, we encourage you to check out what the Foundation can offer and apply. We know that great work is being done in every state and we want to help you support more veterans, military, and their families.

That being said, these grants would not be possible without individual donations. The ALA Foundation Board and the National Headquarters staff are regularly working to raise more money in a multitude of ways. And we've increased the number of donors. It's up 13 percent from Fiscal Year '18.

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: Which is often. And the retention rates, which are really important, this fiscal year are up 16 percent from the prior year. We have seen growth in these areas over the last year and one reason we've retained more donors is due to the diligent process of thanking donors for each and every gift. Each week, a board member will personally call or write a letter to every donor that gives to the Foundation. It doesn't matter what the amount is.

Another way we can garner more donations, and something that I think all of us in this room can join in, is our monthly donation program. We currently have 49 monthly donors who support their favorite ALA and ALA Foundation projects. We're hoping to grow that number to 100 before our 100th National Convention,

and we ask that you join us in starting a monthly gift. You can do that for as little as ten dollars a month. If each one of us started a monthly gift, we would certainly be able to surpass our goal.

I'd like to thank Marty Peters of Texas and Beth McGinn of Delaware for being part of the first 100 monthly donors. So thank you, ladies.

Sharing the work of the Foundation and encouraging members to get involved is just as important as giving, whether that be sharing stories of the Foundation funded projects at meetings, conferences, or just on social media. Each time you mention the Foundation, a member is that much more likely to apply for a grant or to make a gift. And we hope this year that you will join us again in serving as an ambassador for our Foundation.

And finally, I ask you to continue to build up strong and passionate leaders within your own departments. To succeed, the Foundation needs a group of dedicated individuals to foster growth and promote the Foundation, both within our organization as well as externally. We're looking forward to adding more members to our Board of Directors and we look for people that are good financial stewards, that have fundraising experience, and are apt decision makers. If you know anyone, including yourself, that you think would make a good candidate for the ALA Foundation Board of Directors, please encourage them to apply or contact me if they have any questions. The applications are online now and they are due the first of April.

So thank you so much for all of your support for the Foundation and all that you do to serve our veterans.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Dory. Does anyone have any questions for the Foundation? How many of us are monthly donors in the room? Wonderful. So when I ask this question at National Convention, hopefully we'll have a few more hands. Okay. All right. So the Foundation report will be filed for audit, then. Thank you, Dory. I now call on Finance Chairman Sharon Conatser, Past National President, for the Finance Committee report. Sharon?

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Madam National President. Since we met at National Convention, your Finance Committee held three conference call meetings and we met yesterday here in Indianapolis at Headquarters. We have monitored statements, we've looked at investment planning, and we looked at our fundraising campaigns, member benefits, and policy review.

As you know, we adopted a deficit budget. As you can see, we are doing our due diligence as staff and volunteers and are now ahead of budget and we're happy about that.

I would like to ask the National Finance Committee members who are in attendance to please stand and be recognized. Each of these members takes the responsibility serious and brings great knowledge and expertise which is invaluable to our committee. My sincere thanks to all of these ladies: Vice Chairman Past National President Virginia Hobbs.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Past National President Peggy Thomas.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Past National President Nancy Brown-Park.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: And Past Department Secretary and Past Department President Paula Raney, and she is not, she had to go home this morning. Thank you, ladies, for your dedication and support.

We are very pleased to have once again received information yesterday that we received a clean audit. A big thank you to our external auditors of Alerding CPA Group, who walked in just at the right time.

(Laughter.)

MS. CONATSER: At this time, I would invite Sara Riegel, our Director of Finance, to share numbers with you. Please ask questions during Sara's presentation. Raise your hand and I will call on you. And please go to the microphone to make it easier for everyone to hear. Sara?

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. All right. Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. RIEGEL: So I'm kind of lucky today because I've got two pieces of my puzzle here and present. So you will hear from Rick Evans with Valeo, and then you'll also get to hear from Mike Staton and Chris Mennel with regard to the audit.

So I'm going to kind of just focus on our first quarter. All of you received the first quarter financials in the email and the packet. So I'm just going to do some highlights.

It's coming. All right. Thank you. Which way? The other way --
(Laughter.)

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. So if anybody knows me --
(Music.)

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the captain --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You're on your second flight for the day.

VOICE: -- Flight 1919, nonstop service from here --

MS. RIEGEL: Okay --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That's why Sara focuses on numbers and not technology.

MS. RIEGEL: Yes, that's not my strong suit.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: But she has a beautiful red suit on today, don't we all agree?

(Cheering.)

MS. RIEGEL: We apologize. Okay. So I'm going to go ahead and get started and first of all, I wanted to let you know that I did not receive any questions prior to the meeting. So I'm assuming everybody looked at this at great length and you were satisfied with the presentation. I did want to let you know, so we'll start with the revenue section, I missed a footnote. So I do apologize. That was in the activity of 117, which is ALA Girls Nation. I wanted to let you know that we were under budget as far as receiving revenue in, but in January we received more

registrations, and then also in February. So we closed that gap. I did not have that footnote, so I do apologize for that.

I'm going to try and lift this up a little bit. Okay. So does everybody have a copy in front of them by chance? Okay. So we had -- okay. So I'm not going to go line for line, but I did want to pick up some things that probably you had some questions about. The first one, of course, is full disclosure on the Girls Nation, missing that footnote. Most of our categories as far as our revenues, they were all better than budget. I was coached yesterday.

(Laughter.)

MS. RIEGEL: We were better than budget, so that means we're on track, okay? And that's a good thing. So let's point out some of the things that we do have.

Thank you for your generosity in your donations received for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. So thank you very much. We also received donations with regard to our Spirit of Youth, and then also we continue to receive donations with National President's Scholarship Endowment Fund. Yes, Glynis?

(Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Could we see if it would work without the lights? Could you see the screen better?

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. All right. Is that a little better?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: They like it off.

MS. NEWSOME: It's better with it off.

MS. RIEGEL: They like it off? Okay. So we're going to do numbers in the dark now.

(Laughter.)

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. So the next activity, and do I, I wanted to let you know, I think a lot of you have been around for a long time so you know that we internally track everything by activity numbers. These are the weeds which I live in. So I'm good with that. I wanted to go down to the activity 133. I'm sure that jumped out at you as far as we're worse than budget on that direct mail revenue. But please, understand that we were a little overzealous in budgeting because we were doing it by historical. However, we still have the rest of the year to make up that deficit and we are working very hard on it. Madison is back there shaking her head. So when we produced financial statements in October, the very first phone call was from Madison to me. And then we went back and made sure that we were doing it, you know, we were recording everything correctly. So communication is key with us. She is johnny-on-the-spot when it comes to her area, definitely.

The next area was on the national (indiscernible). We were just slightly under budget on those revenues coming in. We actually just, I mean, I know it's not significant, it doesn't meet that threshold. But I like to be transparent on those things. So any questions on the revenues? Hearing none, I will move on.

Okay. All right. Thank you. And it's very hard to put these financial spreadsheets into a Power Point. So they are too wide. And so we are working on that, though. We are working on the presentations. So that is coming.

All right. So let's go down to expenses. Basically, we are doing pretty well in this category as well. On our national officers, I did want to show that we are way better than budget. I had to put that in there.

(Cheering.)

MS. RIEGEL: And if you all know that we did not have the Far East travel like we had had before. But we budgeted for it this year with that anticipation. So sometimes you will see areas that we still continue to budget for, but we don't have to, as Linda says, we don't have to spend the money. So we did have some savings. She did enjoy and participate in Hawaii, so but we did not have that travel. So we're, there you go, we're starting to save. Okay?

Going on down to the National Chairmen's Meeting, I wanted to bring that up just a little bit. With the National Chairmen's Meeting, we had some extra time and work put into that. And so you're going to see increasing expenses. And that was just the time that we allocated towards that. So we had to put in a little more extra time working on schedules and everything. So we're good. We'll make that up. We promise.

Also, in the Department Leadership National Conference, I do acronyms so I apologize, we just put in a little more time ahead of time on this in preparing for that. That is our staff as well as our leadership getting together and making sure that we have a good program and presentation.

In the Girls Nation, we were over budget in that category. But that is us, we ended up expending the, making the deposits in anticipation of the 2020 Girls Nation. So we did that a little bit earlier than last year, than we anticipated. So that's why that is showing as being over budget.

Sorry. And then I wanted to go down to -- Madison, I'm not picking on you. I swear. Development and Fundraising, we were over budget in this category. But like I said, we are on this as far as capturing the differences in there.

We'll go down to Mission Training. Now, that is 400, Activity 400. So this year, as you know, and we're really super excited about this, we have our traditional Mission Training 101 and now we've added on three sessions of Mission Training, I say Mission Training 201. So I know there's a proper name to it. So with that, we did have to put in a lot more resources and time in preparing, as well as scheduling those things out, paying deposits for the hotels and then travel expenses in advance. So that is why you see that as over budget, because we have put in a lot of resources in capturing that and preparing for that.

The National President's Scholarship Fund, with the new, correct me, Nicole, the new Junior Loyalty Scholarship?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes, Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship.

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. I had -- so with that, this came up when we were preparing for fiscal year '20, so we did prepare for those scholarships. But we also did not know how to incorporate the time. So we're spending a little more time on, program wise, as far as managing that.

So we're, ultimately we're doing good, as you can see. Our net operating income, not loss, okay? Is over \$2 million. So we're doing good. Do keep in mind

that with your membership this year, we are ahead of the game. I did a little comparison to last year. So and that's usually the same time last year. And we were actually behind. We were behind \$171,000, about five percent. So this year, we are doing, we're about seven percent above. So in our membership.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: Okay? Yes? Oh, Glynis?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Glynis.

MS. RIEGEL: I'm sorry.

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. Quick question on Activity 400.

MS. RIEGEL: Yes, ma'am?

MS. SEELEY: We added a new training that, okay, it is almost \$50,000, correct?

MS. RIEGEL: Correct.

MS. SEELEY: Is that going to be recouped somehow in the future? Will we get that money back in return somehow? Or is this --

MS. RIEGEL: The registration --

MS. SEELEY: -- do we need to change the budget?

MS. RIEGEL: Well, okay, the registrations that we charge are, do not capture all of the costs. This is what we consider to be a program and a service of the national organization. So because we're in the infancy stages this year, that is where we're seeing, we're putting in so we can bring back out as far as our expense.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Glynis, just to give a comparison -- and I'm going to lump all of the mission training together. You know, traditionally we had six. This year we went back to five traditional 101s and added three 201s. As of this week, we are 97 registrations ahead of where we were last year.

MS. SEELEY: Awesome.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So we should be recouping some of that.

MS. SEELEY: Awesome.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes.

MS. SEELEY: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: Any other questions? Okay. And then I'm going to let Rick and Mike and Chris provide you with the best information. Okay? Thank you.

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Sara. I appreciate it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We can probably bring the lights back up.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Sara. I appreciate your hard work and your help this year. A little housekeeping. At the Post-Convention Board Meeting in 2010, there was a motion made that, and I'm quoting, "that no deductions be made in the per diem of a state's dinner tickets of Past National Presidents attending the state's dinner." At this time, at the direction of the Finance Committee, I move that we rescind this motion.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The motion comes from a committee so there is no need for a second. Is there any discussion? Sure. Maybe a little background.

MS. CONATSER: The background is the National Chairmen, National Officers, when, as you know, when you attend a meal or a meal is furnished, you don't get per diem for that meal. So this motion was made that the Past National Presidents, if they went to the state's dinner, still got the per diem for that meal. So we are withdrawing that. We want to rescind that motion. And they haven't been paid for that. I will tell you that. We've checked and it has not happened. But just to make it clean, a housekeeping motion that it's out. And what we are rescinding is that no deductions be made in the per diem of the state's dinner tickets of the Past National Presidents attending the state's dinner.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So that would be removed, and that the per diem would come out for the Past National Presidents to attend a state's dinner.

MS. CONATSER: Just like everybody else.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Just like every other National Officer, Chairmen who are authorized to attend the state's dinner. They feel they've given back, but they feel they don't feel they need to have a "free meal." Okay? Any other questions or comments?

Ready for the question? All those in favor of the motion, say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All those opposed, nay. The motion is carried.

Thank you for your generosity, PNPs. We appreciate it very much.

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Madam President.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: I want to say thank you for each of you taking the time to approve the policies put forward this morning, and for investing in our organization not only financially but by being good stewards of our finances by preparing, studying, and asking questions this morning to help move our organization forward.

Madam President, before I conclude my report I would like to invite a guest to share information about our investments.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I think it would be a great opportunity. This doesn't happen every year for our NEC.

MS. CONATSER: That's right. Valeo Financial Advisors was formed in 2003 after the three founding partners, Rick Evans, John Trott, and John Wortman, left one of the largest investment advisory firms in the Midwest. Valeo was an independent investment advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Valeo has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Indianapolis, Indiana, Denver, Colorado, Richmond, Virginia, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Valeo built its business on providing investment and financial planning services to families and institutions. Currently, they work with more than 1,000 institutions and families across the country with investable assets of \$5 billion.

Prior to the establishment of the company in 2002, Rick Evans, one of Valeo's founding members, led investment consulting engagements for some of the

Midwest's largest foundations, retirement plans, and capital funds ranging in size from \$3 million to \$250 million. Rick graduated from The Ohio State University -- that's a Big 10, Nic, we've got to watch that, you know -- and also maintains a CFP designation. He has been providing investment consulting services to institutional clients since 1991. Along with Rick's ownership responsibilities, he actively works with his own client relationships. We are very lucky to have Rick in our corner. Please welcome Rick Evans.

(Applause.)

MR. EVANS: Quite an introduction.

(Laughter.)

MR. EVANS: What a wonderful opportunity to be in front of all of you today. I know it's been, it's actually been 15 years -- I'm sorry. It's been 15 years since we started with your organization. You were one of the early adopters. If you actually look at the timeline, 2003 is when we started our firm. 2005 is when we were actually retained by your organization. So we've grown together and I think we've all benefitted along the way.

So I really just wanted to roll back the clock a little bit, tell you a little bit about the history. So I don't know if there's a clicker here. Hopefully I click the right button. All right. I did it. I did it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Can you see that okay, everyone?

MR. EVANS: So real quickly, I'm not going to command much of the time here. Really, I'm going to be probably about five or ten minutes here. As we're looking at the slide here, though, I wanted to roll back the clock. And the original engagement that we were involved with was really evaluating where the organization was and was really as a historical project, kind of a research or flashback to say from the managers that you had in place, you had just a couple managers I believe at the time. There was some crossover. They really weren't talking together. There really wasn't even an investment policy statement at the time. So we did an historical evaluation, kind of gave an evaluation of the performance, which was highly mediocre, and then said, you know, this is what you need to do to improve the program.

So improving the program was literally putting a, drafting the investment policy statement, which has gone through a couple of different iterations. But I believe everybody has a policy actually in front of them today, which is phenomenal. So that gives you the marching orders and it allows us also to have some consistency as the Finance Committee changes over the years. And we know the reasons why we hire and fire the particular money managers. But I think as you are looking at the policy itself, as it says right here, is provide just written guidelines to the management and monitor the investments. And it's really a retention of, and we also suggested that the organization retains an investment consultant, such as Valeo, or there are other independent investment consultants. But it allows you to be, Valeo is a manager of managers, is probably the best way to describe it. We are not in there picking and choosing the individual stocks or bonds, I'm not saying that. But we are seeking the best managers in a particular type of asset class. So whether it's a stock

or a bond type of manager, we are trying to pick the best managers out there on a net basis as far as what the fees are and what the performance is.

So regardless of our, we hope we're around for another 15 years plus, but it is something that we are always cognizant that we can be unplugged. And that's really by design. An investment consultant should be able to be unplugged or remain independent of the managers. It's kind of you don't have the fox in the henhouse type of thing. So having that independence and having that extra layer also helps protect the organization from a fiduciary standpoint. We are going to be the first ones on the stand if anything ever happened because we are going to be blamed because we are giving the investment, specific investment recommendations and the committee then is implementing it. But it's based on our recommendation. So you have a layer of insulation and oversight that we think with an organization of this size and the dollars that we're talking about could justify it. So that's really the history of our relationship.

So as we look at it today, we do have goals and guidelines for each of the individual pools. So the General Fund has its own independent investment policy statement. The National President's Scholarship Endowment Fund has its own investment policy statement. You can see them all listed there. They are all independent pools that we are overseeing. And importantly down at the bottom, the Foundation, which has had phenomenal growth -- it's been really fun to see that over the years in a very short period of time, see some nice growth. And then utilizing the investment policy statement, as I said, is just objective oversight, consistent guidance as members change, as I mentioned a moment ago.

So executive summary, I'm not going to get into the nuts and bolts of the investment policy statement. That's way too much in the weeds, especially this early in the morning. So I know you appreciate that. But on the front page of the policy statement, there is an executive summary that if everybody can understand just this basic, this page is a very important page. And we can see the basic parameters here, the time horizon for the General Fund. And actually, it's for all these pools share a similar timeline. So the time horizon is greater than ten years. Very important to understand that. And quite frankly, despite the phenomenal results we had last year, that's great and it's obviously, we have much deeper pockets today because, the organization has much deeper pockets today because of it.

But what happens on a year to year basis really doesn't matter because we're focused on the long term with this portfolio. We know the portfolio is going to go up and it's going to go down because of the type of investments we have in it. But we need to remain focused on long term and that has served the organization very well. We don't have to roll back too far. Over the last 15 years, we know we had some pretty dark days in this portfolio, where the portfolio stumbled. A couple of years into our engagement we took a deep step back in 2008-2009. It was pretty scary for everybody. And thankfully being patient, and not hitting the panic button and say, hey, we've got to run to cash, has really served the organization well. And I'll talk about the total numbers here in just a moment.

So as you look at the modeled return, which is also extremely important, when we're choosing the types of stocks and bonds in the mix, we're trying to come up with a modeled return for you which will help from a budgeting standpoint. But as we are looking at it, most importantly in the parentheses, 4.5 percent over CPI. CPI is inflation, okay? So that's really what we're trying to do. Historically it has been three percent. So that number there at 7.5 percent is kind of a, is based on historical numbers. But really what we're shooting for is 4.5 percent over CPI. Well, we've done that. We've actually exceeded that by a little bit, which is exactly what we're trying to do. So we're not swinging for the fences. We're just trying to hit some steady eddies over time so we have a nice mix of investments. And that's what is listed down there below, where you look at the asset allocation.

We have a baseline of two percent cash in the portfolio basically at all times. We have bonds at 28 percent. We have stocks, different stock managers in place, of large cap, small cap, and international managers that are in there. And then alternatives. Alternatives is a -- I'll just say it's a non-traditional type of an investment strategy that's in there. And part of that component is there's going to be some esoteric bond management or there's been some hedge funds actually in there in the past. There's been timber in there in the past. Right now, we're focused on direct real estate. So there is a mix of senior living, a senior living facility that's in there as a development, a dollar amount that's in there. We have an apartment complex that was basically rehabbed and is going to have an increase in rent and then basically turn it in a couple of years. That's the strategy on that. We have an industrial product in there, an industrial property that is a development deal. And then we actually have an office building down here in downtown that you are actually a part owner of. So those are all things that the organization is able to participate in and that then provides kind of a unique path that real estate can go on or these alternatives don't go on the typical path of stocks and bonds, which are interest rate related and market forces and that type of thing.

So that mixture is what we have. And then along the way, we are rebalancing and meeting with the investment, with the Finance Committee on a regular basis, and we'll rebalance and provide new managers as needed. So it's, we're in constant contact and I think it's actually a monthly update that we provide, a performance report that's provided to the organization. So it's available anytime.

So final slide. So since inception, the General Fund, as I said, has achieved its modeled portfolio target of 4.5 percent over CPI. CPI has trended less than that three percent historical number that we saw. So to do the math, our bogey was 6.4 and now we're at 6.5. So we did exceed it, which has been, again, over a long period of time, over 15 years to be able to do it. We're proud of that. And what does it mean from a total dollar amount which I have highlighted there? It's \$26 million. Over \$26 million has been added to this organization through investment performance. And so as the dollars have been spent, we all know the organization does have expenditures. So we've seen the net dollars that were in originally has obviously declined. But fortunately, the portfolio has continued to grow. So that's clearly what we're trying to do over the long term for the long term vitality of this portfolio.

So it's very important, I think it can't be stressed enough as this last point, strong investment performance and oversight is critical to the long term success of this organization. As we all know, there's, you know, if we get the portfolio to enough size, it can ultimately be in a position, there is a possibility of having it ultimately self-sustain the organization itself. So that's what we're trying to shoot for. We're not quite there yet. But I think if we have continued growth and have another 15 years such as this, we definitely will get to a point where you're going to see some nice numbers in the portfolio and continue to be ahead of targets as we have outlined in the policies.

So we very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to all of you. And it's a wonderful organization, very important client to our firm, and it's been really nice to have you guys trust us from the beginning. And hopefully everybody has been happy with our organization. So thank you very much for your time.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Rick, for being here with us today and sharing this valuable information with our leaders.

Madam President, this concludes our Team Finance report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Any questions from the Team Finance report? All right, Sharon. The Finance report will be filed for audit. Thank you very much.

All right. Moving on. I now welcome our Audit Committee Chairman Jeri Brooks-Greenwell, from Maine for her report.

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: The National Audit Committee is charged with assuming an independent oversight and advisory role and is comprised of five outstanding professionals, each with appropriate backgrounds and expertise. These individuals have extensive knowledge of our organization, its structure and its mission, providing diversified perspectives and fresh insights. The Audit Committee serves both the American Legion Auxiliary and its Foundation, and in order to create a governance structure of accountability and demonstrate financial integrity, its responsibilities include identification, assessment, and management of financial risk and uncertainties to our organization, to validate the integrity of financial statements and financial disclosures, and to confirm compliance of all legal and regulatory requirements.

In carrying out these duties, the Audit Committee meets a minimum of three times each year, either by conference call or in person. During these meetings, the Audit Committee adopts the audit schedule, engages the external audit firm, examines the annual consolidated financial statements for the American Legion Auxiliary and the Foundation, reviews the IRS 990 reports, assesses and makes suggestions on policy and procedures updates, and makes recommendations to the NEC on the appointment, reappointment, and removal of the external auditor, and approves the remuneration and terms of their engagement.

The committee meets with both management and the auditors to gain an understanding of significant risks and exposures facing our organization and ensure that recommendations made in the auditor's letter to management are implemented. In addition, this committee addresses complaints about financial mismanagement and report to you, the NEC, on an annual basis or as necessary, whether any complaints or concerns about financial improprieties have been raised by members or others and how those complaints or concerns were investigated, managed, and resolved. I am pleased to report to you that there have been none reported this year.

(Applause.)

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: While the NEC retains oversight authority, the Audit Committee and Board must adhere to the same duty of care or financial responsibility benchmark. The Audit Committee verifies that all information substantiates to the IRS and the public that the American Legion Auxiliary is operating in a manner consistent with its exempt charitable purposes and continues to serve the mission for which the IRS granted tax-exempt status.

The Audit Committee held an in person meeting on October 14th and 15th, 2019. During this meeting, a status update was provided by IT consultant Mark Conyers. National Treasurer Sara Riegel offered interim audit information, provided a listing of those members that were non-compliant in filing conflict of interest forms, presented an appraisal of current insurance policies and state charity registrations, and relayed 990 related updates. A review of human resources practices and policies was provided by HR Manager Sharon Hitchcock and a request for proposals, RFP, was presented by Deputy Finance Director Sherri Scrogam.

As the committee continued its reviews of current policies and procedures, much discussion focused on financial, operational, organization, and reputational issues that needed to be addressed in more detail. Some of the fruits of our committee's labors were presented to you earlier in the consent agenda. Discussion ensued at length at the pros and cons of changing the name of the Audit Committee. It was decided to retain the name because of the specific reference in the IRS Form 990 and to make every attempt to better educate members as the overall responsibility of the Audit Committee.

The committee via conference call on December 10, 2019 reviewed the audit RFPs received and selected the two top firms to move forward to the interview phase on December 19, 2019. Following a thorough review and interview process, we are delighted to report that Alerding CPA Group will remain the external audit firm for the American Legion Auxiliary for the upcoming three years.

The most recent in person meeting was held on February 1, 2020 to review and approve the audited financial statements. Additional agenda items included an opportunity to meet independently with both the external auditors and management, a final review of recommendations to be presented to you, the NEC, on policies addressing accounting principles, audit and tax filing, conflict of interest, fraud/whistleblower, National Headquarters emergency action and disaster recovery, electronic communications, internet and social media, record retention, and whistleblower protection. Other business included a review of the business insurance

RFP prior to committee interviews on February 12th, updates on 401K status and travel insurance and background check policies, a report on compliance of the filing of conflict of interest disclosures, and updates on National Headquarters disaster recovery plan and website.

We are pleased to officially announce that the business insurance coverage will be provided by Gregory & Appel.

As we celebrate our organization's century of service, this committee continues to place tremendous emphasis on the health and well-being of our organization. The Audit Committee remains vigilant in ensuring that the resources of the American Legion Auxiliary are well protected and they continuously and conscientiously review, evaluate, and monitor the Auxiliary's policies, standards, and compliance to help mitigate any exposure to risk to our organization.

Madam President, with your permission we wish to present two very special guests.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Absolutely.

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: We are very pleased to have two familiar faces joining us this morning. Michael Staton is a founding director of Alerding CAP Group. He has over 35 years of experience in public accounting and has performed numerous consulting services, including not for profit audit committee training. Mike has been named the Accounting Advocate for the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. He has served as President and board member of the Indiana Association of Corporate Renewal. Mike has also been actively involved with Marian University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in accounting with a minor in mathematics. He has served on Marian's Board of Trustees, Audit Committee, Finance Committee, and is Past President of both the National and Central Indiana Chapters of its Alumni Association. Mike is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and the Indiana CPA Society. He is also a licensed CPA in both Indiana and Tennessee and has taught accounting seminars for various banks and routinely attends national conferences on (indiscernible).

Chris Mennel is responsible for providing oversight, direction, and training to the Audit Department while performing the technical reviews on approximately 55 audit, review and compilation, thank you, engagements for the firm. My good Lord. His client base includes closely held businesses and nonprofits located throughout Central Indiana. Chris is very active in Alerding's government audit practice and has performed multiple audits under the OMB Uniform Guidance. Like Mike, Chris is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and the Indiana CPA Society. Chris earned his bachelor's degree in accounting from Indiana University. He is active with St. Therese School, is a past board member and treasurer for Y-Press, Inc., and was selected as Emerging Leader from the Indiana CPA Society. Please help me welcome Mike and Chris.

(Applause.)

MR. STATON: Okay. Good morning, everybody. First of all, I want to, you know, say I'm Mike and this is Chris. So you get the two of us here. But I do want to start before we get into our actual presentation, as Chris kind of sets that up for us, I

do want to say thank you very much for your signing us up for another three years. It was very important to our organization. This organization here is very, very important to our firm. The relationship has been very strong over the years. But it was just nice to get that ratification that you still want us around for another three years. We appreciate that. I didn't want that to go past here as we go through the presentation.

We're going to talk about several things in this 30 minutes that we have here today. I'm a very big processes person. I like processes. I like controls. I like those things. Chris probably gets tired of hearing me talk about that but it's very important to me. So we're going to talk a little bit about the overview of the audit process. And then we're going to get into an analysis of the financial statements and the key indicators. So we'll talk about it at a very high level, some of the financial numbers that we go through here and what makes up those numbers and how we look at those from an audit process.

Significant transactions and current year results. There are some positives in there and there are some negatives in there, but we're going to touch on both of them. I think it's very important that we're transparent, that you guys see both the good and the bad of the numbers and where we're going and what we see from an outside perspective. And remember, we're looking at this from an accounting and from an overall organization standpoint. So we kind of look at it a little bit differently than you do internally. But at the same time, I think it's important to see what we have to say.

And then we'll look at the ALA Foundation financial statements and then the fiduciary responsibilities if we have time at the very end. And I will say that I'm very proud of this organization from the Foundation standpoint. I know Linda was a big part of getting that started, but the Foundation has come a long, long way and it's pretty cool to see from our side.

So the Audit Committee. Everything for us starts at the Audit Committee. In Jeri's presentation you heard her talk about it's really the Audit Committee is the one that hires us, the organization that keeps us around. They are the arm of this organization that kind of controls what that process looks like and how the transparency of an actual outside audit looks like. So from our standpoint, we start with that organization. We meet twice a year. They actually meet two or three times a year, sometimes four. We meet with them twice a year. The first time we meet is really all about trying to make sure that we are doing the things that this organization wants to have happen.

So we talked about risk analysis. If you look at the risk of this organization from our standpoint, it's really, most of it is in investments and in internal controls, and then the actual cut off of the numbers. Risk analysis, we'll get to this on one of the future slides, 91 percent, 92 percent of your assets are in investments. So the Valeo conversation was very, very important to you. So we spend an enormous amount of time on that particular area.

The other things we look at is we look at the internal controls of the organization. We look at the changes within the organization. In the current year,

there were significant changes for us. You had significant changes in personnel. Any time you change personnel, our job changes. There's a lot of, a lot of security, for lack of a better term, in seeing that your organization has the same people every year so we know that they know the ins and outs of the organization. But they also understand the numbers and where they are coming from and they see changes. They understand if something doesn't make sense to them. And so that's kind of a security for us. Well, as you know, Susan changed her job description from employee to retiree. So that was a big change for us. So we talked about that a little bit. And then we look to you, to the Audit Committee, and say, okay, what is important to you in this year? What changes would you like for us to look at from the audit perspective? And just get a feel for what happened during the year.

And then we follow that up with the update on the General Accepted Audit Principles and GAAS changes. In the current year for us, and you won't see this in your slides there as you go through, but for us there were some big changes in the current year. The big buzz word in not for profits this year is liquidity. Organizations have to show more liquidity than they have in the past. They determined that donors have a right to understand the availability of the organization to succeed. And what they are saying is that people like to give money to people who are doing well. They don't want to give money to an organization that's going to go out of business in three or four years. Now they feel like their investment hasn't been successful.

So liquidity is a big change and we'll see that as we go through these numbers. So, and we talked about different classifications of net assets. We talked about different classifications of footnotes. So there's additional footnotes that went through here and we'll talk about some of those as we go through this presentation.

So a lot of changes in the accounting world. We make sure that the Audit Committee understands those. We make sure that they are comfortable with them. And then at the end of the year, we make sure we explain how those can fit into it.

I will be glad to report there were no disagreements with management. We worked through everything very successfully this year and we didn't have any conflicts as we went through that part of the audit.

A few minor audit adjustments. I will tell you that that's pretty normal. There were a few minor adjustments. But anytime you have that much in investments, and everything else like that, and then we had a lot of fixed asset changes in the current year, you've had a lot of fixed assets in the last couple years, we maintain depreciation schedules and things like that. So there's obviously adjustments that we have to make. But nothing that I would call significant or any major errors or any kind of issues with that within the internal management.

Clean opinion both in the ALA and the ALAF. So that's important. That's what you want to see. That's what we expect from this organization with the quality of the personnel that you have within your staff.

(Applause.)

MR. MENNEL: I'm going to give you a little bit of an overview on the audit process. Jeri already mentioned that the financial statements are on a consolidated basis with ALA and the Foundation. As you know, they don't include

the state departments. You already know that, but that's important to point out. Because as you are looking at, you know, expenses of \$8 million and the contributions that came in, that's just here at National. The reach of ALA is so much bigger beyond that, across the country and, you know, even to other parts of the world. I think your website does a great job of displaying that. But as an outside reader, the financial statements, they may not always look at those numbers and understand that that's not the only impact of ALA is what they see there.

In terms of how we conduct the audit, we do come out and perform it in two different phases. We normally come out in September for our interim testing, we're focusing on those internal controls, we're looking at risk assessment, planning. Mike already mentioned things are changing very year. So even though a lot of our focus is on the same areas, investments are always big, you know, there's certain areas that are always there. The focus changes a little bit every year. And it's also by design so that the personnel here don't become too comfortable with us. We don't want them knowing exactly what we are going to be looking at when we come in the door.

(Laughter.)

MR. STATON: Auditors like to be secretive.

MR. MENNEL: Yes. And the year end portion of the audit happens in November, and we have it wrapped up sometime in December or early January.

The risk of fraud, a buzzword for many years now, but we consider that throughout the audit. There's a few procedures we do directed at fraud, but then we also consider fraud in everything we do. You know, if we're looking at cutoff and we're reviewing invoices, we have a mindset of, you know, fraud detection in the back of our brains. Everything that we're looking at, we go to CP every year on fraud. It's ingrained in our employees that this is something we have to be focusing on. And it's because we find it every year. There aren't too many years go by that we don't have at least one situation of fraud happening in our client base. Mike and I have a client right now that they had a theft situation this year and they are looking back at the financial impact that that had. But then there's the public perception, there's the mistrust among the owners and among the employees. There's so many things that that causes that internal controls are that much more important to prevent something like that from taking place.

And then we verify balances through third party sources. We don't just look at internal documentation. We're going out to the investment advisors, the banks, and trying to get third party verification of those balances as well.

MR. STATON: Okay, we'll start with what in the not for profit world we call the statement of financial position. Most people call it just the balance sheet. And so I kind of throw that out there as both sides of this.

In total you can see that, you know, this organization is very heavily reliant on cash and investments. Last year you had \$39.6 million. This year you've got \$39.7 million. You know, as you look at that number, it's only up about \$120,000, so you might think, well, okay, \$39 million, why didn't it grow more? Well, you have to remember what we did in the current year, and Chris will talk about this, we had continuing investments in this building. And we have taken the money out for

this building through investments. So I wouldn't be majorly concerned with that because you did have pretty decent results. I will tell you that September 30th wasn't as good as February, so you know, anybody that's got any money in the stock market, it just depends on what day you got up in the morning whether you were making money or losing money.

So in total you had about \$800,000 of income in there offset by about \$700,000 in withdrawals. And I will tell you that the cash and investments is made up of about \$34 million to \$35 million from the ALA overall organization, and then we also have about \$4 million in the paid up for life investment portfolio, which you really kind of draw on that as you go through. And so those funds are really kind of spoken for as you go through that process. And about \$1 million of cash, outright cash. Property and equipment is up about another \$500,000, and Chris will talk about that. That's more the investment, the current year, in the overall building and making sure that that's up to par, the way you want it to be.

Other assets is made up of a bunch of different stuff. We obviously, we bring this at a 30,000 view. I mean, it's receivables, that's deposits on Girls Nation, that's all those types of prepaid expenses and everything that fits into that. But it's such a small number compared to the total.

So in total you have \$42 million, almost \$43 million of total assets. So it's a pretty strong standpoint from the overall organization's balance sheet. So, you know, something to be proud of and something that this organization has worked very hard for over the years, so.

Investments. This is a chart that, you know, I was kind of hoping Valeo wouldn't show and they didn't, so from our perspective. If you look back, this is a 15-year chart. So if you go back to 2005, you had roughly \$21 million of investments. And then we all have lived through 2008 and 2009. We dropped to a low of \$19,578,000. That was a tough period for a lot of organizations and then this organization was not exempt from that pain as you go through there. And then you can see -- and it's interesting, there's nobody in here that's under the 30 range, I don't think. But most of the people that are under 30 in our office think that investments always go up. I mean, you look at --

(Laughter.)

MR. STATON: You know? They look at you, and they literally have made comments to you. They say, "Well, if I put money in, I know I'm going to do better." And I was like, and they always though prime was 4.5, by the way, you know, because prime was 4.5 for about five years. And they said, "Well, prime is a fixed number." And I said, "Well, no. No."

(Laughter.)

MR. STATON: So we had to have that little discussion. But as you can see from 2010 really all the way up into 2016-2017, we had a little blip in there, and then we get to 2018 and 2019 where we stay pretty flat. But remember, we took \$2 million of cash out of that for the building, okay? Roughly \$2 million. So from that perspective, it's not that we've necessarily been flat there, we've just kind of held our own with investment income and offset by other expenses.

So now, right now, and this is just in the ALA. I didn't put the paid up for life money in there, because to me that's kind of restricted money so I don't really want to count as far as our future expenditures for operations. So we're sitting roughly today at about \$34,441,000. So pretty strong. 2020 is starting out okay. I mean, most people think it's going to be, you know, anywhere from three to five percent. Some people believe it's going to be a little higher than that. But we'll see how the presidential election factors into that number and how the end of the year comes. Because, remember, we are a September year end. So we'll have to see how that little conflict goes toward the end of the year here.

So overall, I think very, very strong from that perspective. Chris?

MR. MENNEL: Property and equipment, most of this we've seen before because the building, you've owned it for a couple of years. But we wanted to recap now all of the improvements of the last couple of years that have taken place, at least through the financial statement perspective.

The initial investment was \$2.1 million. That was the purchase price of the building. Last year at this meeting we told you that we expected the expenditures in fiscal year 2018 and 2019 to total \$800,000. The total is \$921,500. If you, you know, look at things like furnishings, improvements, things that had to be repaired. It did come in higher than expected, but there are a number of reasons. Things that were found in the building that weren't expected to be replaced, or decisions that were made to go ahead and take on, you know, a bigger improvement that would last longer, and so forth.

And there is a schedule that the managers put together that lists out all the systems in the building, when they were last replaced, when they think they will have to be replaced again, and projects it out for about 30 years to get a sense of what's going to be the cost per year, what's the average so that funds can be set aside and the Finance Committee has started to set funds aside. Because you could have a year where repairs are \$15,000 and the next year they could be \$300. You just can't budget for that from year to year. So by setting aside some reserves, you can help smooth that from year to year.

MR. STATON: Fund balances. I want to spend a little bit of time on this. Normally we wouldn't in this presentation. But this was a big focus of those changes in our world, the General Accepted Accounting Principles. One of the things that people got into in the not for profit area that was really kind of confusing to outside readers was it used to be that we called things temporarily restricted, permanently restricted, or unrestricted. Well, unrestricted everybody kind of understands that it's your money, you can do with it what you want to, and everybody is fine with that area. And everybody thinks, well, that's a pretty simple explanation. That's where all the confusion really came from. Because as you go through these fund balances here in the top, now we call it without donor restrictions and with donor restrictions. So simply with and without. And the middle two areas here are really where the confusion came from, at least what was interpreted as a confusion, is we see the NEC Designated Endowment. And when you hear the word endowment most people think that's money that you cannot touch the corpus. And so if you put \$100 dollars

in there, it has to stay in there, the \$100. You can spend the investment income if you want to. You can do all kinds of things as the investments go up and down. But you have to leave that \$100 in there. Well, anytime you have an endowment that is designated internally, in our world that's considered unrestricted. Because you designated it. You have the right to undesignate it. And what was happening in the accounting world was that people were saying, "If I have an endowment, it must be permanently restricted." So I'm going to throw it under permanently restricted net assets, and that's wrong. And so what the accounting profession determined was, okay, let's forget about all that. It's either with or without outside donor restrictions.

So you have actually four different areas in without. You have an NEC Reserve, you have the Designated Endowment, you have some other internal designations, and then you have General Operations to \$26.7 million. So if you're looking at it from that perspective, you have kind of designated that that \$26.7 million is for your unrestricted type fund. But it's all unrestricted in that category.

And then when you get down to the term with donor restrictions, that's money that came in, if I donate \$100 to the organization, and I say this is for an endowment, I'm an outside donor giving you money internally, you have to respect my wishes as to what that money is going for. Okay? That's with donor restrictions. So you have about \$780,000 for specific purposes. That could be for Girls Nation, it could be for a particular activity, it could be for something. I give you, you know, \$100, and I say you have to use it to, you know, buy a copier. Well, you have to use that money for that particular purpose. So that's what that relates to.

The ALA has an endowment of about \$850,000 that's outside money, and then the Foundation is up to \$1,490,000. So very strong in that area. So does everybody understand the difference between those two? Because that was one of the big emphases on the new accounting pronouncement this year. Does it make sense?

MR. MENNEL: And that's not just us saying that that money has to be spent for that purpose. If a donor gives it to you, that is a legally binding restriction. So you have a duty to do that, you know, from a legal perspective.

MR. STATON: Yeah. And to the point that if you cease to perform that function, or the organization goes out of business, then you have to find somebody else that is going to perform that function for you and spend that money, or you have to give it back to the original donor.

MR. MENNEL: Next up we have the statement of activities, more commonly known as the income statement. And this line compares fiscal year '19 to fiscal year '18 from a very high level perspective. Total revenues, the numbers are in thousands. So as you see total revenues, we're at \$8.9 million, almost \$9 million. And that's an increase from \$7.7 million last year. The dues increase was the biggest part of that. That was about a \$1 million of the \$1.2 million increase. And then changes in the direct mail campaign, that was another big chunk, a couple hundred thousand dollars of the increase from year to year.

In terms of expenses, very consistent from year to year, from \$8,726,000 this year, looking at \$8,739,000 last year. The composition changed a little bit. But

overall it was pretty consistent. We mentioned the building expenses were a big hit. Some of those expenses were capitalized. Others were expensed and showed up here. So that was an increase this year, but offsetting some of that was a decrease in salaries and wages with changes in some of the personnel and retirement. That went down this year and so offset some of those building expenses.

The net income before investment income was \$235,000 compared to a large \$1 million net loss last year. That \$235,000 is important because in the last 15 years, there's only been two or three times when that number has been positive. You almost always have used investment income to help offset a loss. And we'll get to seeing some (indiscernible) numbers on the next slide. But you can see the impacts of investment income, \$800,000 this year, \$2.3 million last year. And that gets you to the total net income of \$1 million this year. That's not a concern that it went from \$2.3 million down to \$800,000. As Mike mentioned and Rick mentioned, fluctuations in the market will impact that. And so that's why we really focus on that net income or loss from operations before the impacts of the investment income.

On this next slide, we compare the two going back all the way to 2005. So these are in five-year chunks. 2005 to 2009, if you don't add in investment income, this organization lost \$3.3 million. In the next five years, the organization lost \$2.2 million. In the most recent five years, a loss of \$677,000. So it's getting lower each set of five years. But still, a negative number. There's still that reliance on investment income. And the reason it's getting lower is because of the dues increases. Those have really helped you sustain your operations. They've, you know, given you extra money to do the programs and carry out your functions.

If we add in investment income, it was a positive \$444,000 five years ago, a positive \$8.2 million from 2010 to 2014, and a positive \$8.3 million from 2015 to 2019. And that total of \$17 million is why the investments have grown. So really allowing for the long term stability.

MR. STATON: The next two slides focus really on membership and membership both numbers and dollars. As you can see and hear, I wish I could walk over there but I've been told that this goes off on me if I go past the speakers. But as you go back here, if you go from 2005, '06, and '07, we kind of maintained, you know, the actual. And I went back up here. Dues represents 70 percent of your total revenues. So everybody get that focus: 70 percent of your income comes from dues. So that's why these next two slides are so critical.

So 2005, '06 and '07, we kind of hold our own, and these are in dollars. So you go through here, and then we start sliding. And you can see '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, and you'll see why that happens in the next slide. Well we keep going down on kind of a steady pace. And then 2013, we start the dues increase, the first dues increase. And we jump back up. We go up a little bit, because 2014 was a full year of those revenues hitting the financial statements. And then we begin our decline again. And then 2019, we pick those up again, and with the current year dues increase. Let's go to the next slide.

So the next slide, I focused on numbers. And we had a lunch the other day with Kelly and Linda, and I had a little sobering thought on this one I'll share at the

very end of this slide. But if you look at this in a very consistent and not a very positive consistency, we go down about 20,000 members a year. 685,000, 657,000, 645,000. So if you round those off, it's about 20,000 a year. Okay. I'm 58 years old. I'm hoping I'm going to live another 30 years. If you do the math on this, because we are accountants, if we decline 20,000 members a year for the next 30 years, we will cease to exist as an organization. So I was very excited to hear the earlier presentation that the membership was actually up in the current year. Because this is very, very critical. And from an outside looking in, I think this is one of the biggest issues this organization is going to face in the next few years, trying to get that 601. Because if you remember back in that, you know, 2015, 2016 time frame, we had a campaign to get it up to 1 million members. Now we're closer to a half a million members than we are closer to a million. So, you know, I'm not trying to be critical. But at the same time, we watch this pretty closely because this is the revenue stream of the organization and that's why, you know, as Chris pointed out, investments are so critical.

So we're down to about \$601,000 as we sit here at the end of 2019.

Functional expenses, I won't spend a lot of time on this slide because there is a lot of information here. On your financial statements, in the not for profit world you break your expenses down into three categories: program services, management and general, and then fundraising. These categories are that I call the natural categories. These are the functional expenses, are things like salaries and wages, rent, office supplies, all the things that we kind of represent and that we understand, you know. Sometimes you get in technical language within accounting. But these are things that I think mean something to everybody else. They are normal for us to hear from.

So your program expenditures are the things that actually represent what you are trying to do for your mission of the organization. So anything that is mission oriented comes under program expenditures. Nationally, if you look at that, the 65 to 75 percent is the norm for what shows up in program expenditures. This organization this year spent 73 percent, last year it was 77. So in line with where you should be. Not too bad at all. If it's more than that, it's okay in this category. You don't want to get less than that because you want to make sure that you can tell your donors and your members that you are actually spending it for the mission.

Management and general, we slipped a little bit this year from percentage wise. We were closer to 18 percent. Last year we were at 14. So just slightly outside of that. But I will tell you, there was a lot of things going on internally from the management side in the current year. A lot of activity was internal, for lack of a better term. But I think that the organization is on the right path now and I'm looking forward to that.

Fundraising. Some people would argue that you don't want any fundraising. I will tell you that's crazy. People like to see people trying to help themselves. So you are at about nine percent. Five to ten percent is the norm in that area. So again, right in line.

So I would say overall just a little bit outside of it in management and general, but overall we're right in line with where we need to be in those categories. So that's a positive from this standpoint.

Okay. Purpose of external financial statements. Why do you hire Alerding CPA Group to come in and look at your financial statement? The first big buzzword that everybody knows and hears a million times is transparency. You want somebody coming in from the outside and looking at your numbers. Internally, the people in this organization in the Accounting Department work extremely hard. It's probably one of the hardest working Accounting Departments that I've seen in my client base. I mean, they are here when we get here. They are here when we leave. They work tirelessly for that process. But anytime you get involved in it that deeply, you are going to make mistakes. You are going to go through and you are going to see things differently. It's nice to have somebody from the outside come in, take a 30,000-foot view of it, test your numbers, look at that, and make sure that we're comfortable with how they are being presented to the outside world.

So audit financial statement, really in this organization you don't have bank financing, you don't have somebody, investors looking at that. So it's really for the governance is why you are presenting those financial statements, so they can see in a snapshot what those financial statements look like and where the pluses and minuses are. And external users, you do have external users, people look at it. You've got GuideStar and people like that, current and potential donors, state agencies, federal taxing authorities, and the watchdog organizations are always ready to pounce on not for profits. So, I mean, they are already looking to see where you end up with that. So, I think it's very critical that you make sure you maintain those external financial statements for the overall group.

MR. MENNEL: I'm going to touch on the Foundation just a bit. The numbers are smaller here but they are no less impressive. The endowment has continued to grow, from 2008 being near zero, \$22,000, to 2019 at \$1.6 million. That is really strong growth for a Foundation. In the past five years, it has quadrupled from \$484,000 --

MS. NEWSOME: Yay!

(Applause.)

MR. MENNEL: We have in our client base organizations that will start foundations because there is a board member that wants to give to it, they get other board members on board, it's a good idea, it's got a lot of spirit behind it. They make some contributions and then it sits. And it got \$100,000 and it sits there for maybe years and it really can't do anything because it doesn't have enough to start generating return. So that to grow like that is excellent and it will just continue to grow with the focus you've provided to the Foundation by transferring some of the programs over. You're increasing awareness. You're increasing the activity through it, the number of dollars flowing through it, and then designating one of the direct mail campaigns that's allowing new contributions to come in every year. So excellent growth there.

Some key indicators beyond the financial statements, things to look at, things that you can take, you know, to your own state departments and look at there, the first one is membership. We've already talked about it, but how to retain it and grow it. The average loss is \$23,500 per year. Within that number, nearly 11,000 members are passing away each year. So there isn't even the option of saying we're going to meet every member's needs and hold onto them and make sure that they continue to be a member. You're fighting a losing battle of 11,000 members every year before you even get started. So there has to be new members filling in just to keep at the current level.

Also, look at how the mission is accomplished. According to your website, there's 7 million volunteer hours this past year. That is a really high number, 7 million hours. So where individuals are at might be meeting them as volunteers and then getting them to become members. You know, Mike likes to talk about the Millennial generation a lot. Well, I'm too close to that to talk about it --

(Laughter.)

MR. MENNEL: But there's some truth there. If they don't necessarily want to respond to a membership request, maybe they want to become a member and then a few months or years down the road -- or, maybe they want to volunteer, and then down the road they want to sign up as a member. And that's okay. Increasing the members and the volunteers is going to be great for the organization.

MR. STATON: Yeah, because what we see from an employment standpoint is that young people, one of the things they even talk about in the interview process for the CPA firm, because they have options out there, they want to know what type of volunteer opportunities we're going to give them as a CPA firm. Well, you are a not for profit, so they really, really want to do volunteer work for you. But it's very important to the Millennial group. But getting them to sign a membership form is a whole other step. So that's a challenge that you guys are going to have to face up to as you go forward.

MR. MENNEL: When we go on campuses to interview, there's two things that really get their ear. There's forensic auditing. They all think that sounds really cool and they don't realize --

(Laughter.)

MR. MENNEL: -- you can't make a whole career out of it. It's not that frequent, thankfully. And then nonprofits. When we say we work with nonprofits, they all kind of perk up and ask questions about that. And they do have an interest in it. It's just finding them and bringing them into the fold.

MR. STATON: Then we'll switch here from the financial information to fiduciary responsibilities. Internal controls, I'm a huge internal control, our firm is big on internal controls. I think internal controls are the key to the healthy financial position of any organization. This is really the day to day, you know, comments that you go through from your, you know, what policies you have in place, you know, how are you tracking the information.

I always tell people that, you know, there's three major cycles. You've got the payroll cycle, you've got the disbursement cycle, and you've got cash receipts.

And the key here really is very simple. Nobody should be able to do everything. I mean, as simple as that is, we always look at what they call a pie of evidential matter. You've got a circle that comes through here. I'm trying to pull that away. You go through and you want to make sure that nobody can do everything.

So let's start with a simple invoice. An invoice comes in. Somebody has got to approve it. Somebody has got to put it in the computer system. Somebody has got to decide when it's going to be paid. Somebody has got to write the check, sign the check, and then it goes through the banking and you go back to there. Nobody should be able to do all of that. And the two main things you should look at for trying to break that, because I know some of the internal organizations here at your different locations don't have enough people, make sure whoever is putting the invoice into the system does not have the ability to sign the check. And then whoever is accounting for that process doesn't have the ability to do bank reconciliation. If you get at least those two things in there, you've met the minimum here and now we at least have the ability to break that cycle. And it's for your own protection, too.

And we do those same kind of tests here in an organization this size. We make sure that as you go through that process that different people are touching it at different times. Now, if you have collusion, okay. Then there's potential for fraud. But hopefully we won't have two people, you know, both trying to cheat the organization at the same time. And we can do that. But if we do it the right way, there's enough breaks in that cycle that somebody is going to catch somebody pretty quickly. You know? And so as we go through that process. A big one here -- go ahead.

MR. MENNEL: Just one quick comment on that. Something simple that can be done at home is to contact your bank and just meet with them and say, how can you help us? There's a lot of new technology, new things they can do around check writing and wire transfers that can help protect you if you do have a situation where you don't have many people, not enough segregation of duties. They don't all cost a lot. They will try to sell you the whole package that includes everything and is expensive. But there are some things that they can do for pretty low cost to help you.

MR. STATON: Yeah. And I will tell you, fraud is big, big time, I mean, in today's world, with things they can do with your email addresses and trying to get you to transfer money and things like that. So if you have any questions to Chris' comment, mention the word positive pay to your bank and they will understand what you are talking about. We've had several clients that have skirted some really significant financial losses by having the bank do what they call positive pay. I don't want to get into too many details, we're going to run out of time here. But basically what it does is it says, I'm going to send the bank an email to tell them all the checks I'm going to write, and the dollar amounts, and who it's to, so if something comes through that doesn't match that, they immediately turn it down. It could be five cents off. It could be \$5,000 off. But as soon it's different from what you told the bank, they deny the check and then you don't, you kind of cut off that process of trying to lose money. So positive pay, so as you go through that.

We mentioned independent reconciliation of bank accounts, review of expense reports. We do that on a daily basis. One of the things in not for profits that was a big buzz word over the last few years is executives stealing money. So we make sure we do look at credit cards that are held by individuals within the organization. We look at expense reports to make sure that they are making sense and they are for the mission of the organization.

Deposits made, independent recording receipts, again, I talked about that. And automated bookkeeping systems, QuickBooks, whatever you use. If you use an automated system, at least you are going to be in balance. I mean, at a minimum you are going to be in balance, and it takes some of the headache away from that. So simple things you can do from that perspective.

And continuing on to budgets, I'm a big budget guy, too. I think budgets in a small organization are probably just as critical if not more than they are in a larger organization. If you set up a budget before the year starts, and you have ideas of what should happen during the organization for that year, and all of a sudden you get a monthly financial statement and a quarterly financial statement and it's outside of those, it gives you a discussion starting point. You can look at that and say, okay, I thought my, you know, meals and entertainment were going to be \$1,000 and they are \$5,000. What happened? Now at least somebody stops, takes a chance and goes back and looks to see what happened, and maybe you can catch, you know, the problem at that point. So budgets are critical. Budgets are important.

Purchasing fidelity insurance. That's just more of protecting the organization in case somebody does steal from you. And then officers, directors and officers insurance I think is a critical. And then just make sure you make, invest cash in a prudent investment instrument so that you don't get the risk of loss if you're not big enough to absorb that loss.

MR. MENNEL: This slide getting close to the end is talking about the governance of the organization. And we've touched on this. But the importance of good governance, the transparency within the organization, your leadership here is setting the tone for the whole organization. As we look at things like mission creep and there's outside organizations, the IRS are focusing on these. It's not just an issue for you here in this room. But the example and the focus that you put on the mission, if you are already starting to creep outside of the mission, by the time that trickles down to the departments, the units, they are really going to be off mission. But if you stay focused on it, then they will stay focused on it as well. Any large national organizations, that's one of the keys, is staying focused on the mission so that as there's fundraisers, as there's programs, they are all staying true to that singular purpose.

MR. STATON: Perfect timing. We've got one minute.

(Laughter.)

MR. STATON: Does anybody have any questions for us? We'd be glad to answer those if you have any. I mean, if somebody, you only get a minute -- yes, ma'am?

VOICE: I have a quick question. So on the slide that showed the administrative percentage outside of the benchmark, I think it was 15 percent --

MR. STATON: We were at 18.

MR. MENNEL: We were at 18, yeah.

VOICE: -- is that, it's the first time in quite a while where I've seen it (indiscernible). Is that due to the additional expense with things that were undercover, uncovered in (indiscernible).

MR. MENNEL: That was a part of it. There was also some shift in the wages. Not just that they decreased from last year to this year, but some shift in how the wages were allocated just based on the employee mix and the focus. And I think that will come back in line.

VOICE: My next part was going forward, do you see that --

MR. MENNEL: I would expect it to come back in line with where it was, you know, last year.

MR. STATON: And I will tell you, and this is a positive, not a negative. So if I say this incorrectly, I'll throw that out in the beginning. This organization does an incredible job of allocating expenses by actual time and effort. A lot of times you see not for profits, they'll say, okay, 20 percent of my time is here, 15 percent is here. And they just start throwing percentages out there and they never change them. This organization spends a significant amount of time making sure that if I work two hours here or two hours there, it's in the right category. And I think there was just a lot more, you know, with the building, there was a lot more internally here. I mean, you had a lot of changes in personnel. You had a lot of changes in, you know, just the overall mix here. So I think that we're seeing that as an anomaly and we'll watch that obviously carefully next year when we go through that process.

(Applause.)

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: Thank you, Mike and Chris, very much. Madam President, the Audit Committee has approved the Fiscal Year 2019 Audit for both the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. So on behalf of the Audit Committee, I move acceptance of the External Auditor's Report as presented.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It has been moved to accept the External Auditor's FY 2019 Audit Report. No second is required because this comes from a committee. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of accepting the External Auditor's Report for Fiscal Year 2019, please say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed, no. The motion is carried.

MS. BROOKS-GREENWELL: Thank you, Madam President. This concludes the report of the Audit Committee.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Jeri and the Audit Committee, for all of your hard work.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Can we hit the lights, Sam? Great.

Well, as I said in the beginning, we're six months in. Cornelius and I have had wonderful travels. And I hope that you've enjoyed traveling along with me. I think when I get up in the morning, those are the comments that I laugh at the most, are, "Oh, we feel like we're with you every step of the way, every day." And so this is just going to be a little pictorial of what we've done since taking office on August 28th.

First, obviously, our National Officers. We have our Division Vice Presidents, who are really just starting to ramp up their visits right now. But as you see, we had some officers attend homecoming and they were standing by the combine. You have me and my right hand holding hands as we were just elected National President and National Vice President. And of course, you have all of our officers. And then there's the Junior Meeting shirts that everybody wants, correct?

ALL: Yes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes. That's one of those things that needs to be put on the list for emblem sales. I always said to the girls when Kathy or I were in the room, "Hold onto your shirts, girls."

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So that was some of the external for our officers. Every day, Mary Casadei, obviously, is putting out there devotions. And Peggy is pounding and hounding all of our departments to get reports after I have a department visit.

So as we look to our history, our year started off with a search committee. The search committee had been in action and then asked upcoming leadership to step in to help find the new Executive Director. So I look forward to you getting to meet Kelly in her own words here in a few minutes. But that was our search committee the day we made the decision to make an offer, after many, many months of hard work. So from there, public service announcements. How many have seen the Commander and I doing public service announcements? Okay. This is the first time, and that was a joint effort by the Legion and Auxiliary having marketing meetings on how we could better talk to our membership. So first thing, of course, was membership eligibility. Spouse, males, Legion Act, what does all that mean? Then we went into buddy checks to get us ready for Veterans Day. Then we did Happy Holidays, and I said to the Commander, "Where's our Santa hats?" Then as our National Secretary brought to the light of the Legion, and some of the departments that I've been I think you can answer this question, how many posts in the United States don't have units associated with them? 4,600. 4,600. And that is a challenge I give to those Legionnaires when I'm speaking in front of their delegations. I want them to help me answer why.

Then you will see coming shortly National Poppy Day. This week I taped three. I did a PUFL, I did a monthly donor, and a Poppy Day. And the Poppy Day was with the assistance of the Department of Indiana. And so I think in total we have done nine public service announcements, when you add in one message for Girls Nation Senators and one message for Girls State Citizens. So it's a new approach we're taking on social media, as well as getting out to the departments.

Then this was a new initiative for us. With my background, as you know, a burn nurse and a hospital CEO, we partnered with the Legion for my participation in System Worth Saving visits. I'm going to explain a little bit about what they are, because some of you may not be aware.

If you recall many years ago in Phoenix, there were veterans that were passing away because they couldn't get appointments. They were waiting on waiting lists. And then medical record things happened, and then we had a situation in Tomah, Wisconsin with narcotics, and you just kept hearing all the bad. But we know the Legionnaires, veterans, are best taken care of in their own system. We know we don't like to prioritize healthcare for our veterans. So the Legion put into action when Ron Conley was National Commander, System Worth Saving, that Congress lets the Legion go into hospitals, VA medical centers across the country, approximately 20 per year, to sit down and have a collegial discussion about what's going on in their VA, what are they doing well, where do they need some help, what can we do as a volunteer service organization to assist.

First, we sit down with a town hall meeting, invite all veterans who use services in those VAs to come to a town hall. So my first one was one of the biggest in the nation they asked me to go to, Washington, D.C. Yeah. There you go, Lauren. And so that's Ralph Bozella, the Commission VA and our Chairman from Colorado. And we are at that VA. So we had a town hall meeting at the Legion Post that's showcased on the slide. And then the next day, day and a half, we actually interview and tour the facilities. So for me it's kind of like being on the other side of a surveyor. It was nice to be on the other side of the table once. But realizing that we try not to make it adversarial. It's definitely a collegial aspect. And then a report is put together on every single one of those visits and that is shared with Congress and also lays on the President's desk and the VA. So you'll probably hear a little bit about that in the Commander's testimony, I would think, next month in March.

The next location we went to was Lexington, Kentucky. This is their VA. They actually have two campuses, and I think you could have guessed where it was when you saw the thoroughbred. That is actually in their lobby. And this grouping were from Ohio that were in charge of the class and the trainings. And then also the trailing candidate Randall Fisher, who actually used to work at the VA, who is a Legionnaire obviously, the trailing candidate for National Commander, he was on the site visit as well as David King, who is National Vice Commander.

So that was some of our fun. You know me, I'm always looking for those opportunities. So they got those brand new wheelchairs. If the whole picture would be there, you would see all four of us. But I think it's good for them to know that we're there to look at what is the perspective of being a patient in their environment. What do they need? What are they feeling? What are you sensing? It can be talking about women's health, it can be talking about military sexual trauma, it can be talking about how long it takes to get your records. It can be talking about going outside with the Mission Act to be able to get your services at an urgent care that's outside the VA.

So those are, like I said, about a total of three days from start to finish.

Then in October, we had Homecoming in America's Heartland. And I know many of you in the room are smiling because I know you were there climbing on the combines or taking the Clydesdale rides with all of us. So there's the big John Deere tractor on the tour that we had. There are all my lovely Juniors from my home unit. Not all of them. We have 58 total, but we have about 38 active. So that's I think 20, about 20 of them. It was Homecoming that weekend so some of the seniors, you know, we had to work their schedules. But you will see that it's all about having fun. And then you see the upcoming leadership, sitting on the hay bales, here we are, all together. One more step, one more day by day of the process of what it takes to become a leader of this great organization.

And then you have the cheers. That is my cousin, who is a Rear Admiral in the Coast Guard. So for him to come home to be able to do the escorting meant a great deal to me and to have the entire Legion Family there. We had 14 combined Past National Commanders and Past National Presidents and SAL Commanders in attendance, which is one of the most ever. So we were very proud for Iowa.

Child Welfare Foundation. You will hear a report from the Liaison of the Child Welfare Foundation today. But at their annual grant process, the Auxiliary sits at the table. We have an opportunity to help decide granting. And as an organization, we did really well. It was really fun. And I don't want to steal Desi's thunder because she is going to be speaking on behalf of Kris West, who is our Chairman. But realizing that the Auxiliary received grants which all helps offset those deficits. But it's an honor to be a participant in that process. Because we do make contributions.

At that time is also the American Legion fall meetings, where as National President you have the opportunity to address the NEC of the Legion in what I call when I was raised in this organization their hallowed chamber. And it just happened to be that it was actually live broadcasted that day online, because they were also doing the tribute to a National Treasurer who passed away, George Buskirk. So we quick got it out so social media could see it.

Also, looking as we were looking at the process, having an opportunity to spend time with the SAL. The SAL was struggling at the same time we were with what did it mean for greats, and great-greats, and membership eligibility and stepchildren and adopted children. So I sat in their meetings, and they said, "Nicole, we're so sorry you had to listen to our dirty laundry." And I said, "Dirty laundry? That was passion. That was dedication." You don't always see a grown man cry in public. It was their heart strings that they needed, their organization needed to move forward, but just weren't quite sure how. So we're not alone in our struggles at times.

And then you see a picture of a 100-year-old Evelyn Thompson from Nebraska, who just passed away this last week at 101. Her son came and got me and he said, "Would you come over? Would you mind talking to her? And I think she'd really like your pin." I said, "We can take care of that. We sure can take care of that." So I got notification right before I left to come here that she passed away this week.

Okay, mission trainings. When we were setting up our 100th Anniversary Committee, I said to Linda Newsome, there is one thing I really want us to be able to do. There is a few things, but one really in particular. I want to take the 100th Anniversary to the members. Not every member can afford to come to National Convention or choose to use their vacation. And not every department can afford to have a National President come for a visit. I understand that. So for us, we took it to the mission trainings. And we took it to the 101s because we asked that those be grassroots members who don't have those other opportunities. And if I personally couldn't go, which I physically went to three, videoed in for a fourth, and Vice President Kathy was at the ones that I couldn't be at. So we hosted the birthday party. We played a little bit of trivia. And we saw the future of our great organization as we installed the Honorary Division National Vice Presidents of the Juniors. And of course, had a little fun.

In Orlando with the hand cycle. I think the hotel was starting to wonder. They were trying to set up for lunch and we were riding the bike around the hallways. I just kept saying "Turn, turn, turn," because there was a lot of dishes in our path. But the key is that it once again, and you heard our numbers are up in our mission trainings. And it's exciting. National has been sold out for weeks for 201, and we have two other 201s. I know Albuquerque is trying really hard to up their attendance as well as we have Hartford yet to happen all in March. So thank you, staff, for helping to coordinate.

And tomorrow, the trainers will be doing their training, called Train the Trainer, I think Stephanie calls it T3, instead of T2, you have to add your T to it to get T3. So we're looking forward to being here to assist them in that training tomorrow.

All right. And then we went to Creative Arts Festival in Kalamazoo. One thing I learned in my big first month long trip as National President, you can't trust the weather report when you pack that far in advance. So Vickie Koutz and I had to go shoe shopping, because I didn't have any close toed shoes and it was snowing. So if you see pictures in some of those you don't see my feet because I'm in sandals in most of those. But the gentleman in the middle was the artist that I chose to recognize his artwork with our national thank-you card this year. And his was a picture of a stream where him and his wife would always walk and she had passed away. And he had his entire family come and he was from, and I didn't know it when I picked it, right from Michigan, from Battle Creek. And so they actually did a little photo shoot with him and I and they are framing that and putting it in the Battle Creek VA Medical Center.

So what was special and important was that I asked Kris West, who was National President the year we started our involvement with Creative Arts Festival. She had not been back. So she was my special guest that week. And Kris isn't one who usually gets a little, I don't know what you want to say, she got a little, you know, just a little emotional, a little. And she loved her week. And she still talks about it. I saw her when I was in New Hampshire just a few weeks ago. But it was a great opportunity, and it was a great opportunity because of the committee. Vickie

and your committee, you did a wonderful job, all of you, and leadership and staff. That is, as you know, one of our premier opportunities that we do have.

And then the gentleman in the bottom right corner, he's a Hawkeye.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So he came up to me. He didn't, I said, "What's he bringing to me?" Well that, he was, he loves baseball. And that is an American jersey. So he was pretty proud to give me that. And now he and I have become Facebook friends.

And then as we heard, all of those meetings today you have heard about, I have tried extremely hard to be on almost every single card or in face meetings. I think I missed one because I had a travel delay, and the other it was just, we were just stuck on where I had to be that day. But thank you, chairmen, for all of the hard work. Because that is what keeps, one, us moving forward, two, looking to the past to recognize where we need and to learn from where we've been. We heard the financials. We don't want to go back to what happened in '08. We don't even want to go back to what happened in '12. But look how far we've come, to have \$32 million in the bank and have rebounded with \$6 million in just the last four years. So we know we've got the money if we need it, when we need it.

This was something you always dream about, of laying a wreath at Arlington. Thank you, Tyra, our D.C. Executive Director, for helping to make that happen. With the Legion, we together laid a wreath at Arlington. We also had a wreath that was presented at the Vietnam Wall, and had a breakfast meeting that entailed being hosted by VA Secretary Wilkie. And for us, one of those once in a lifetime opportunities that obviously I will cherish. I don't get goosebumps very often. I was a little nervous on which step, you know, go, start with your left, okay, we've got it. And we get to the front, and it was a warm day. It was 65 degrees on Veterans Day. And that sentinel had a little sweat just running down his nose and I knew he wasn't going to move and I wasn't going to move either. If he told me go left, I was turning left. But a wonderful day.

And Kathy talked about birthday cake. Every picture of cake you see, I probably had a bite of it. Or I will have a bite of it. One day in New Mexico, they will appreciate this, I had four pieces of cake in New Mexico. They are very proud of that, Cece's nodding.

So we hosted a birthday party for the American Legion at our D.C. office while I was there. The staff here had a party a couple of days before. We're having parties all year long. And so that is us hosting a party with Tyra and learning that our Legion counterparts don't know what we all do. So I had a really nice opportunity to do some education. And as you can see, some of the cakes are very interesting. Some are shaped. Some I've cut with swords. I didn't know, I thought that sword was pretty sharp. They don't cut through fondant very well I've learned.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So the key is, again, it's about celebrating and enjoying. And then I got a call from that 75th National President and said, "I see on your schedule you have nothing going on actually November 10th, our birthday."

And I said, "You are correct." "I am in D.C. I'm picking you up." I said, "Okay." So we went to Brunswick, Maryland. They are one of the cities that has the longest running Veterans Day parade, 87 years. And I met a Rosie the Riveter that day. But I'm saving this picture for National Convention. I'm just giving it to you as a teaser. Linda and I both rode motorcycles that day.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So our parade of Rosie the Riveters and motorcycles, just wait. That is your teaser. You'll have to wait and see.

So as we look at December 7th, you heard from Sara that I actually not only represented the Auxiliary, I represented the entire American Legion Family. The National Commander had to head back to D.C. to the White House, and the SAL were not included. So we were the American Legion Family representative at Pearl Harbor.

The little guy in the middle is a young Marine. That is at the Punchbowl Cemetery. He is Jacob Million (phonetic). He is from Ohio. He is ten. He has wanted to be a Marine since the day he was born, he told me. He had to raise money to go and he sold beef sticks and chocolate bars, ma'am. A ten-year-old did not call it a candy bar. And I handed him one of my pins, and he said, "Ma'am, those are the poppies you talked about in your speech." And his Grandma looked at him and she said, "You listened?"

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: "Of course I listened, Grandma, to everything." So I think our future is in good hands. But you see in front of the USS Missouri, meeting many Pearl Harbor survivors. And then a hang loose picture with Sterling Cale, the 98-year-old, who I won't tell much because that will be showcased in my letter in the next magazine. Who 98-years-old, wanted to meet me almost more than I wanted -- I thought I wanted to meet him even more, but it was all about him wanting to sit down and talk to me about our generations and how life looks different when he was raised in the Depression to when I was raised in the seventies and eighties. So once again, stay tuned. And thank you, Wendy, for being the photographer all week for me on that trip.

Then I came here for Christmas. This room was transformed into Santa's Workshop of putting together kits of needed supplies and items for homeless veterans, as well as that evening went with some of the staff that are unit members to serve a homeless dinner. But you know what? It is all about fun. So we had a little Christmas party as well. And that is the formal Christmas portrait. That could be the Christmas card kind of thing.

All right. Oh sorry, went too far. Okay. And then of course, Cornelius. Most people, I think he's more popular than me.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And that's okay. So he has been everywhere. The Juniors, not only Juniors and SAL went to see him, I have many requests from Past Department Presidents. I have a request from a Division National Vice President to have her picture with him today. So if it's all about, this is my way of remembering,

of course he came from Iowa as a gift, to remember where you're from, to remember what your roots are, and to remember that in 360-some days, you get to go home. So the few days I am home, Cornelius takes a break. And most of the time when people, like last night, well, where's Cornelius? He's resting.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So we make sure. I think the funniest was in that four feet of snow in New Hampshire, up in the blizzard, or on the ski slope in New York, when I didn't take him down the ski slope. I was afraid we'd lose him.

And health and well-being, yes. Pretty much you know, I'll do anything. I'm a daredevil. And adaptive sports. So health and well-being, the first when Tyra looked at me and she said, "You're going kayaking." And I said, "In the Potomac? In November?" (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And then I learned that we were going to Bethesda, Walter Reed, and they have an Olympic-sized swimming pool. I had never kayaked before, let alone to play kayak football with wounded warriors. It's aggressive. And the whole goal was for me for two hours to stay upright.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Because I didn't want them to teach me how to flip the kayak. So you will see. And as Kathy said, those opportunities have been priceless. Probably the toughest was learning to walk with a prosthetic leg at Aurora, Colorado. And that was one of my very first visits. I had no idea.

But skiing a couple of weeks ago in New York, I did say to Mary Anne, who was at the bottom of the hill, I said, "Can you say a little prayer, National Chaplain?" Because I'm not a skier. So as you can see, and I hope you look at those videos, and I hope you take time to look at the pictures on Facebook. Because it gives them a sense of well-being that I can't understand and explain it all. But I have a lot better understanding and perception of what they go through on a everyday basis.

And membership. I'm not going to steal any of Pam's thunder today, because membership we are doing extremely well and I'm very proud of our membership team. You see we have a Legion Act, oh hello, Deb. The Legion Act brought in those new members. And then on the right side, you see Chanin Nuntavong, who is one of our TAL staff members in D.C., who not only is a Marine himself, is honoring his wife's service as a Marine. Every state I have met, veterans who wanted to honor their spouses by being an Auxiliary member, and those that had no way of being eligible but have always wanted to honor their loved one's service. I have met tri members, dual members, and even quad members. And some of them say, thanks so much because that's how I got to get my bike. That made me a quad member. So I told the staff, we've got to look at not only dual membership pins, we've got to look tri pins, and we've got to look for quad pins. And we need some male Auxiliary type branding attire. Because the fitted just don't look so good.

And charters, this is the one thing I will steal from Pam. Yesterday I signed five new charters yesterday.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And with charters, at this time last year, there were 52 charters turned in. This year, there were 30. We have replaced those 30 with 29 new charters.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So if that is not starting to stop the slide, which was our goal, to stop the slide, I don't know what else identifies that. And I've had fortunate opportunities to meet some of those Auxiliary units that presented a charter just last week. And seeing the faces, and seeing the hope of where they want to be.

My trip to Puerto Rico, Noemi called Tamara and said, "If she really wants to come, it's okay, but it's kind of dangerous." So hopefully we're going to get that rescheduled this summer so that we can honor Puerto Rico as well. And realizing, as I said this morning, in our prayers and in our thoughts.

So looking forward to Europe around Memorial Day. And everywhere I've been it has equaled at this point 18 out of 44 departments that have asked to have the National President come. And my dad's responsibility is to track my mileage. And we are over 60,100 miles at this point in time.

So as we celebrate a century of service, I can't ask for more. You have been there every day. Every opportunity that has come upon us, we've embraced. New York said, "We'll take care of a costume." And I thought, "Oh boy," you never know. Well, I got there and I saw it at midnight and it was a flapper dress. And then you're like, "Oh my God, is it going to fit?"

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So I have a flapper dress. I've been at a sixties dance for obviously the hippies. And last week in Texas, Madam Past National President Carlene knew it's kind of hard to pack. She said, how about you be yourself? I said, woo-hoo! So as we look at where we want to go, your excitement is contagious and that is momentum. And as you've heard, we are moving forward in this century. And as you heard at installation, it is all about celebrating. And I once again, I told you at installation, if celebration becomes a four-letter word by the end of the year, we have accomplished what we set out to do.

So as I close my remarks, this is our theme song for the year.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Madam National Secretary, Linda Boone, for our Headquarters report.

MS. BOONE: I have no Power Point. She just outdid it.

So I'm going to give you the report of the National Secretary, and in the new style, in the new way we'll be doing this in the future. And then a report of our status of our relationship, meetings and things with the American Legion, and the strategic plan.

So the National Secretary's responsibilities from the Bylaws: record proceedings of the National Executive Committee meetings and the National Organization in Convention assembled. So I'm here to report that the minutes of the NEC meeting on August 29th and today, once approved, will be archived and available like all those before them. The 29 National Convention proceedings are archived and posted on the website.

Responsibility number two, to keep all records of the National Organization and to perform other duties as assigned. Some of these documents are financial, which the National Secretary shares responsibility with the National Treasurer to ensure accuracy and meeting filing deadlines and criteria. These documents are current as of today: the biannual corporate filing with the State of Indiana, tax documents, federal and state, retirement plan documents, and individual state charity registrations for fundraising activities.

Other duties as assigned currently refers to the management responsibilities of the National Headquarters. Since National Convention, members of the NEC have received weekly briefings to keep you apprised of National Headquarters activities and information. Kelly Circle, as Executive Director, will be taking over those communications going forward. Kelly and I both agree, this is a great transparency communication tool to keep the Board of Directors prepared to make governance decisions for the National Organization. In the future, the National Secretary position will be focused on governance and the Executive Director on the management piece.

Responsibility number three of the National Secretary, as a corporate officer to maintain constant and continuous control of all trademarks, trade names, patents and copyrights of the American Legion Auxiliary. In calendar year 2019, 179 ALA emblem requests and 86 ALA Girls Nation and Girls State emblem requests were approved, which total about 265. That was an increase of 45 percent over the 2018 year. In the first seven weeks of 2020, 12 ALA emblem approvals have been processed. Angie Graham on our staff is the person delegated as the contact for the process and reports issues to the National Secretary and/or the Judge Advocate for resolution.

So let's talk a little bit about the most exciting thing that I have felt being able to participate in over the last year and a half, is the relationship with the American Legion. In October of 2018, National President Kathy Dungan and I were shocked to learn that the relationship between the Legion and the Auxiliary was frayed. We took aggressive steps to start repairing the relationship by first reestablishing meetings with the Legion volunteer leadership by representatives from our leadership. Staff interactions were started and more communications developed. We hosted the Legion for their birthday in our new building and many staff and leadership attended our open house. Donations to support Legion endowments were also reestablished and presented at their spring NEC meeting. National President Kathy authorized additional attendance to the Legion 2019 Washington, D.C. Conference, and we presented a plan for the 2020 Conference that would further increase the Auxiliary's presence for advocacy efforts. National President Nicole has supported expanded efforts to continue to build relationships and increase Family

focused initiatives. In this administrative year, the Auxiliary and the Legion staff have met three times to develop action items in marketing, communications and development, National Convention, membership, and training. We have the next meeting scheduled in April.

As reported in the weekly briefings, out of these meetings have come the opportunity to be represented on the holiday display at the New York Times Square electronic billboards, magazine articles showcasing both organizations, AEF and NEF joint promotions on the websites, pursuing future joint membership benefit programs, making changes to National Convention formats, promoting membership activities together, exploring joint training opportunities and joint programming for SAL and Juniors and Girls Nation and Boys Nation.

There are many ideas and potential opportunities that could impact mission delivery and it's gratifying to see the Legion and the Auxiliary staff working together in excitement. The joint goal is to provide better support for the volunteers doing the front line work and in both organizations to serve our mission.

Being asked to participate in the Legion Washington, D.C Conference last year was rewarding and we were able to have 22 authorized attendees. And this year, we will have 60 authorized attendees to expand the advocacy efforts for veterans and their families. While working together at times proves to be a challenge, due to different culture and processes within our organizations, it's been rewarding in the progress accomplished. We hope this might serve as inspiration for department Legion and Auxiliary organizations to look for opportunities to work as a family.

So a report on strategic planning. The NEC adopted five goals for the strategic plan at the Pre-Convention meeting last August. Since that time, the staff have been exploring strategies and metrics to be able to report the progress to the Board. In January, the National Committee was sent a draft to review and provide feedback. That feedback has been incorporated into the plan and work continues to develop and finalize strategy and metrics. The new Executive Director now needs to be brought into the process and so we can figure out how we're going to do all this transition, and that will occur likely in April. The committee anticipates having a detailed report for the FY 2020 available prior to the Convention Board meeting in August.

So Madam President, that completes my report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Linda.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. I am very excited to present to you Kelly Circle from the Department of Kansas for her greetings and to get to know Kelly a little bit this morning. Kelly, the floor is yours.

(Applause.)

MS. CIRCLE: There we go. Okay. So thank you everyone for being here today. I am honored and I am in awe to be standing before you. When I look around the room and I see the millions of volunteer hours represented, it just blows me away. So thank you. Yeah, we thank our veterans for their service. I want to thank you for your service to our organization. You're amazing.

So just over a year ago, I was presented with the idea of applying for the Executive Director position. And I have to say, a year ago, I thought, there's no way. I can't think of changing my career and uprooting my family again. I just bought a house. I just finished my PhD in Education, I'm supposed to be in education and helping students for the rest of my life. But that idea, once it was there, it just wouldn't go away. And I thought and I thought and I prayed and I contemplated and I consulted with my family. And before I even applied for the position, so it took me a little while to apply, so sorry search committee for that.

(Laughter.)

MS. CIRCLE: But I wanted to make sure that it was the right move. And once I made that decision, I was all in and just really wanted it. So for some of you who know me, you may not know a lot about my background. Many of you don't know me at all. So I'm going to give you a little bit of my background.

So I joined the ALA in 2006 to honor the service of my mother, who served in the Navy in the fifties. Her name was Twyla, so a unique name. The American Legion has been a part of my life for a very, very long time. I remember as a child going to the swimming pool and swimming all afternoon, and then the American Legion Post was right across the street. So we would go over there and they would let us play in the dance hall and play with the juke box while we waited for my mom to pick us up. So that was pretty cool.

When my mother passed way in 2007, the American Legion Family was there for me again. The same Marysville Post hosted our gathering. And I have to say, they put the fun in funeral for us. I learned so much about my mother and things from a whole different perspective of her personality, how great of a dancer she was, and just how outgoing she was. So it was really special and I appreciate the American Legion Family for doing that for us.

As a member of the great Department of Kansas, I served on committees at both the district and the department level, and I served as Second District Vice President and President. And currently I still serve on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the department.

In 2014, I was asked to serve on the government staff for the ALA Girls Nation. That was a life-changing experience for me. I have since served three more years on the government staff, and I continue to be inspired and invigorated every year by the talents and potential of these young women. It's ten days that I had to take off, ten vacation days that I had to take, but it was -- and it was grueling. I mean, by the time I got home, I was so tired. I don't know how the volunteers who do, many of the volunteers at National, at Girls Nation, they are also heavily involved in their Girls State. And I don't know how you keep it all together, when you do Girls State, Girls Nation, many have jobs, families, your own unit activities. I don't know how you do it. So I'm just really impressed there.

I feel like I've been preparing for this opportunity like my entire life. Like things that I didn't, never made the connection, all of a sudden came together and I realized, oh, that was the lesson I needed to learn to make this opportunity happen.

I have a proven track record in taking two failing businesses and turning them around. One was an apartment complex in Kansas City, Kansas that was in bankruptcy and they needed a manager that wouldn't embezzle. Go figure, yeah.

(Laughter.)

MS. CIRCLE: I'm like, I think I can handle that. I was promised a job for a year while they worked through the bankruptcy and then after that I was going to be on my own. And that's where I discovered I had a talent for building relationships. Within the year I went from a 66 percent occupancy rate to a 98 percent occupancy rate. And from less than a 30 percent paying full market rate to 100 percent paying full market rate for those apartments. The complex was brought out of bankruptcy, sold at a profit, and it's still in business today. So I'm pretty proud of that.

The other example, I was hired to teach part-time in a legal assistant program. The school hadn't officially decided to close the program, but it was the smallest enrollment, lowest GPA, and lowest graduation rate of all the programs being offered. And through this experience I learned the power of positivity. I also discovered that people will rise to the standard that you set for them. If you set the standard here, they'll go here. If you set it here, they go here. I treated my students as professionals. I expected them to act like professionals. And lo and behold, they did. So soon enough, everyone was on board and within the year the program had the highest GPA, the highest completion rate, and the highest job placement rate out of any program the college offered.

So these are just tiny organizations compared to the ALA. And thank heavens the ALA is not in dire straits like they were. So that's nice. And in those situations, I was pretty much on my own. People had given up on these organizations. And so I was able to pretty much do whatever I felt like I needed to do on my own. Now here, with hundreds of thousands of members and a governing board this large, I can't make wholesale changes on my own, nor do I want to. This is where I need your help. So by working together, we can make forward progress into the next century. We need to have a shared vision of our goals. I believe in servant leadership, shared governance, and transparency. I am here to serve the members and to manage operations to accomplish the goals that we set together.

I look at it like this. Members are the brains and heart of this organization and the staff is like the skeleton. We provide structure and protection of the vital organs, but it's the members that are the life of our organization. And we all have to work together to make that happen, right? So when I ask for your help, I'm asking for a few things. I'm asking for your guidance. I'm asking for your trust. And I'm asking for you to set the example.

So first on guidance, I need your advice. I need your words of wisdom. I need your years of experience, your lessons learned, your institutional knowledge. I was very lucky to have wonderful mentors in Unit 153 in Olathe, Kansas and District 2 in the Department of Kansas, as I was up and coming leadership. They were very patient with me. I'm looking straight at Jeannie Oss (phonetic). I'm so glad that we put you there. I didn't mean to do that, but it was great. They were very patient with me when I thought I knew everything and they were very patient and

kind when I tripped on myself without even realizing my faux pas. There are a couple of ladies in the room today and I want to convey my sincere thanks to them and to all the ladies who mentored me in the Department of Kansas. So please, take that back. That means a lot. The ALA has been instrumental in my development as a leader. And I believe this is one of our hidden strengths and it's one that I hope to continue to develop on the national level for mentorship.

Trust, this is a little bit harder. There has been an atmosphere -- I'm just going to call it like it is. There has been an atmosphere of distrust among some members and between members and the staff that we need to put behind us. This is where transparency and communication come into play. I'm going to be brainstorming ideas and strategies and I need your openness to consider change, try new ideas, maybe try some things that have been tried before but maybe just weren't tried at the right time. And I'm hoping to use technology to our advantage to have more dialogue on, especially on important matters, so everyone can have a chance to ask questions, discuss different perspectives, before making these big decisions when we come together. I want everyone's voices to be heard.

Most of all, I need you to be the example. Be the change you wish to see in the world. Model that behavior that you expect and that you want to see from fellow members. Let's have a robust and respectful dialogue and discussion when we're discussing important matters. But once that decision is made and we walk out of this room, support the decision that's made. Be knowledgeable about the rationale of why it was made so that you can explain it to others. Be the support person that you may not have had when you were up and coming. Hopefully, you did. But be that support person that you want the up and coming leaders to have. Because it's going to be in their hands when you're gone.

So after lunch you're going to be receiving a small token from me to remind you of this important point, be the change you wish to see in the world. And don't worry, Finance Committee, it's on my own dime.

(Laughter.)

MS. CIRCLE: I'd like to take a positive strength based approach for organizational improvement as well. Instead of focusing on declining membership and asking, oh, what are we going to do? Let's focus on what we do well and build on those successes. Here are a few questions to focus on. What do we do best? Why do people come to us rather than to other organizations that are like us? More importantly, what do we do that gives us strength? What is it in your unit that your unit does that you all come together and time just flies and you're just having fun? What are those things? Is it running bingo on a Thursday night? Is it setting up and running the holiday gift shop at the local VA hospital? Is it Girls State? Whatever that is, focus on that. You don't have to do everything. Just focus on what brings you passion and brings you strength. Keep doing more of that thing. When we focus on something that we're passionate about, that attitude is contagious. We want to talk about it and people want to hear about it. And that's how we're going to get new members, being excited about what we do.

Also, don't assume people know who we are. It was a big wake up call when I got this position and I resigned my position at Red Rocks Community College, and at my own college when I asked, I said, "Hey, I'm going to do this," and they're like, "What's the American Legion Auxiliary?" Oh no. So, and I realized as a member I wasn't doing a good enough job of spreading that word about who we are and what we do, even though I had been at Girls Nation so many years and people knew that I was gone on vacation for a long time.

So wear our brand with pride and don't just wear them to ALA events. Wear it to, wear your shirts to the grocery store, wear them to work, wear your President's pin to work. People will ask questions about it and you can say, "Hey, it's for the ALA. We're a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. We're getting ready to send a delegation to Washington, D.C. to hear the National Commander's testimony and meet with our state elected officials to lobby for our legislative agenda. That sounds pretty cool, doesn't it?" So people, whatever it is that you get excited about, you know, get that in and people will ask more questions.

So as the Executive Director of the ALA, I hope to serve our organization on a larger scale, supporting the initiatives of the American Legion, furthering our mission, and reintroducing the public to this wonderful organization. So in conclusion, I would like to thank the staff for welcoming me. I want you to know the directors and all of the staff, I've met with them individually. And to a T, every single one of them when I asked why do you work for the ALA, they say it's the mission. We love the mission. We love being part of something greater than ourselves. It's really, the passion is there. The commitment is there. Their dedication is there and their knowledge is superb. So we are in good hands.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Linda Boone. Again, I'm just going to keep thanking her like for a year. She has contributed so much to our organization, not only as Past National President and a member for over 50 years, but she put her life on hold for a year and a half to guide us through this time. And she did a magnificent job. And so please, help me thank her.

(Applause.)

MS. CIRCLE: Thank you very much. That concludes my remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Welcome, Kelly. Thank you very much.

Okay. We just have a few more minutes before our lunch break and we have a very special report upon us. Past National President Linda Newsome, would you please come forward for our 100th Anniversary Committee report?

VOICE: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Oh, of course.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sorry -- she stands out. I'm ready. Are you ready?

Okay.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Take it away. Happy birthday.

MS. NEWSOME: Happy birthday? Sit back, relax, this is my report.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Remember, it's you, then lunch.

MS. NEWSOME: Actually, what it is is your report, what you sent to me for the Midwinter Report. And what you have been doing for the 100th celebration.

Madam President, wow. Our 100th Anniversary Celebration is in full swing. Our units, districts, and departments have put on their party hats -- well, it's kind of one -- turned on the ovens for the beautiful cakes, and showed the world why the American Legion Auxiliary has been a helping hand to the American Legion, our veterans, and the community.

Maybe you saw online that location, location, location is an advantage. Just ask some of the gals in this room who sell real estate.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: No names. When the Department of California was on the Price Is Right for two days --

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: -- ten members wore the 100th Year of Service t-shirt, and one member was even called on stage. I wonder how she did? Talk about spreading the word.

Maryland, too, produced its own t-shirt with 100 Years of Service, Not Self on the back and the Maryland logo on the front. Hey, I had to get a pitch in for my department, Maryland. The Fall Conference was a perfect place for over 250 Auxiliary members to put on their party hats, try to answer the trivia quiz, and eat cake. And ice cream. The National President had an opportunity, as she just blurped out a few minutes ago, to meet a real Rosie the Riveter and ride in semi-costume as a Rosie in the local parade. You might have seen some of that on Facebook.

Many of our departments have found the most senior members, or the members with the longest membership, and presented plaques or other recognition to them. Michigan is working on a time capsule and plans to collect Auxiliary or Legion pins to display at their Convention. They are also requesting that each unit select a member of their unit, past or present, to be recognized as their Member of the Century for her contribution to the ALA. One unit in Michigan decided its goal was AOK, Act of Kindness. Then the unit went one step further and encouraged each unit in the state to participate in Operation AOK and publicize the 100 years of service. That unit did over 200 acts of kindness. Very good, Unit 459.

Minnesota and Texas both compiled a centennial cookbook to accumulate funds for their celebrations. Both include photographs and a brief write-up from their respective history and both were a hit.

Nebraska in its report sent in over 30 pictures from units throughout the state. They showed many, many anniversary cakes, memorial items on display, proclamations from mayors and the governor, and costumes through the ages. Christmas decorations showed trees with flakes and poppies and poppy wreaths.

Unit 222 garnered great publicity as the Humboldt Standard newspaper gave the unit an article over one half of the front page on 10/31/19, one half of front page.

So many activities by so many members. I swear I think I gained 20 pounds just looking at all the pictures of cakes and dinners.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Madam President, I'm glad you're the one who ate them.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: While many great celebrations have taken place, many, many more are in the works. Just checking the President's page on Facebook shows many examples. I can't wait to get the year-end report, and National Convention will culminate our year-long celebration.

The National President reminded me to remind you that hopefully you will have your colors with you. We want a stage full of colors. Take note, it's not too late for your department to join our parade. NECs -- remember, I'm tough. That's what we were told. Please have your department chairmen keep the National Committee informed of your department activities. I have a list of those departments from whom I did not receive a mid-year report. I would be pleased to check with you after session.

But before then, you heard the teaser about the 100th shadowbox and now you are among the first to see it. Madam President, take it away.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Let's hit the button, Sam.

MS. NEWSOME: Please do.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Please do. Please do. We were here at 6:30 this morning.

VOICE: I have it on my computer, so --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Well, that's good. I'm glad you have it.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Well, while she's --

(Video.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Hi, I'm Nicole Clapp, National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. And I'm here at our National Headquarters in Indianapolis. I am so excited to be the Centennial 100th National President, and I have with me Linda Newsome, my good friend, who was the 75th Diamond Jubilee National President in 1995. So we are here today because it is our 100th Anniversary and we have a big reveal that we're going to share with you this morning.

So if you think about our Centennial, think of all the good works our members have done in 100 years of helping our veterans, military, and their families. So for us, it's about Service Not Self, and that's what it's always been as we defined the American Legion Auxiliary. So with that, we would like to share with you our 100 years of our history. This shadow box actually was created during Linda's year of National President for our 75th Anniversary and we've taken it one step forward to commemorate our 100th by adding and enhancing the original display.

So if you're here and you'd like to see this, please come to National Headquarters. You will see the mementos and the history of our organization and all

the mission related activities that we do for our veterans, military, and their families. So we want to wish you a Happy 100th Birthday, and we hope you come to National Convention to not only see our beautiful Headquarters, but to see our beautiful commemorative shadow box. So thank you and Happy Birthday!

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So, yeah, as Linda said, you are the first to actually see it unveiled. I have one request. Do not, and I repeat, do not post it until after National has it on our website later today and posted it on Facebook. Please. Fair enough? Okay. Because we had JP, our videographer, here this morning. So they've been working all morning on getting that ready for you. So we hope -- yes. And when you come back from lunch, there will be a special commemorative token for you to take home of the display. We, the lofty goal I wanted to do was to make sure it was at National Convention. Well, liability and risk, that outwon my, what I wanted to do. So we will do, we will have the video and the handouts also at National Convention so people that aren't here, as you are the prized first viewers to be able to be a part of it, and we will show it from the stage as well. Okay?

But I would be remiss if today I didn't have birthday cake. So it is time for us to break for lunch. And our lunch break runs till approximately right about an hour, about 12:45. So lunch is out in the hallway, is my understanding. And please use your time to explore, see National Headquarters, and please have a cupcake. Because I'm only having one today.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So unless there's any other business, we are in recess.

MS. BOONE: Okay, they go out that door --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Oh. Oh, okay. Go --

MS. BOONE: -- to get to the food.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So go through the Cavalcade, is my understanding, to get to lunch. Anything else that needs to be presented? Oh, hold on. Sam? Did you need them? Okay. Okay. Okay. So we are in recess. Have a wonderful lunch and we'll see you back here in right about an hour.

(Recess.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. What do you think? Noemi, can you come here?

(Pause.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. All right. Welcome back. All right. So this afternoon, some years at NECs, we have chairmen. I'll present some. We just have a select group. I wanted to make sure you had complete information that you need. So you will -- am I not on? Angie? Okay. This will work.

So welcome back. And realizing that this year, I specifically wanted to make sure that every chairman had an opportunity that could speak to you and for you to take the information back. I'm going to say this now, and I know it's in my

script for later, but there will be a link provided in an email of where you will be able to receive their written reports, as well.

So I asked them to do two things this year. I asked them to do a written report, as well as a verbal report. And the content will not be identical so it should help you generate even more ideas. And so, with starting, National Membership Chairman, Pam Ray from Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Good afternoon. While you all were at lunch, I put a wonderful little blow-out in front of you. So during this report, anytime you hear something exciting, I want you to blow it so I can see that you're listening, because, you know, after a good lunch, I don't want anybody to miss anything. And the National President at midnight didn't know what a blow-out was.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: No, I -- I sent her a note, and I knew she'd be up.

MS. RAY: I was, like, a horn. That's what I knew they were called.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: All right. Madam National President Nicole. A community of volunteers serving veterans, military and their families. Reading the mid-year reports has been fun and enlightening. It is clear our members are living up to our brand. There are so many unique recruitment ideas in every state. Challenges on the national, department and local levels have ignited the necessary flame to shoot off fireworks this year.

The Western Division's department membership chairmen have challenged one another for highest percentage, number of new members, number of new female veterans, number of new juniors and more. Their reward, a donation to an ALA program of their choice or the National President's special project.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: You blew that thing right off. Yeah, you broke it.

(Laughter.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, so I got a lot of hot air.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: The Department of --

(Inaudible.)

MS. RAY: I was so sad that they don't make them with noise anymore.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I know.

MS. RAY: I was so sad. The lady goes, oh, none of them make noise anymore.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: New Mexico, we had ones that made noise, because --

MS. RAY: Well, then, I need to go shopping in New Mexico, ma'am. I was sad.

The Department of Arizona recognizes newly chartered units by presenting their charter at a Department meeting along with a baby doll. The doll represents the need for nurturing and guiding a new unit. I loved that too.

The Department of Idaho is working very hard. During their recent conference, attended by our National President, they practiced scripts so they are ready for an upcoming Caring and Sharing week in April. NECs, please go back and promote this incentive. A kind word or a thought on the phone can make all the difference in the world. And Caring and Sharing is a personal contact situation, not an email situation, just a reminder. And there are sample scripts in the Action Plan, so please, look at those.

Interest forms have been a focus for the Membership Team this year. We call them the "gift of membership." They're giving us the information. They're giving us their desire, so what a gift just to call them and find them a unit nearby.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: You'll also hear that in the written report, but I just wanted to be sure that you do take all of that back, and, also, give a kudos to your Department Membership Chairman. They're working very hard on the interest forms this year.

The Department of California Membership Chairman reports utilizing a membership team. With such a large department that has many miles from one end to the other, this has proven very beneficial. The ladies of California have a great system for responding to interest forms they receive from National.

The DMCs, which is Department Membership Chairman -- it's easier to say the other -- shares the form with the team member closest to the potential member's address. The team member makes contact with the person on the interest form and connects them with a member of a nearby unit. They are so kind. They send us back success emails. So we know where they've signed this person up and that it was a successful attempt.

The Central Division's DMCs have also made challenges within their divisions. Many departments in the Central Division also report department challenges with the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion.

The Department of Iowa's membership challenge, who is certainly (indiscernible/ laughter) to me -- the American Legion family has decided that whichever part of the American Legion family garners the greatest percentage in the membership by department convention will select two members from the other two family components to sit in a dunk tank during convention.

So Department Chairman Judy is so confident that she's already gifted the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion membership chairman floaties and goggles.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: Judy's off to a wonderful start. As of February 19th --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But the Department (indiscernible) said he will not -- we don't want to see him in a Speedo.

MS. RAY: I think there's other options.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: I think this is a great idea. It's put her off to a wonderful start. As of February 19th, Iowa's membership percentage is 89.57.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Eastern Division Chairman, Laura Santino, has shared that one of her Department Membership team has a team member that is solely responsible for working interest forms. Each of their team members has their own specific assignment for the year, and I think that's a great idea, as well.

The Department of Florida reports having members in every unit in their department. That is an accomplishment. Thank you. And that is something to celebrate.

How about Tennessee? Let's play Cornhole. If a member brought membership to the Fall Conference, they got to play Cornhole to win patriotic jewelry. You don't know what Cornhole is, and you're from Iowa?

(Inaudible.)

MS. RAY: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, I know it as "beanbag."

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: We all talk about helping members feel more comfortable and informed. Hallettsville Unit 230 of the Department of Texas is a great example of how to do it. The unit pairs a new member with a unit buddy for the entire first year of their membership.

Kermit Unit, in Texas, has taken the time to send "thank you" or "thinking of you" cards to every member on their roster, whether they've paid for 2020 or not. The Unit Membership Chairman states, "encouraging words can be a contributing factor in keeping members." Kermit Unit also wrote letters to the American Legion spouses that were not members of the ALA. This has resulted in some new members.

South Dakota, a large state with many miles in between each town. I was amazed that the First District President went on a seven-day Fall tour, traveling over 500 miles. She visited 11 units and collected membership along the way. Many of these units said they had not received a visit in years, and it made them feel very valued. It was truly motivating.

Many departments are utilizing their 100th anniversary celebrations as a membership tool. Their celebrations have been open to the public. This is a win-win. Your community can celebrate you. They can learn about your organization and find out if they are eligible to volunteer and join the American Legion Auxiliary.

I've shared these stories so everyone here can go back to their departments, districts and units and share these stories. Perhaps one or two ideas would work in your department. We are so close to making our 100th year a success in membership by achieving 100 percent or more.

Let me update you on some numbers as of yesterday at 3:00. The number of new members, so far, 28,300. We are 11,344 members ahead of the same time last year, and we now have 29 newly or rechartered units. The Central Division has six; Eastern, three; Northwestern, one. Southern's very busy, 12. Western is seven for a total of 29. Current number of female veterans, 351. Number of male spouses, 510. I know. I'm excited about that.

National membership, as of yesterday at 3:15, was 84.65 percent, with a total of 510,881 members total. So -- okay. Percentage is 84.65. We have 510,881 total members. So, by my math, in six months, we've gotten 510,000. We only have 92,000 to get in the last six months. We can do that! We can do that!

Madam President Nicole, I think these numbers support how hard our members are working to meet and exceed their membership goals. NECs, I am asking you to, please, help us keep the momentum going. We still have six months, and we can do it. And we can all celebrate together in August.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Pam. As we say in our monthly newsletter, in the emails that come out every two weeks, that's the momentum, that we do want a sky full of fireworks come National Convention. So 95,000 -- 92,000. Yes, it was 95 two days ago. Sorry. But 92,000? Each one of us? We can do this. So thank you very much. I'm very proud of all of you.

All right. National Public Relations Chairman, Marty Peters, is unable to be with us so I've asked National Vice-President, Kathy Daudistel to, please, give her report.

MS. DAUDISTEL: I think we need to be louder at National Convention. You're going to have to find the noisier ones.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We might have it under control with something.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Good afternoon.

ALL: Good afternoon.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Wow. Good afternoon!

ALL: Good afternoon.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Boy, the cupcakes must have been really good.

(Laughter.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Okay. This is from Marty Peters, with apologizes to Elizabeth.

ALA, how do I promote you? Let me count the way. I promote you by ear, by mouth, by sight and to the height my soul can reach when out of sight. With proclamation, letters and grace, I promote you to the level of every days.

Veterans' needs, and missions, programs, light, I promote you online and on the airwaves right. I promote you in print and posters and praise. I promote you with the passion put to use. Public relations is my branding attire and my faith. I promote you with a love I'll never lose. Together with my unit, I promote you with each breath. Smiles, tears of all my life, and I do choose, I shall but promote you better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes of passion with passion in her words that have lived since the 1850s. This year, we begin a new century of service, and we need to rekindle the passion we experienced when we first joined and learned the amazing programs and service of which we could be a part.

Your '19-'20 PR Committee has asked the departments and units to pass on the passion. Our units have responded with amazing results. There are often no

surprises in these days of Facebook, Twitter and all social media, but just to remind you of a few exceptional PR activities.

December 12th, 2019, "come on down," was heard by 25 brand new members of California, Unit 741, Camarillo. Wow, and wow again. And they did it all over again and we're on the air again. Great exposure. Great idea. It took about a year of planning and preparing, but what a wonderful result as they were seen from "sea to shining sea" connecting with our members and potential members nationwide.

In the words of organizer, California Membership Chairman, Tracey Fercho, on the televised Hollywood Christmas Parade, Gingerbread Men were sponsored and wrangled by the American Legion Auxiliary and was mentioned by the announcer on the air, seen on Hallmark Drama and CW and more.

Several units report a weekly or monthly newsletter column and frequent radio broadcasts. Hawaii spent History Day at Pearl Harbor with a table and information about the ALA. Nevada managed to get a casino billboard featuring the ALA poppy in Riverside Resort in Laughlin.

Arizona Unit 53 and Buckeye member, Trina Stark, created a great video of the unit and Legion family in action on their Facebook page. It shows who we are, what we do and why we matter.

Unit 66 in Green Valley hosted an open house with the high school band performing and planted a tree in honor of the Centennial with great media coverage. Also be sure to see Arizona's "Me, Me, I'm a Public Relations Ambassador" video.

A unit in Texas got a street name changed to American Legion Lane after working over six months with the city leaders.

One unit is thinking outside the box. Unit 1990 in Nesbit, Mississippi, has a fundraising table in an auction house. The auctioneer points out items being offered by the unit and advertises proceeds which will benefit veterans, militaries and their families. I am sold on this idea. I don't have a gavel, but --

(Laughter.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: It's exciting to see our activities publicized in other organizational sites, like the Washington, DC's Capitol Hill Corner blog featuring photos of the 2019 Veteran's Day ceremony hosted by Family 8. Unit 8 president was pictured with a quote. So many proclamations. So many letters to the editor. Lots and lots of brandings, but not enough.

I see photos posted to Facebook where our units are doing amazing things, but there's no poster, no sign, no branding to remind the attendees and the public who we are. There are, of course, many units that have embraced the branding. We just need to pass on the passion about branding.

PR played a major role in the hundredth Centennial celebration these first six months, and I am confident it is continuing in 2020. Cakes, cakes and more cakes. Parade floats. Proclamations. Banners. And your PR committee strutted their stuff with branded computer bags.

Please emphasize the awards available to your members. Most units are doing PR but drop the ball when it comes to telling us about it. Taking the time to both write it down and email it would be a plus.

In your written report, that you don't have yet, you will find details on what you can do to help the PR Committee as you go back to your departments. I know that here all of us are "preaching to the choir," but we need you and your PR chair, as a duet, back in your department.

Please help everyone understand that PR is a part of everything we do. Every single program, every level of our organization should work closely with the PR person and with the PR person in the SAO Legion and the Riders. We must toot our own horn, sing our songs, and let's show everybody why we have existed for a century and beyond.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Kathy. I would ask that you keep Marty Peters and her family in your prayers. Her husband is close to the end stages of life. So she really wanted to be here, but we know where her heart needs and her passion has to be this week. So we will continue to pass on that passion.

National Chairman from Minnesota, Norma Tramm, Legislative Committee report, please?

MS. TRAMM: National President Nicole -- I love saying that -- and Auxiliary members, all. Does the work we do for Legislation actually make a difference? Well, this year, our Centennial year, I've asked for stories about how legislative changes have impacted our veterans.

Well, one veteran remembered a time when he could fight for our country, but he did not have the vote. In 1971, the 26th Amendment to the Constitution changed the voting age from 21 to 18. Many of you remember that, but maybe there's some in here that don't.

(Laughter.)

MS. TRAMM: This gave our veterans the pride to encourage their children to serve our country. Another service Navy family said that because of the help they received with schooling, his wife was able to get a degree in Social Services, and she now helps other spouses with applying for schooling.

And many other veterans, throughout their life, have furthered their education so that they could obtain better jobs because of the work that our members did to help pass that GI bill, and thank you, all, for doing that.

I'll be sharing some of these stories, as they are shared with me. Watch for them on the ALA Legislative Facebook page. I did not ask for names, and I did not ask for departments, just stories. How many of you have joined the ALA Legislative Facebook page? Okay.

Well, remember, when you go to join, you have to answer the questions, because if you don't, it's very difficult to get accepted, so answer those questions. They're really pretty darn simple. What unit do you belong to, and what department? So I think you all know the answers.

On the second Monday of each month, there is a video posted on the Legislative Facebook page, and we share a message then. The January video posted has the American Legion National Legislative Division Director, Melissa Bryant, sharing information. And I hope you've seen that, if you're on that page. And if you haven't, log on and watch it. It's an excellent video. All videos continue to be available on the Facebook page.

We shared, on December 20th, 2019, that President Trump signed the National Defense Authorization Act. The Widow's Tax was part of the NDAA. And after 18 years, it was finally successfully done, so that was a great accomplishment. And we thank our members for being so faithful to help out.

Now, when you advocate for a Bill, do your homework. Okay. That's really important, because we want our elected officials to know, you know, that we are knowledgeable. We want to go and share things. And we want to know, first of all, are they sponsors or co-sponsors of that Bill? So we need to acknowledge the fact that they are. And if they're not, then we'll start the conversation on why they should be advocates of that Bill and appreciate how they will help us work for the American Legion Legislative priorities.

Congress.gov, if you haven't seen it or looked there, go to Congress.gov because it has a plethora of information. And that will tell you if your elected officials are sponsors. And then it will tell you, who sponsored it, when they sponsored it and what's going on. Remember, one communication. Only one item at a time. We don't want to confuse our requests with other issues. We want to make one focus.

And when you go and visit them, we want you to fill out the American Legion Congressional Meeting Report, so do that, so that we make sure we have that recorded. In this election year, there'll be a great focus on campaigning.

So our members can advocate for our veterans and their families by hosting a meet the candidate night and having questions to determine how the candidates are going to support our American Legion Legislative agenda.

We must remember, we're non-partisan. When you wear our emblem, you make sure we're non-partisan. We advocate for our veterans, our service members and their families.

Now, Wisconsin ALA Legislative Chair, Char Kiesling, she was excited to report that Wisconsin Representative Katrina Shankland, she was alumni of ALA Badger Girl State. See where our members are going? Yay. She requested some help in writing a resolution, and the resolve clause reads, "Resolved by the Assembly, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature in recognition of the American Legion Auxiliary's ongoing commitment to community, state and nation by supporting veterans and their families does hereby commend the organization, upon the 100th anniversary of its founding."

And I know others have also had such proclamations. What a nice gesture. We're so proud of our heritage of "Service Not Self" for these 100 years and 100 more to come, at least. We're extremely excited that we have the Department Legislative Chair will be attending the Washington Conference in March, and the

information that they will be able to absorb and share in their departments will be long-lasting for our members.

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate this opportunity.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you. And if you haven't seen the Legion's Legislative priority sheet, it is out on the Facebook page, and there, I think, are ten priorities, plus, of course, the flag protection. So, please, get familiar with those, because that is what we collectively advocate for through the American Legion Family.

All right. Children & Youth Chairman, Lisa Williamson, from Alaska.
(Laughter.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: I normally can hear you a little louder than that.

So a birthday is a milestone that offers us the time and space to reflect on the past and how far we've come. We can look back at the American Legion Auxiliary's last 100 years with pride and look forward to the next 100 years with a sense of hope and optimism from our Nation's youth and Children & Youth.

Maria Montessori, and Italian educator, best known for the philosophy, the education that bears her name, once said, "Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of the future."

Sometimes we learn from the innocence of our youth just from their actions. And as such, we have been and need to continue to give them the appropriate recognition. Your service to this committee has been great. Let's talk about one aspect. The ALA Youth Hero and Good Deed Award.

The Youth Hero Award recognizes children who have helped others, demonstrating a physical act of valor. The Good Deed Award credits youth that demonstrate a leadership role in community service. Recipients of these awards exemplify the motto of "Service Not Self."

As we celebrate a century of service, the national Children & Youth Program has set a goal of recognizing 100 Youth Heroes and 100 Good Deed recipients. And guess what? As of yesterday, we reached our goal when it came to the Good Deed awards.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: We have reached 153 Good Deed awards so far, with six months to go. So maybe 300 is within the realm. However, we've only received 20 Youth Hero awards. Now, we understand Youth Hero awards are a little more difficult to qualify for, as it does require a physical act of valor, but don't be discouraged. Several departments are working hard to get these Youth Heroes recognized. Will your department be next?

And to quote Rosie the Riveter, a common thread here today, "We can do it." Let's showcase a few of these awardees, shall we? Recently, Utah Unit 139 -- Utah -- bestowed the Youth Hero Award to 14-year-old, Kyra Gibson. Her grandmother was driving when she had a stroke at the wheel. Thankfully, Kyra jumped into the front seat and was able to swerve the car to a stop, avoiding a head-

on collision. What calm in the face of extreme danger and very deserving of the Youth Hero Award.

Ten-year-old Zechariah Cartledge is a perfect example of a youth that is deserving of the Good Deed Award. This young man wanted to help the families of our fallen first responders in a meaningful way. So he runs one mile for every first responder who has made the ultimate sacrifice.

And in 2019, Zechariah helped to form Running for Heroes, a nonprofit organization honoring those who gave up their lives so that we may live in a better world. Good going, Florida. Sorry, I got a little choked up there.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Nice.

MS. WILLIAMSON: Wow! So, Florida Unit 344, also thought that Zechariah was very deserving of it. They drove nearly two hours to present Zechariah with this very deserving award. They used Facebook Live during the presentation. They interviewed him. And they even made sure local media was aware of the presentation.

Now, that's the perfect way to ensure our youth are recognized not just by us, but by their communities. When it comes to the Good Deed Awards, it can be as simple as shoveling snow. Members from the Department of Montana presented the entire Browning High School football team with a Good Deed Award when they did just that.

Teamwork is something that the Browning football team is used to on the field. And after a record-breaking snowfall, they decided to help out their local elderly. And it was a perfect workout too.

If you see stories like this, investigate the source and nominate the youth for the award. Our Youth Hero and Good Deed Award nomination form is located on the website. If you have a hard time finding it, it's also on the Children & Youth Facebook group. And you can always email me, and I'll make sure and get you a copy.

I challenge each of you to keep your eyes open. Use the tools at your disposal: social media, personal contact, news media or just a conversation at church with a friend to find out these standout youth and thoughtful children so they may get the recognition they so deserve.

And of course, once you have submitted a youth, remember your good PR skills and make a big to-do of it. Celebrate the child's success. Let your local media know. And there is also a Good Deed, Youth Hero news release template also on our Facebook page and the website.

There are a couple questions that have come up of late. One -- Can your unit submit more than one Youth Hero, Good Deed Award? Yes, please! Especially those Youth Hero Awards. Does it have to be within my state or located close to my own unit? No. But for the PR portion of this, it would probably make things a lot simpler, so I suggest you try to get it to a local unit. If you can't do it, please, take care of it and submit the young child for either award.

Remember: This isn't about us. It's about recognizing these wonderful kids. As Ronald Reagan once said, "There's no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit."

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Lisa. Vicki Koutz, Department of Indiana will now present to us our VA&R Report. Vick?

MS. KOUTZ: Thank you, Madam President. I want to congratulate all the departments for 100 percent reporting. The first half of the year has come and gone already, and the members have shown their true passion for our veterans once again.

Since 2006, the Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation have hosted a four-day winter sports retreat. And all the veterans and the active duty personnel with disabilities and their immediate families have been welcomed at no additional costs. Two posts and units join together and provide the veterans with a home-cooked meal and also gave the veterans an opportunity to socialize with other service members, friends and families.

Several departments have helped sponsor Honor Flights this year. Members have written letters to the veterans that were given out before they left on their once in a lifetime trip. Communities turned out for their send-offs and return trips home.

Our members have made sure that no veteran has been forgotten during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Veterans Day this past year. These days were celebrated by recognizing our special veterans. Dinners were delivered to the homebound veterans and their families, and veterans were adopted into nursing homes and State VA facilities by unit members who supplied them with special holiday cards along with the monetary gifts and other gifts.

Laying of wreaths for the Wreaths Across America was a highlight for many of our members this year, but especially for one Post family in Ohio. They rode bikes for two days for a total of 88 miles to raise money to purchase 404 wreaths, which I thought was very neat. I wouldn't be able to walk after that, but that's really a neat idea.

The Arizona American Legion family members purchased a golf cart, so their residents using wheelchairs at the Tucson VA Home could be driven to their appointments instead of having to be pushed in their wheelchairs.

Alaska members escort their veterans to their cars when the temps are 35 below zero or colder. I can't imagine. They go pick them up. They bring them to events at their Post. They take them to doctor's appointments. They take them shopping, and they even attend each and every unattended funeral.

Their department chairman stated, "In Alaska, they aren't just our veterans, they are our reasons, reasons for getting up and doing, just like they did for us."

Taking the theme of the Centennial to heart, units in Illinois incorporated the 100 Into Service Projects such as 100 pairs of socks for female and male homeless veterans, 100 cans of food for local homeless shelters and 100 hours volunteering at VA facilities. And I've heard others that's done that from other departments that they've used that.

Most every department has volunteers, whether regular or occasional, who serve our veterans by doing a variety of tasks. Everything from giving them juice, coffee and snacks, while visiting the VA to make goody bags. Some, like Erma Worley, who is a Redcoat Ambassador at the Lake City VA Medical Center in Lake City, Florida. She loves serving our veterans when they come into the lab where she volunteers. She says she is married to a veteran, and she still thanks him every single day.

At this time, Madam President, I would like to recognize, I think, we have two of the committee members here. Anne Crawford and Janice McCloud. If you would, please stand. They're on the VA Committee this year. We had an awesome time at the National Veterans Creative Arts. Did everybody receive their Auxiliary Magazine, the latest issue? I got mine when I got here because mine is at home, and I've been gone, so I picked it up quickly when I got here.

So the National Veterans Creative Arts was one of the highlights of that magazine, so I hope you've all taken time to read that and realized how important that is to us. I love the program. I am excited to see what the second half of this year brings. A special thanks to all our volunteers for their dedication so far. Keep up the good work.

This concludes my report. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And if you go out on Facebook, you'll see me driving that golf cart she referenced in Tucson. All right. We have a focus on National Leadership through our committee chairman, Diana Sirovina, from the Department of Wisconsin.

MS. SIROVINA: Madam President Nicole. When we were young, I just bet we all thought our goal in life was to be a leader in the American Legion Auxiliary. Now, that may be true for one or two of us, but most of us came into a leadership position in a much different way. If your path was anything like mine, it was rather being "voluntold" than being a willing volunteer.

Way back then, I was just happy to be a card-carrying member without any commitment or anything to the Auxiliary. It was my late mother getting involved, being elected unit president and not really offering me a choice, that finally brought me to a more active role.

I'm certain that are lots of you that became involved in a leadership role that you have today in many different ways. I would bet that all of you were able to participate in some kind of educational classes right in your own department.

Mid-year reports from all around the country indicated a wide variety of educational opportunities offered to their members. If you noticed, I avoided using the word, leadership, in my last comment. People hear the word leadership, and cringe. When they hear the "L" word, they want to get away as far as possible from it. They don't see it as a way to be better educated. They see it as having to take an officer role and run things.

As you know, the past few years have brought great changes to our educational programs in the form of expanded Mission Trainings and the ALA

Academy. These programs have been carefully crafted to provide new ways to improve the member engagement experience.

Many members have taken advantage of these educational opportunities to become more knowledgeable about our organization. One of those training opportunities is the Senior Basics Course. If you've taken this course, you know it has the basics of meetings and protocol and gives a pretty good account of how the Auxiliary got started and significant events in our history.

Unfortunately, it ends somewhere around 2012. And if you remember taking the course, you also remember it's 100 questions long and somewhat on the dry side at times. Just a little. As we celebrate our Centennial this year, it seems like a great time to retire this course and replace it with something entirely new. After talking with members around the country these past months and asking what they would like to see included in the program, I can tell you their answers were as varied as the places they lived.

One thing that was the common answer was they wanted something new. Imagine that. So new and improved is what they will get.

The new program will focus on several areas important to the way we can train our current and future leaders. We want them to become confident in their knowledge of the Auxiliary so they will be able to share their enthusiasm with others in their units and their communities and ultimately attract new members.

We will continue to celebrate our Centennial by making members more aware of the history of our programs, offering pointers on the importance of running a good meeting, and most importantly, how to be an effective leader. Each of the subjects will be a separate module with scripts and coordinating PowerPoint presentations. And having smaller, less cumbersome presentations will allow units to have group sessions, perhaps at one of their meetings, which is something they asked for.

As we work toward the Centennial goals of teaching our members the value of their membership, these new educational classes will also fulfill the goal of getting more members interested in taking leadership roles.

The program is in the developing stage right now, and we hope to have it available on the website very soon. And one thing that happened since I wrote this report, Kristin Hinshaw and I have been working back and forth on our Facebook page. And as of about a week ago, it's an approval to post on the Facebook page, because it was getting so many things about so many different things around the country. I know pancake breakfasts in Connecticut are really great, but I mean, the pancake is going to be cold by the time I got there, you know. So in an effort to focus more on leadership, our committee is going to be posting a topic on there for discussion.

Kristin put the first one out on Thursday, I believe, and within an hour, there were 19 people that had responded and put things out there. So we're going to be doing that, and kind of doing, like, a topic of the week for people to post their ideas rather than their events.

So that's something that happened since I wrote this, but. An interesting comment I found when I was doing research for various leadership programs says, "A leader can only lead as far as they have traveled themselves." This needs to serve as a reminder that we all need to continue to learn new things so we can mentor others to become active and knowledgeable members for a stronger American Legion Auxiliary for the next hundred years.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Diana. Our Americanism National Committee Chairman, Denise Conrad, from the Department of Ohio.

MS. CONRAD: Good afternoon, President Nicole, members and guests. Across the nation, our members are excited to catch the ALA Americanism fever and promote Americanism program. There are a couple of stories for the mid-year reports this year that our Centennial American -- from our Centennial Americanism team that really show promotion and implementation of the ALA Americanism program.

For example, in the Department of Nebraska, Chairman Sharon Scott, has developed an essay contest guideline to help her unit members better understand how to engage the students and implement the essay contest.

In Kentucky, Chairman Nancy Moses, has a Facebook page where she periodically asks a flag etiquette or an Americanism question, and then all those that respond with the correct answer has their name put into a drawing. The name will be drawn for \$100 at the department convention.

In Indiana, Chairman Brittany Schofield attended the first Juniors meeting of the year so that she could talk to the girls about how they could help with the Auxiliary Americanism initiatives. She also talked about the patch that they could earn and how to obtain it.

In Ohio, the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary joined together and support an Americanism in Government test that is administered to an average of 65,000 high school students between the grades of 10 and 12. It contains 50 questions regarding city, county and state government, with one essay question at the end.

The top 18 students are awarded an all expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for a week. So they have three boys and three girls from each grade level. Wisconsin and Indiana, I believe, have similar contest programs in their departments also.

In Alabama, one of the ALA units supports a bulletin board in the community center with significant military dates on it, and if there's any kind of special event that's going to honor that day in the community.

In Georgia, they proudly boast former resident, Moina Michael, the "Poppy Lady." A memorial tribute is held in her honor. And this year, President Nicole had the opportunity to attend.

This other one, in Puerto Rico, my heart just goes out for them. Even with all the earthquakes and all of the issues that they're having and the conditions that

they're in right now, the Auxiliaries there are still making it a priority to make sure that every tattered school flag is removed, replaced and the flag is disposed of properly, teaching students respect for Old Glory, even under the conditions that they're in. Now, that's amazing.

(Applause.)

MS. CONRAD: There are so many great things our units are doing to promote the Auxiliary Americanism program. Just a couple of reminders for you, as NECs, I'm asking you to take back to your departments.

Make sure to encourage your units to continue to read their program Action Plan. There's still a lot of the year yet to go. They have lots of time that they can still do a project for Americanism. They don't have to do everything. They just have to do something small.

Gently remind the units that the "Star Spangled" Kids is now under Americanism and not Children and Youth, so that they report it under Americanism so we can get it reported under the right program.

(Indiscernible comment.)

MS. CONRAD: "Star Spangled" Kids is no longer a Children and Youth initiative. It is under the Americanism program. I always associate it with, when you think of Star Spangled, you think of red, white and blue, you think of Americanism, so to me, that makes sense, but that's just me.

Especially in the year of a presidential election, remember to remind your unit members that they need to vote, and they need to help those that are at home, need a ride to the polls. They need to reach out to those people to make sure that they're getting to the polls to be able to exercise that right. If they are not voting to help find a solution, then they are part of the problem, what I call, "no voice by choice." So make sure that you get them to the polls.

Finally, please continue your efforts to encourage our units to report, report, report. Thank you for all that you do to continue the American Legion Auxiliary mission and its programs, because all of you play a vital role in that.

I do have one thing to share. The American Legion, for the first time this year, will be underwriting the Americanism Chairman to attend and participate at the Oratorical Finals.

(Applause.)

MS. CONRAD: So we hope that this is going to continue moving forward, so maybe if I do a good job, we'll be guaranteed somebody gets to do it next year. So that's exciting news. It has always been an option for the Americanism Chairman to attend and to participate, but being underwritten by the Legion this year, I already have received my call-in letter. It's the end of April, so it's amazing. It's an absolute great thing that we're going to do together, now, so thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Denise. And if you're in the area, usually every year they're looking for volunteers to help at the Oratorical. And it is the weekend of April 17th through 19th, here in Indy.

Okay. Deb Albers, from Nebraska, our National Education Chairman. Deb? And you look very Nebraska-like today, very Huskerish.

MS. ALBERS: Thank you. Yes, I do. Oh.

(Laughter.)

MS. ALBERS: Is it okay if I do this?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yeah, do whatever you like.

MS. ALBERS: Okay. I can walk around the room? Oh, no? Oh, okay.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You've got a time limit, so --

MS. ALBERS: Oh, okay. It's 2020, and we're headed for the second century of the American Legion Auxiliary, right? Our 2020 vision is clear for the future. I cleaned my glasses right before I came up here. And today, this Education Chairman is talking about scholarships.

Well, I'm very, very proud of the fact that scholarships help students all across our country, and at the unit, the department and the national level. And it's pretty exciting. And you know this, because if your unit didn't give a scholarship, certainly, you gave it at the department level.

And this is what I glimpsed, in 52 of the reports I received -- I think that's 100 percent, isn't it?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Right, 52 is out of 52.

MS. ALBERS: Okay, good. One question I ask of each of the department chairman is, how did you promote the new Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship? And I sent them each a Christmas card, and I asked for that question. Hmm. I got pretty good answers.

Now, the new scholarship is designed for past Juniors that have continued their membership as Senior members. Applicants must have had membership as a Junior or Senior the past three years, and now are currently Senior members.

This scholarship is intended to reward our past Juniors on their continued membership while in college. It's sometimes hard for college students to find scholarships, and this was an excellent foresight by our leaders, as well as a promotional tool for membership. So thank you for that.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I need to thank --

MS. ALBERS: And thank you, Norma.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- Norma and Lisa and Kristin.

MS. ALBERS: It was very good. Well, a lot of the departments referenced making packets for their units with all the National Scholarship information in it, adding to scholarship matrixes, that kind of thing.

Units reported making scholarship packets for guidance counselors. That's pretty typical.

Some promoted their Junior member loyalty scholarship at Fall and mid-Winter conferences through their newsletters and on their websites.

Arizona promoted scholarships at Girls State and at Oratorical events. I thought this was a great idea.

Now, my eyes widened when I read it in the departments, like, Virginia and Florida --members made a special effort to talk to their past Junior members that were now in college and tell them about the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship.

Now, at that moment, I realized, probably this year the best way to do that scholarship was word-of-mouth at the grass-roots level. And I got a little worried. I hope we have a lot of scholarships out there. It's easy to take a packet of information to the guidance counselors, but it's a lot harder to get it to college students.

So I'm asking all of you, this next year -- well, right now, talk to your Juniors right now and let them know about this scholarship, because it's going to be hard -- it's hard to get that word out to all of those Junior members. How about Senior members that have become -- no, Junior members that now have become Senior members. Okay.

Now, I'm going to talk a little bit about funding. Funding scholarships was not something mentioned in most of the reports I received, but I loved hearing about Dollars for Scholars in California, where they pass the mortarboard hat -- and I thought about doing that today -- to collect funds.

At the national level, individual donations are coming in slowly with individual donations to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship at \$3,330. And this was December 31st. And the National Scholarship Fund at \$1,163. That was December 31st. We did get a grant from the Child Welfare Foundation of \$60,000, pretty exciting.

And I'm updating this too, hot off the press, as of January 31st, because for the Spirit of Youth Scholarships, we have \$4,475. And the National President Scholarship Fund at \$86,000, but that counts the first half of that grant. So that's pretty good. I think it's improved a lot since then.

(Applause.)

MS. ALBERS: You can blow your horns. That's pretty exciting.

Earlier this year, I wrote a blog about two past recipients of our scholarships. And each of them expressed a very deep gratitude for receiving them. These two individuals were both Senior members. They're both Senior members right now of our organization. And I think we'll be looking to them to the future of this organization.

And this Junior Member Scholarship is a really good tool for membership in your organization. Get them to promote this -- or get them to continue their membership by promoting this scholarship. I think it's a really great way.

Okay. I think we're going to be looking to the future, right? Right. And we're seeing clearly in 2000 -- no, in 2020, with our scholarship program. So thank you very much. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Deb. Speaking of Junior members, it's a perfect segue to our Junior Activities Chairman, Suzanne Knapp, from Michigan.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She broke the mic.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She totally broke it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Break it, drop it.

MS. KNAPP: Let's see if I can not break it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay.

MS. KNAPP: Madam President Clapp, National officers, National Chairmen, Executive Committee and Members. The Junior ALA members have been keeping busy working the mission. Their enthusiasm for working fundraisers, crafting and service projects has gone above and beyond.

I'm happy to report that our ALA Juniors are making a difference. They have been promoting the ALA programs, attending ALA Girls State, inviting their friends to events and service projects, as well as making an impact in the communities in which they live.

Yard sales, bake sales, sock hops and spaghetti dinners are just a few of the fundraising ideas that they have been reporting. We have had a total of 126 Junior members attend the National Junior Meetings, a little bit down from last year of 131. But I understand Junior membership is slightly down, also, and I'm really hoping that means our Junior members have graduated into Senior membership.

Adaptive Sports was the theme for the guest speakers of the National Junior Meetings this year. And let me tell you, the girls have absolutely loved all of the speakers. The Juniors learned in Baltimore about the Paralympics from a blind athlete -- kayaking -- oh, excuse me, that was Kalamazoo. I take that back. Kayaking and canoeing was in Baltimore. Yoga, biking and many, many more sports. They were amazed at the idea of a blind athlete being able to play soccer or hockey, among many others.

The speaker brought a soccer ball in their -- they have, like, bells in them and other equipment that he passed around. And the look of amazement on the faces as he was speaking, and the ball was going around, he could tell exactly where that ball was the whole entire time he was speaking to the Juniors.

We also got to see and feel an authentic Paralympic medal. And let me tell you -- his biggest concern, "where's my medal?" At the end, "where's my medal? I want to make sure it's in my bag." He was very worried about that.

The speakers answered any question, including, how do you use a cell phone. Let's just say that he can understand speaking at a rate 100 times faster than any other person in this entire world, because I'm going to tell you, he kept turning it down and slower and slower. I have no idea how he could understand what they were speaking.

Another speaker brought a hand-bike that all our Juniors and even Madam President got to try out.

The Juniors are truly amazed at what sports can be done by any athlete with just a little bit of modification.

Service projects reported this year have been off the charts. The Juniors have collected toiletries, socks, gift cards and many other items to not only make bags for the veterans and homeless, but also, to take with them when they visit VA Hospitals and Homes.

The service project this year at the National Junior Meetings was to decorate wheelchair and walker bags. We have some very creative artists in our Junior members. The bags were then given to the adaptive sports speakers, and they were distributed to local veterans.

The online Junior leadership course has been up, online and has been reaching not only our Junior members, but our Senior members, as well. The Senior members have liked taking the course, so that they have the knowledge when they help the Junior members take the course, they understand what's going on. Word is spreading that the course is interactive, and hopefully, we will have most of our Junior members, if not all, have taken that course in some form.

The Patch Program continues to grow. The biggest problem this year seems to be who the units need to contact in order to order and receive their needed patches. We have worked this out on an individual basis by working with the units and guiding them to their department chairman to get those patches.

The Junior Activities Committee has tried to raise awareness of the new Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship, and you've heard that preached a lot this year. We're happy to say that on social media, it is being shared, open, read and hopefully applied for with an overabundance. What a great way to reward our Junior members who have become Senior members by furthering their education to become productive, knowledgeable and patriotic citizens of our nation.

This year, I am happy to report that we have had no major issues we've had to resolve -- yay! Throughout the last six months, we have had requests for ideas on how to rejuvenate or start a new Junior group. We have offered ideas. We have tried to get them in contact with their Junior members near their location and encourage them to, please, don't be discouraged, as it does take time to get an active Junior group together.

We have one unit signed up 12 newborns this year. In a few years, they should have a very active Junior group. Another question that is being asked, as we travel around to the Mission Trainings, if there was any kind of training or guidance for a new Junior Activity chairman. Also, requests have been made for ideas to help rejuvenate a Junior group, as the same thing over and over and over gets very boring to the Junior girls.

The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Facebook page continues to be a great resource for our members to learn what our Juniors are doing all over the country and to inspire our members who work with our Juniors with fun, new and creative ideas.

Madam President, if you have any leftover cake, I'm sure the Juniors will be happy to help you eat that, as they have shown that through Mission Training.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes, they have. They've --

MS. KNAPP: And that concludes my report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Suzanne. They have helped eat the cupcakes, that is for sure.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We now have our National Security report from our Chairman from the Department of California, Melanie Taylor. Mel?

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Madam President. The American Legion Auxiliary's National Security Program promotes a strong national defense by supporting service members and their families. Supporting active duty military, the

National Guard and the National Guard Reserves and their families are who we should be focusing on this program.

Confusion sometimes exists whether our time and money should be reported as National Security or Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. So remember to ask yourself, does my time and money help an active duty service member and their family? If so, then report it on National Security. Or does it help a service member who has retired, is no longer in the military and is now a veteran? If that is the case, then report this under VA&R.

In looking at the 2017-2022 National Security Program's Action Plan, you saw that we offered three national awards. This year's 2019/2020 annual supplement only shows two national awards being offered, the unit and the department awards.

The department award that was titled, Military Spouse Mentor Award is no longer being offered, and that was due to a lack of submittals. Although assisting military spouses and getting and maintaining employment is still an objective of the National Security Program, please remember to continue and volunteer and assist in any way you can.

Work with the American Legion at job fairs. Create a scholarship fund for that spouse who is learning a new skill. Work with the local school district and the guidance counselors and offer to be on-call for assistance with military children.

The American Legion Auxiliary will continue to support the National Security Program of the American Legion. We do this by completing CERT or Community Emergency Response training courses; signing up for the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts; donating blood; getting involved in the Citizens Corps Council; ensuring that we are prepared for all natural disasters; whether it be floods or fire, that I can personally attest to; or hurricanes by collecting supplies and preparing emergency preparedness kits; hosting a POW/MIA ceremony with your Legion; honoring the ROTC and JROTC cadets; and assisting with raising funds for Operation Comfort Warriors -- thank you, Jimmy Koutz -- which provides necessary supplies needed for our wounded service members.

Madam President, I want to thank you for the hard-working women that are on this committee, and I would like to introduce them as this time. Diane Spencer is our Vice-Chairman from the Department of Kentucky. Marcia Hague (ph) is a Committee member from the Department of Illinois. Tamara Opland, Committee member from the Department of Minnesota. Patti Lach, Committee member from the Department of Maryland. Joan Chwala, the Central Division Chairman from the Department of Wisconsin. And Joanie fell in January and fractured her ankles in several places. And she is just -- keep her in your prayers, please. She's struggling.

Sandy Seacat from the Eastern Division, Chairman from the Department of New York. Eva Wallace, Northwestern Division, Chairman from the Department of Washington. And, yes, I did say Washington. Dara Oliver, Southern Division Chairman from the Department of Florida. Anne Parker, Western Division Chairman from the Department of South Carolina. Thank you, ladies. Thank you, Madam President for this.

So NEC ladies, when you go home, please, I ask, when you go back to your departments, please share what you have learned here today. I want to thank all of your departments for the hard work you have done this past six months in National Security, and I look forward to reading your end-of-the-year reports and all that you have accomplished this year.

Madam President, that concludes my report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Melanie.

And say a prayer for the National Security Committee as a whole. They have had to have three replacements, all because of health. So two of them in this room are replacements that are helping us out, so I think that committee has had the most change. We were going around the table last night, and they were all comparing whose committee. So when you look back at those appointment changes, National Security, so thank you, Mel, for taking it all in stride.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President, does that mean that we get extra cupcakes at the end of the year.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You can have extra cupcakes today.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Cupcakes are on me.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Thank you. All right. I have never seen so many different looking poppies in my entire life. Beth McGinn, our Daily Poppy Reference, National Chairman.

MS. MCGINN: Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You are welcome.

MS. MCGINN: As I stand here 100 years after Ms. Moina Michael, the "Poppy Lady," first advocated for the recognition of the red poppy as a symbol of remembrance, honoring the fallen in World War I, I can't help thinking that she would be so astounded that her simple red flower would one day be embraced by almost 600 American Legion Auxiliary members across the nation.

I believe she would be so humbled, as I was, reading the Mid-Year poppy reports from all the departments and honored that ALA members are continuing her legacy by raising funds for disabled and hospitalized veterans and now our military and their families too, by distributing not only the traditional red poppy, but a variety of unique, non-traditional poppies that are created by veterans and Auxiliary members. And like Nicole said, there must be -- there's every kind of poppy you can think of out there.

What do you think she would say about the millions of dollars raised each year and the way members use their poppy funds? There have been questions this year about donating to organizations that support our veterans and military, but these issues have been resolved with detailed explanations on why they can or cannot be used. And I encourage all units to get a copy of the Poppy Program Guide to help you determine how those poppy funds can or cannot be used.

Units reported using the resources at the website, like the new poppy coloring book, which is amazing, the poppy bookmark and other handouts that are

used at distribution sites and community fairs to educate donors how 100 percent of their donations are used to assist our veterans and our military and families.

At Fall and mid-Winter conferences, departments offered poppy making demonstrations and presentations to educate their members and they held poppy wreath centerpieces and hat contests. They have all been posted on Facebook so I'm hoping that you all saw them. Poppies have been incorporated in countless department and unit Centennial celebrations.

How excited Ms. Michael would be to know that Congress has designated the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day, which is May 22nd this year. So start planning your event at your unit or your department level and include your Post family to celebrate the poppy and to promote awareness of its importance within our communities.

Thank you, Ms. Michael for inspiring generations to continue supporting and honoring our veterans, military and their family with a tiny, red flower.

So in closing, I do have a special project this year. I'm going to drop one on the floor. I'm asking that every department create a poppy that represents their department in some way or another. I do know from the reports that some people are holding contests. Their units are making the poppies. And they're coming up, and, maybe at their -- what's coming up, Spring -- Spring conference, they will choose which poppy.

And I'm happy to say, today, I received my first poppy. I'm going to create a cork board of the map of the United States, and your poppy will be on there. It can't be more than two inches, like this one, but -- and I will present it to Madam President Nicole as a Centennial poppy.

But I wanted to tell you, I had my first submission today from birthday girl, from Puerto Rico.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: Now, her poppy -- I have to tell you, her poppy has a little bell in the middle, because they are the bell of the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, so that will be placed there. The other sample I have, of course, is from Delaware, and that has the ladybug, which God forbid -- I mean, I don't know why, but it's the state bug. But anyway, thank you, Carol Faley, for making those.

So I'm hoping to have this big map with everybody's poppy from every department, a representative poppy. Any questions, you can send me an email. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You're welcome.

MS. MCGINN: All right.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So we are looking to have our own poppy field across America.

Okay. All right. Girls Nation report is by the Chairman, Wendy Riggle, from the department I'm very familiar with, Iowa.

MS. RIGGLE: Greetings, National President Nicole, Officers, NEC members and guests. American Legion Auxiliary Girls State, Girls Nation is proud to announce that we did have mid-year reporting of 100 percent by January 14th.

Sometimes, it's felt like a "Chinese fire drill." You thought everyone understood the goal, but at any point, one department had exited the car and failed to return. One had forgot how to open the door and get out. One got in the car next to you, and the last one ran around and got in the car but forgot their report.

However, we got them all corralled and got a report from every department, not by the reporting deadline, but within about a week afterwards. So next round-up, is annual reports due May 15th, so NECs, please, remind your Girls State people about that deadline, and as Norma and I were talking last night, they might as well write the report right now.

Their program isn't going to happen before then, so they already have it planned. And wouldn't it be great if we had 100 percent reporting a month in advance? That'd be wonderful! So it was great fun to read the reports from the ALA Girls State Directors and Chairmen as to what interesting things they were doing.

My written report shows our program's continue to work toward the goals of the Action Program. But today, I'd like to share some special things that some of the programs are doing.

Our greatest assets is our dedicated volunteers working the ALA Girls State programs. One such person is Carol Dalton who is a 41-year staff member at Idaho Girls State, who operates the Girls State store and, apparently, dresses up as characters, even Wonder Woman, for the entertainment for the staff and girls.

And, yes, we all have long-time, dedicated volunteers who serve our ALA Girls State programs, but if you don't write them down and tell us, we can't recognize them.

Providing an awareness of the ALA mission is evidenced by our service projects, and our departments are doing a variety of things. Arizona has delegates bring socks. A hundred pair were donated in 2019 and they were taken to the homeless shelters and Stand Downs. But North Carolina got them one better. They reported, they had donations of an entire van load of socks in 2019. I can't imagine that.

Montana provides a USO show at their college and brings veterans from the local VA for the event.

Indiana took the service dog project to a new level when they invited the veteran and his service dog to talk to their delegates, and then asked him to stay for several more days. His inspirational story expressed how he feels his service dog actually saved his life and helps him deal with issues on a daily basis.

Kansas, Virginia and Utah mentioned the 100th anniversary of the women's right to vote, women's suffrage movement, and are planning to incorporate that information into their 2020 program.

Did you know that Utah was the first state to elect a female U.S. Senator who defeated her own husband in the Congressional race? So they have quite a story to tell, don't they?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pillow talk.

Along with that, many of our ALA Girls State programs are doing Auxiliary moments, which provide highlights of all the ALA programs.

The Tennessee program runs during Memorial Day, so they stress the importance of commitment to veterans and the role the ALA plays in that.

In 2018, the Missouri citizens passed a Bill that required a mandatory donation for the 2019 delegates, which was donated to the Missouri Veterans Homes and Hospitals.

In Massachusetts, they announced that any eligible citizen that wants to become a member of the ALA go pay their Junior dues. Social media continues to be a major impact on our programs. We're dealing with teenagers -- what do they like?

Illinois uses a Snapchat for the girls, which is a highlight for them.

And Louisiana does a live stream during their program so parents and others can view the program.

Most programs boast of Facebook pages, Snapchat and other social media sites that I've never even heard of. But they share it with the information about their programs.

ALA Girls States also have addressed their legal issues. Colorado addressed the ban on smoking and vaping by educating their staff. Buckeye ALA Girls State renamed their chain of command document to chain of communication and has seen a positive impact on their staff.

In Oregon, they had an issue where leadership change resulted in a lack of documentation of the program, so they implemented the "writing everything down policy" for the future.

South Dakota tragically lost their director in December, Cheryl Hovorka, who was one of our committee members. So Assistant Director Tiffany is stepping in to take over that program. This is a lesson to all of us that we must make sure that our programs have a succession plan in place.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That's a good point.

MS. RIGGLE: More and more programs are partnering with the American Legion Boys State to save money, increase participation, raise awareness of the programs and to secure better contracts with their universities. They report success with this partnership and increased delegates and cost savings.

I just want to finish with one short story that came from Rhode Island ALA Girls State. At the talent show on the night of graduation, one girl got "stage fright" going up the stairs to sing and was immediately surrounded by a multitude of participants and escorted onto the stage.

They formed a circle around her, and as she began to sing the National Anthem, they opened up the circle, leaving her in the center. Her rendition was so extraordinary and heartfelt, she moved many in the audience to tears. The director relayed at graduation that this exemplifies the final pledge of the ALA preamble -- "To sanctify and consecrate our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

Thank you to each one of you that in some ways helps make the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and Girls Nation Program a success. It truly does take an Auxiliary village to raise an ALA Girls State citizen. This concludes my report.

However, National President Nicole asked me if I would help her out with a project, so my question to all of you is, is there any women veteran in the group

here? If there is, can you raise your hands? Okay. So keep your hand raised. So who knows a woman veteran? Okay, great. I got lots of pickings.

Okay. Here's my woman veteran. And there aren't \$100 bills in here, sorry. We'll just go down the line, and we'll pass these out, and I'll explain what they are. So at Girls Nation, each one of the committee members actually gets a chairmanship. So this year, one of our chairmen, and it is Marge Richardson from the Department of Arizona, and she's in the Poppy Chairmanship. And what she will do -- or what she's going to do -- what one of her job -- there's somebody over here? Okay.

What she's going to do on Saturday night, which always happens is, they create a wreath. We tell about the poppy story to the girls. We explain the poppy story, how it was -- how the poppy was created, why it's the symbol of the ALA. And the girls each take a poppy and put it on the wreath. This poppy wreath, then, is taken to Arlington on a Sunday morning and laid at the Tomb of the Unknown.

And so, Marge -- a very lofty goal, which I wasn't sure, but she took it upon herself -- she wanted to have all of the poppies created by women veterans. So if you have an envelope, we would like you to find a woman veteran in your state. There are materials in there to make the poppy. There is an envelope to mail the poppy back to Marge. And there is a little piece of paper. She wants the name and the state that the veteran is from.

And then she is going to match up, if I -- if she has two poppies of Iowa, then Iowa Senators will get those poppies, and then any additional would be put on there. So there are complete instructions. I know nothing about crafts. I wasn't sure how it would work. But I took it out. I made it in about a minute. I even told Marge I wasn't very crafty, and she sent me this gift of this little (indiscernible), and she's like, Wendy doing crafts.

(Laughter.)

MS. MCGINN: Thank you to all of you for doing that. We appreciate it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you very much. Thanks, Wendy.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. We know AEF is always upon us and particularly this year once again with all the tragedies that are going on in our world and natural disasters. So Vickie Thrower-Mills, national chairman from Alabama. Vickie, the floor is yours.

MS. THROWER-MILLS: Madam President Nicole, national officers, national chairmen and members and guests.

Congratulations is in order for the National AEF program as we had 100 percent mid-year reporting. And that was on behalf of the entire committee.

I'm going to share with you a little bit of history about the AEF program. As our 100-year celebration takes place for the American Legion Auxiliary, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund celebrates their 50th year anniversary. The AEF national grant assistance program was established in 1969 as a project by National President Marcella Davidson from the Department of New Mexico. It was initially funded by the generous legacy gift from Helen Coby-Small of Burlington, Wisconsin. It continues to this day as a source to help our members in need.

In 1981, the program was expanded to include a fund to help members due to unexpected life changing circumstances such as death, illness of a spouse, divorce, desertion, which is allowed for short-term assistance to be provided to help our members obtain the skills needed when all other sources of financial aid has been exhausted.

Today, we've come a long way. The first AEF grant was for the total of \$150. And today, members may be eligible to receive up to \$2400 as determined by the grant committee.

Since September the 1st of 2019 until January the 31st of this year, the AEF program has provided members with \$79,578 for a total of 61 approved grants so far. (Applause.)

MS. THROWER-MILLS: We have received \$50,390 in donations since September the 1st for the AEF program and our national organization.

I want to share with you a few highlights of the fundraisers from each department -- or, from not each department but from a few of them. We'd be here for a while.

In the Department of Ohio, Patricia Taylor, department chairman, reported during the 2019 Memorial Day weekend, portions of Ohio were hit by multiple tornadoes where several communities were damaged by one or more of those tornadoes. As a result, this was devastating for some. It is because of incidents like these that our members of the American Legion Auxiliary appreciate the Auxiliary assistance that the ALA has in place for those who qualify. And their department began working as an American Legion family with juniors, American Legion riders, Auxiliary and legionnaires working together to reach a goal of \$6500 for the year. And at this time, they're only \$254 away from that goal. So congratulations, Ohio.

Department of Indiana, Mary Edwards, the department chairman, she challenged their districts and asked which one will be stepping up to fill the boots and the shoes and the socks for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. She encouraged them to include the juniors. One unit dedicated their meeting to the AEF program. They decorated high-heeled shoes for donations and they dedicated the meetings -- I'm sorry. They dedicated high-heeled shoes for donations. Indiana had one district that sent a sock around with the slogan, "Stepping out of our boots and socking it to them". That was a great fun idea. They discovered that making this fun has inspired the Auxiliary and others to get to this program. Hopefully, the high heels, boots, socks being passed around will be filled with large amounts of money for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

In the Department of Michigan, Linda Wallace, chairman, had an article published in the January 2020 Auxiliary magazine. It was titled "What is AEF and How to Support the Program". Hopefully, many of you have seen that. It did a great job explaining on how to promote the AEF program along with several ideas.

In the Department of Iowa, Helen Hildebrand used her own slogan: "Members helping members during an emergency is the reason for this fund". We all know that each year our fellow members are affected by fires, floods, tornadoes, et cetera, which, in turn, means they are most likely in need of our support. She asked

each unit to support those in need. There's always a need for s'more funds as we celebrate our 100th year of this organization. At program workshops, she handed out s'more goodie bags to each department officer and to district presidents. She challenged them to collect s'more funds than they had in the past. They did just that as individuals, units, county and district. They took on the challenge to raise s'more funds for a great cause. Helen's activities continued at their mid-winter conference. She did a fundraiser to raise s'more funds by creating a contest of favorite s'more desserts. Woo, Bailey and cake, right? It turns out that this was a fun little way to raise awareness for the AEF program.

In the northwestern division, the Department of Wisconsin, Rose Heinz, remarked, "The Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established to help members in their time of need." The Department of Wisconsin used the following theme: 100 years anchored in service and setting the course for the future, quoting "We need to continue to help our members now and in the future." And this department is currently the second highest contributor to our program.

The Department of Minnesota held a silent auction at their fall conference with all units donating to the AEF program and it was very successful. This was in addition to the other units having individual fundraising activities. Their donations so far total \$13,902 which is the highest contribution to the AEF program so far.

(Applause.)

MS. THROWER-MILLS: National Chairman Debra -- national chairman -- Nebraska Chairman Debra Albers -- she is a national chairman, too. Nebraska Chairman Debra Albers presented a table talk discussion at their department leadership chairman (sic). She said there's much flooding in Nebraska and lots of needs for the AEF program as nine grants were received by their department members. It inspired their department president to take a tour of the northwestern division and collect funds for the AEF program.

The Department of Florida chairman encouraged their members to get to know the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. They believe that the AEF program is so vital to their members that she stated, "Although our mission is to serve our veterans, military families, children and youth as well as our communities, it is just as important to care for our members. The AEF is the only program that is solely for our members." She urged the members to take time to familiarize themselves with the units and with the program action plans.

The Department of Alabama, Joyce Hampton, chairman, she used a painting to raise funds for the AEF program. It was hand-painted by a veteran and donated specifically for a fundraiser. It is a painting of a soldier on a mountain in Iraq. They sold tickets at their mid-winter conference and will continue their fundraising efforts until their department convention.

In the eastern division, the department president of Maine, President Virginia Chaput, chose the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and she created a campaign titled Dimes in Time. At the close of their department convention in June, she handed out water bottles labeled with AEF and they're being used around the state to collect dimes for the AEF.

This department also promoted the AEF through weekly and monthly newsletters and on their department Facebook page.

The Department of California, at the beginning of the year, Deborah Fletcher, this dedicated chairman, passed out folders with all the information in it, brochures, applications, recommendations of fundraising, et cetera. She gave her units ideas that they could use to raise money at their meetings by making it fun, like asking how many pairs of shoes do you have in your closet at home. Each one of those was to pay 25 cents for each pair of shoes that they had or 10 cents for every earring that you have at home or 25 cents to a dollar for every room that you have in your house. So she suggested these fun ideas instead of doing the same thing that they've done in the past.

So NECs, I hope that you will take these fundraising ideas back to your departments.

Madam President, you can tell by the many fundraising ideas held across our nation that the AEF program will continue to be a viable program for our members as we move into the next century of service for the American Legion Auxiliary. There's always going to be weather changes and there's always going to be tragedies and personal life issues in our families. It is nice to know that the American Legion Auxiliary can count on the AEF program for help in their time of need.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Vickie. And I have to say Cornelius really like the s'mores back home.

Okay. Jeannie Haas has graciously stepped up to -- from vice chairman to chair the Community Service committee from the Department of Kansas. Thank you very much, Jeannie.

MS. HAAS: Thank you.

President Nicole and members of this National Executive Committee meeting, Dr. Seuss asked the question: "Why fit in when you born to stand out?" And stand out is what the members from all 52 departments did in their communities during the past six months.

Community Service department chairmen reported American Legion Auxiliary members serving 224,685.2 hours in their communities while traveling 78,978 and a half miles. Many activities reported did not include hours or donations but \$403,673.23 of materials and menus were reported donated by members in this ALA program.

Unit members partnered with face-based charities, local fire and law enforcement groups, shelters for homeless women and abuse groups to offer basic needed items. Unit members reached out behind the scenes in times of need to help with food, water, clothing and personal items during crisis situations.

Pictures and reports showed American Legion Auxiliary members wearing ALA shirts and pins while taking part in many activities within their communities.

Look for the end of the year Community Service reports to show not only outstanding numbers of hours served and donations made but also more information about the many ALA members and their activities that they participate in.

Community Service activities you will be hearing more about including Betty benches made from plastic bottle caps, blessing, crisis and purpose bags and purses that have been filled, how many shoes really make a difference, the winning scarecrow in a scarecrow corral and other unique ways to celebrate 100 years of service within a Community Service project. Although this community does not have any updates or changes to present, we would like to request that all members present remind their departments that advance hours and donations can only be reported under one program. Several events reported to the Community Service committee may have been more suited in the Education program or the VA&R programs.

Madam President, thank you for allowing me to share the mid-year reports from all 52 departments. These good deeds and activities of service make a difference in the community and the lives of the residents where American Legion Auxiliary members serve. This concludes the Community Service mid-year report. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Jeannie.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. We know we got a late start coming back from lunch, so it's up to you. Do you want a formal break? We're running about 15 minutes behind if we don't take a break. If we take a break, we're about a half hour behind. It's totally up to you. We can have a quick stretch break or a formal break.

(Break)

(Audio starts mid-sentence)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- regarding the new tag line of a committee of volunteers serving veterans, military and their families. And it was in a briefing that National Secretary put out. And you're seeing on the bottom of the screen -- I can't quite read it from this angle.

So what I want -- there's been a couple questions during the break. And Stephanie Holloway will be addressing that in her remarks in just a little while. Okay? Thank you.

All right. We have about three national chairmen left. And then we will move on to division reports. And thank you for taking a quick break and thank you for being so attentive today. I haven't had to get out (indiscernible) do anything crazy. I think the National President does it herself to keep you awake.

So obviously, this year is all that history and celebration. So our national history chairman is Cathi Taylor who is also one of our staff members. So, Cathi, the floor is yours.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, history is malleable. The discovery of previously unknown documents, letters, photos and artifacts shed new light and they challenge what we had previously assumed. Author Stephanie Meyer

reminds us that "It's true that we don't know what we've got until we lose it but it's also true that we don't know what we've been missing until it arrives."

It was first noticed but not understood a few years ago while scouring the old ledgers and grew when researching newspapers which only raised more questions than provided answers. And then it culminated when North Dakota unit number 253 arrived at National Headquarters last August for a tour. What is it? It is the discovery that the current national collection fails to reveal the diversity of the Auxiliary's membership in the early years. Nor does it give voice to the units composed of one race or ethnicity. In other words, our collection is what some might call pale.

And so the History Committee decided that this was a project worth pursuing to identify and locate those units and learn whether they formed because of segregation or were simply a reflection other neighborhoods. But it has not been an easy task. While it is difficult to identify the African American units as well as the Hispanic, Asian and native American units, the disappointment comes in learning that many, if not most, have closed over the years. The question then becomes what happened to their history, their legacy.

We have been fortunate to purchase this one photo taken in 1927 of the African American legion post and its Auxiliary unit number 273 of Wichita, Kansas. But this is the only tangible so far. We have developed a limited number of leads on our own after exhaustive research. And because of our lack of success, the History Committee has since come to the realization that this project just might be a little bit bigger than us. Our members are a valuable asset for historical information regarding our Auxiliary legacy. So why not use them?

In our December newsletter, we reached out to the department historians and cavalcade chairs but with the holidays and all, well, the request may have simply been overlooked. We have had no response so far.

Now we are turning to you in hopes that you will become our eyes and ears and help us locate these diverse units. Perhaps your department has a photo from an early department convention that shows its diversity. Something that helps tell the story of the American Legion Auxiliary and let others know that we, as an organization, started out diverse in our membership and that we are still diverse.

We realize that the story the members of these units may, at times, be sensitive and possibly hard to talk about. But it is a part of our rich history that should not be overlooked. Maya Angelou once said "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

These units are a large part of the Auxiliary's history. Help us (indiscernible) make them into the record so that when we share the Auxiliary's history, it is complete, that is, until the next discovery.

Madam National President, this concludes the History Committee's report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Cathi. I think she all gave us something to think about. Thank you.

All right. Past Presidents Parley. Past National President Carlene Ashworth from the Department of Texas. Carlene?

MS. ASHWORTH: Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon, everyone.

The objective of the past presidents' parley committee is to recognize and honor the military service of active duty servicewomen, recognize unit members who go above and beyond involving themselves in the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, and, as a past president, mentoring with a positive attitude other members on the unit and department level.

This centennial year, the committee is seeking to locate prior year recipients of the department unit member of the year award with the objective of finding out if this honor made a difference to them and there's continued volunteer activities within the Auxiliary or in their own personal lives.

To honor the Auxiliary's centennial year, the Department of Illinois has assigned a past department president to each of their districts. They have been asked to use historical events from the president's year as part of their activities and invite their past department president to attend these activities.

The Department of Wyoming chair reports their department promotes the medical scholarship by sending their application with a letter to eight Wyoming colleges and universities. This endeavor brings awareness of our organization to people who may not know about the American Legion Auxiliary.

The Department of Illinois Past Presidents Parley sponsors a Valentine Day gift program for women veterans.

Despite this being the last year of the national Past Presidents Parley committee, the majority of the departments reporting stated they will continue with the Past Presidents Parley committee so they can continue offering nursing and medical scholarships, promote the service women of the year program and provide mentoring on all levels.

In celebration of the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th anniversary, this committee is expecting to receive 100 percent participation, all 52 department, with a unit member of the year nomination and at least one nomination from each department for servicewoman of the year. As leaders in your department, please take this information back to the members and encourage them to promote the objectives of the Past Presidents Parley committee.

Madam President, that concludes my report. I would like to introduce our other committee that's here, Kathy Dungan, vice chairman, and Rita Navarreté on the committee is not able to be with us.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Thank you, Carlene. Appreciate it very much.

Our liaison to Child Welfare Foundation chairman, Chris West, is unable to be with us. So vice chairman, Desi Stoy, past National President from Ohio, will give the report today. Thanks, Des.

MS. STOY: Madam President, on behalf of your national liaison to the Child Welfare Foundation chairman, Christine West, I am pleased to share the great news about your generous support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

First, congratulations to the 21 departments that have contributed more to the Child Welfare Foundation than at the same time last year.

(Applause.)

MS. STOY: ALA contributions are \$8,249.48 ahead of last year. Chris says good job and thank you.

She also wants you to know that at the annual fall meeting of the Child Welfare Foundation, the Board of Directors granted 22 organizations \$811,292. The American Legion Auxiliary received two of these grants totaling \$122,312.50.

(Applause.)

MS. STOY: Right. These grants provide funding for the publication "Indivisible: The Story of our Flag", our youth scholarships including Spirit of Youth scholarship, the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship, the honorary National Junior Division, Vice-President scholarships, the ALA National -- ALA Girls Nation president and vice-president and outstanding senator scholarships.

So kudos to the volunteers and staff members for creating and submitting these grant requests. Kudos.

(Applause.)

MS. STOY: Now we know that none of this would be possible without the continued generosity of our members, our units and departments. NEC members, please encourage your departments to continue to have fundraisers, pass the hat or do something different. Use your imagination and make a substantial contribution to the Child Welfare Foundation. For those departments who have not made a donation as of yet, we anticipate a huge surprise at years end.

Let me close with some housekeeping. It's been brought to our attention that we need an updated list of department Child Welfare Foundation chairmen. So, NEC members, please confirm with your department secretary that National Headquarters has your department's chairman's name and contact information. Please do not assume that your information is correct. Please follow through with this.

As well, know that your efforts in supporting the youth of this country through financial support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation are sincerely appreciated. Keep up the good work and thank you again to our chairman, Chris, myself and committee member Lisa --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: (Indiscernible).

MS. STOY: Yeah. (Indiscernible). Thank you. Thanks for your support.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Desi.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I want to remind you that there will be an e-mail with a link later that you will have access to the written reports that you can then pass along to your departments.

I think you've gotten some notes of things to do for a to do list. So let's just keep that running so that when you get back home, you have information to share. And I would ask that you please cascade that down.

National Secretary Linda Boone has arranged for our headquarters team to give us a briefing from their division activities. So just like the national chairmem, yes, woohoo, they will report one after another. And we will start with communications. And Communications Director Mike Butt is under the weather so Managing Editor Stephanie Holloway will be addressing us today. Thank you, Stephanie.

(Applause.)

MS. HOLLOWAY: Hello. It works, okay.

Good afternoon. You know the communications team for our work on *Auxiliary* magazine, the ALA blog, our national website and other important ALA national media. But we are also contributing to national organizations newly launched emphasis on marketing.

Traditionally, marketing has been unknown to many nonprofit organizations because it's tied to selling a product or service. But, hey, the American Legion Auxiliary has products and services to sell like volunteering, membership, educational meetings and events, donations. For years, we've focused on our (indiscernible) with the goal of making sure members and nonmembers understand who we are and what we do and why we matter. And we've made a lot of progress but we can do even better. So people who are interested in volunteering, joining and donating to an organization like the ALA want to be part of the cause and part of the result. They're interested in like-minded values in a collective voice and natural progression in our brand evolution and to share stories that captivate audiences. Those stories should emotionally connect and persuade them to support our brand. A declaration helps to do that.

Today, we're sharing our ALA declaration. The Auxiliary's brand story will be tied to our newly released tag line, a community of volunteers serving veterans, military and their families. And soon, this declaration will be rolled out via ALA national media and made available to all members. So when you watch this video that I'm going to play in a little bit, imagine how it will serve as a rallying cry for current Auxiliary members as well as potential members, volunteers and donors. Then I ask you to go out and share it with everyone you know and tell them we are the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Video played:)

" We are the American Legion Auxiliary.

"We are called to serve.

"We respect our country and the service of those who defend our freedoms.

"We are loyal to our United States Constitution and to those who protect it.

"We are humbled by the courage of our veterans and their families.

"We are alone, yet we stand together.

"We are daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. We are family.

"We are of every color. We are of every faith.

"We are of every age.

"We are anyone and everyone.

"We are common and extraordinary.

"We are citizens.

"We live in small towns.

"We live in suburbs.

"We live in cities.

"We work in fields, in factories, warehouses, offices, at home.

"We are a community. We help one another.

"We love our flag and all that it stands for.

"We are many. We are one.

"We are the American Legion Auxiliary. A Community of Volunteers
Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.

"We commit ourselves to the ideal: Service Not Self."

(Applause.)

MS. HOLLOWAY: Madam President, that concludes my report. Thank
you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. So there was a question earlier that I don't
think quite got answered because we still said "Service Not Self". And the question
was, was the bottom of the tag line going away that had "Service Not Self" in it?

MS. HOLLOWAY: No, no. Those won't go away. Those -- 'cause of a few
we say "For God an country since 1919", those -- you'll still see those. But I think
we'll just kind of refer to that one right there as the official new sort of enveloping
tagline.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So that is the new tagline. Okay.

Sorry to bump you out of the way.

It's -- you know, when we have now a change in membership, how are we
going to address that and change our focus to make sure people knew that we are
everybody. We're all different but we come together. And so that's where this new
tagline in our repertoire, "a community of volunteers".

So it's just to, you know, help you spread the word internally and
externally. We're all together trying to work for veterans, military and their families.

So hopefully, you'll be able to use this. This will be available for you to use
in your departments and your units, how ever you want to use it.

So what she's saying without saying it is we know we're no longer the
women's largest patriotic service organization, correct? Okay. This is our new
tagline. All right.

Thank you, Stephanie.

And I want to, as Colette's coming forward to do the Program & Events
Division, that was her husband who narrated that for us with that radio voice and
produced it. I know -- I see the narration on the screen. So thank you.

MS. FIKE: How many of you have had the spouse's or loved ones who've
been voluntold for Legion family projects? I know I'm not alone in that.

Here's a peak behind the curtain of what 2019 looked like in the programs
and events division, assuming I can get my slide going here.

How do I get to my slide?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just keep going forward on the right-hand side.

MS. FIKE: On the right-hand side makes the video play. You do it. (Laughter.)

MS. FIKE: There we go. So now if I click --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

MS. FIKE: All right. Good.

Forget where I was. That's okay.

So this is just a little peek behind the curtain. You've heard a lot from all of our wonderful chairmen about what has happened in the program side. We're going to be throwing out some information for you so that you understand what happens behind the scenes.

The program and events division is responsible for about 21 percent of the ALA's \$10 million budget. We just want you to understand what it takes to support all the initiatives that you've heard about this afternoon.

Sorry.

We -- we -- these people -- this is the program and events team. Every ALA volunteer or staff member who travels receives a travel authorization. We prepared 914 detailed travel authorizations last year which is 23 percent over the previous year. And that's partly due to the fact that there were department org trainings within the same calendar year.

The events team audits each travel expense report. This includes negotiating corrections and changes with the individual until compliant. Members of the events team, led by Laura Casey, share responsibility for the meetings mailbox, a central place for all of your registration, travel and event-related questions.

With the national leadership team, both the program and events staff prepare -- develop agendas, arrange meeting logistics, purchase, prepare and ship materials and provide onsite event management for 19 national meetings including those on the screen.

To give you an example of what that means, at just one event last year during the 2019 convention in Indianapolis, the events team orchestrated 39 unique events during convention week. To pull this off, they coordinated with 21 different vendors and 80 individual speakers through breakouts and convention sessions.

Over the last eight years, we have reached almost 2000 members through mission training. Now that might sound like a small number considering our membership, but we all know that one active member can make a big difference in mission impact in a department. Isn't the quote on the screen inspiring to -- it's music to your ears, the quote about inspiration? I'm sorry you guys can't see it. But when the departments were here for department organizational effectiveness training in December, every single department raised their hands and said that they were having a hard time getting department leaders. We think that mission training might be able to help you with that.

The ALA currently has about 44,000 junior members. We make sure that all staff and volunteers who interact significantly with these junior members at

national meetings have a background check within the last two years. With your help, we are having some success getting active juniors to these meetings where we cultivate a lifelong relationship with these future leaders. You heard today many times about the new junior loyalty scholarship. And I think that's part of the reason why a Facebook post about that new junior loyalty scholarship have been among the most widely shared posts this year. This college scholarship incentivizes our junior members to retain their membership after they turn 18.

You should be aware overall, though, as Suzanne said, that the ALA is still losing junior members at a slightly faster rate than adult leaders or than our adult members. We feel it's vital to invest in developing leaders for your junior groups at the department and unit level and to get our junior members into the habit of paying their own dues.

With all of our youth programs, we try to make sure, as Wendy mentioned, that there is some connection to the mission because we want them to carry our mission forward into future generations. ALA Girls Nation participants change every year so the program doesn't have to. But we still need to keep up with the times. Each ALA Girls Nation participant submits 27 registration documents and all of this is done electronically now. By the way, we have now reached the era where the participants at ALA Girls Nation were born after the September 11 attacks of 2001. It's hard to believe.

We have three full-time program support people, Elizabeth, Chrystal and Kristen, who answer mail from 11 program mailboxes in addition to their own individual e-mail accounts. They develop content and respond to posts on 12 Facebook groups, two Facebook pages and two Instagram accounts.

We orient and support 14 national chairmen in their specific new roles starting at the national chairman's meeting each spring. And it's really one of the joys of our year to get to know these new chairmen and work with them.

A new agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs has been underway for some time. And this made it possible for us to have a segment on the Veterans News Network. We hope that it will air this year. This is the internal TV network at the VA and it reaches nearly two million of our target market every month. We also talked a little bit earlier about the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Chrystal Daulton is our point person on our team. She works closely with the VA&R committee, our own communications team and the event organizers at the VA, to fulfill our sponsorship responsibilities.

So, until we meet again at the next event, keep the mission fires burning. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Colette.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Next we have membership with Kelly Harrier. Kelly? Thank you.

MS. HARRIER: Hello. As we've already talked about a lot today, we've had a very exciting membership year. Since the beginning of this administrative

year, we have been consistently ahead of where we were at this time last year. Every single week, this is huge deal.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIER: We're also seeing an increase in those who are renewing online and by phone. About 25,000 members have renewed online this year. And our membership division, a team of six, has taken over 8,000 payments by phone. And that's just since July.

So with the online renewals, we've seen a five percent increase so far. But with phones, we've seen a 20 percent increase. And it's only February so we expect that to keep rolling.

The -- and we've been working hard to keep the momentum going. For the first time this year, we sent out an e-mail in July letting people know that they can start going online and renewing for the 2020 year. We did another e-mail in October. This time, we actually were able to include dynamic content. So instead of just say, hey, your dues are ready, you can renew, it was, "Hi, Sally. Your dues are \$30. You can pay three ways. And one of them is you can send it to your unit and here's their name, here's their address." So we've never done that before.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIER: We also sent out another e-mail in February. That went along with our regular standard print renewal reminders from September and January. And then we're also doing a last ditch effort in March for a final renewal e-mail reminder.

So more members than ever are also getting involved in ALA MIS. Over 3000 members now have a login to utilize ALA MIS. And that's at the department, district and unit level. So then at 2000 of our units have access. That's a quarter of our units are now on ALAMIS.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIER: Our membership division has also been working with our marketing team. We will be rolling out a new PSA with Nicole promoting our PUFL memberships. So that is very exciting. And then starting next week, we are starting a new initiative where we're reaching out to our former and expired members. This is something that we've never done before. So former and expired members from the last three years starting next week will get an e-mail from us as long as we have an e-mail address for them. And it's just to (indiscernible) soft ask. It's "We miss you. Here's what the great things we're doing. How -- you know, get in touch with your local unit if you want to come back." So we're hoping to see great things from that.

Then for the past six months, we've also been working with the American Legion on joint strategies. One of the strategies is the ALA is now participating in Legion district revitalizations. We were able to participate in one in Washington and Indiana this fall. And then we're participating in revitalizations in Wyoming, Colorado and Wisconsin this spring.

And then, as we talked about earlier today, we're also starting an initiative to promote that Legion post start an Auxiliary unit. I think everybody knows that 4600 number. So we started out with a PSA to roll it out. And now we're actually

working with the Legion's membership national headquarters staff to work directly with departments. And we've actually identified every single post that currently does not have an Auxiliary unit. So we're working with them on that.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIER: Another exciting development is that the ALA will now start to be included in a newsletter that the Legion sends out to their DMS, their direct mail solicitation members. So they are giving us a chance to revamp a little portion of their newsletter to promote the ALA and the SAL and the entire Legion family. So that's very exciting.

And then so -- and that's -- I mean, we've been hard at work. That's pretty much it. I know you've heard it but, I mean, we've talked about this all year long. But our membership team works hard each and every day to help our members and provide the best member experience that we can.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Kelly.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And, yes, I think that hard work is paying off for us. Yes? CeCe? Yes?

CeCe: Those that pay online, is there a membership card from national?

MS. HARRIER: Yes. So when members --

CeCe: Is it a card from our unit or --

MS. HARRIER: You can. Yeah. And they can have two cards. They'll say the same thing. It's just one signed by a national officer and one signed by a unit officer. But each member that (indiscernible) online or by phone gets an e-mailed temporary card and then also we mail them one that shows up in about three to four weeks. But we also encourage if they want their card faster than that, they can always contact their local unit, too.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes. (Indiscernible)?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

THE REPORTER: I can't hear this person at all.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We'll repeat the question for -- so everybody can hear.

MS. HARRIER: Yeah. So what she was asking is would you be able to in the future pay for multiple people online. It's an option we're looking at. There's a lot of things that involve that. So we're looking in that possibility. In the meantime, call us. Honestly, it's way easier. We look you all up. We charge your card once for the total and we can do it within just a few minutes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Nancy?

NANCY: Yes. As far as past members who, you know, maybe they haven't been active for, let's say, for like four or five years, is there a certain point in time where that member actually expires and they're never --

MS. HARRIER: Do they have their membership number?

NANCY: Yeah. Is that membership number really always there?

MS. HARRIER: It is. So we in the past if somebody, say, hadn't been a member since 1989, we --

NANCY: Right.

MS. HARRIER: -- do -- like, we did a major purge before we started the new database. Anybody that's in our database now, we haven't been purging them if they just were --

NANCY: Oka.

MS. HARRIER: -- former members. So, no, they should keep that number.

NANCY: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Any other questions for membership?

All right. Thank you, Kelly.

All right.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So with membership, we also need to look for our future of our organizations so that it's not all relying on our dues. So that's Madison Maves with the Development Division. Madison?

(Applause.)

MS. MAVES: I did it, didn't I? All right.

So it's my team's privilege and responsibility to raise additional funds to support the American Legion Auxiliary and ALA Foundation. So this includes the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Spirit of Youth Fund, Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship Fund, ALA Foundation's Mission Endowment Fund, Veterans Projects Fund and Veterans Creative Arts Festival. No pressure, right?

So we did start the year out with a bang. You heard today, we applied for and received two Child Welfare Foundation grants for over \$122,000.

(Applause.)

MS. MAVES: Yeah. About 120,000 of that went to 28 scholarships. And roughly, 2,000 of that will go to 670 copies of the Legion's book, "Indivisible: The Story of our Flag" that we'll share with juniors around the country.

As a fundraiser, it's a pretty big miracle that you're going to hit your goal within the first week. So while my team took a minute to celebrate and have a good time, we immediately turned our focus to what's next. And for us, what's next was raising funds for the 10 new junior loyalty member scholarships.

So enter, Barbara Kay Smith.

Barbara was an active Pennsylvania member that left us a \$24,000 legacy gift to the American Legion Auxiliary. That one gift was able to secure nearly 10 scholarships.

(Applause.)

MS. MAVES: Yeah, I know. It's been a good year.

Barbara's one of 26 amazing individuals who have given a legacy gift or made provisions to leave the ALA or the ALA Foundation in their estate plans. So I hope you saw the beautiful new donor wall downstairs. And if you haven't, please stop by. It's right -- almost right underneath you guys in the entryway there.

We're hoping -- our Legacy Society was officially rolled out at national convention in August. And we're working to continue to grow that. So our team's working alongside our ALA Foundation board. And having individual one-on-one

conversations with donors who want to learn more and possibly join the Legacy Society.

So if you've already made that commitment and I just don't know it yet, you know where to find me. If you'd like to make that commitment, and I just don't know it yet, you know where to find me.

Barbara wasn't the only planned gift we actually received this year. Rachel Grout blessed us with a \$5000 gift to use on December 3rd for Giving Tuesday. Rachel is an 83-member from Massachusetts. So with this gift, a \$5,000 gift from our direct mail vendor resource 1 and our incredibly generous donors at both national convention and on Giving Tuesday, we raised a record-breaking \$45,000 for the ALA Foundation.

(Applause.)

MS. MAVES: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tell them what your goal was for Giving Tuesday.

MS. MAVES: Well, what was our goal? 30? 30,000 was our goal and we raised 45. We raised 17,000 at national convention which is an all-time high. Yeah. So it's a really -- it's been a good fall.

So we've been very fortunate with a lot of generous members and nonmember donors. So this includes people like our \$5000 Rachel Grouts or our \$5 donors who have been donating \$5 religiously for the past 50 years and everything in between.

One way our donors do choose to donate is through our direct mail program. This is a huge undertaking for our team and we spend a lot of time with our vendor customizing each piece for our donors. And, yes, this includes everything down to the size of the bird or the color of the butterfly on the cards that you receive.

So in September, our holiday card campaign mail, we had over 20,000 donors donating \$320,000.

Okay. So the next with our centennial campaign that went out in December, we had 6500 donors and we were able to -- that sent in \$114,000.

So we're already finalizing our spring card appeal and are in the creative stages for the ALA Foundation's wall calendar coming this summer.

Another big focus that you've heard a few times today and I'm going to say it again is our monthly giving program. So this program officially rolled out in the fall and we set a goal to hit a hundred monthly donors by our 100th national convention. So right now, as of five minutes ago, we are now at 51 monthly donors.

(Applause.)

MS. MAVES: So those 51 monthly donors have committed over \$19,000 annually. So this is a perfect option for donors at any level. With your help, we can reach the 100-donor goal. So you go online, you click the "Repeat my donation monthly" or come talk to me or give my team a call.

And lastly, I cannot forget our member benefits program. So our team took this over about a year ago and has been working very hard to strengthen our vendor

relation and create new meaningful partnerships. This results in nearly \$100,000 annually for the national organization as well as discounts for our members.

So to accomplish all of this, our development team of three manages one direct mail vendor, 11 member benefits providers, 13 ALA Foundation board directors, 26 Legacy Society members, 46 ALA Foundation grant applicants, 51 monthly donors, 39,000 individual donors and a partridge in a pear tree.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Madison. Asking for money is not easy but she has the personality to pull it off.

All right. And next, talking about money, the Director of Finance/National Treasurer Sara Riegel.

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. Thank you, Madam President, very much.

It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to talk to you again. On behalf of our finance division which is made up of Deana, Cindy, Erin and Amanda and, as the Director of Finance, I wanted to share just a little bit more about what we've been doing. Okay?

The results of the team's efforts, the finance team's efforts, are evident but they're not really evident through the visual metrics, the measurements that you'd probably just heard. We -- and through our impact and outreach of our programs and events but through the details of what we do. A clean audit is a key measurement of our work.

No applause? Okay.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: You guys'll make me cry.

Okay. The finance team lives and thrives in the details or, as some might say, we live in the weeds. For the 18 months, we have spent time evaluating, researching the processes and procedures, the systems that were already formed and in place and improving upon them.

We look into our internal processes first the work flow and the timing of information. We evaluated the accounting system and how to maximize on the software that we already had in place and use it to our advantage. This required evaluating all interdependent systems -- Kelly can attest to this -- that interact with our accounting system and the tools that we resource. We evaluated the allocation of our indirect cost expenses that were done on an annual basis and now we've incorporated them in our monthly financial statements. So you now have a more real time reporting of our net operating income or loss -- income. Positive.

Through these efforts of a development, planning and implementation, we have been able to reduce the amount of time in presenting financial information to the Finance Committee by 7 to 10 days. Okay? And also finalize our year-end audit work almost one month earlier.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: I wanted to let you know that recently we met with the national treasure of the American Legion -- not ourselves -- to discuss the sponsored pension plan that was suspended in 2008. We still have 30 employees covered on

that plan. And when it was suspended, we knew that we needed to continue to make annual contributions to cover the pension plan obligations in the future. Those annual contributions are now coming to fruition. And so we needed to get a better explanation.

The contribution amount that we've been budgeting over these several years was not sufficient to meet those obligations. As a result, we have taken the steps to have an additional meeting with the actuarial firm to get a better idea and projections of our annual contributions for the next five years. So that is something that we're taking those steps on.

The finance division obviously works closely with the governing body's Finance Committee and Audit Committee, Sharon and Jerry, to support their duties of oversight. This requires sharing of knowledge and frequent communication. Our role as a finance division is one of support to the mission and purpose of the national organization and the foundation. We assure you that the finance team will continue to work tirelessly to provide the service of support, make improvements and continue with best practices and principles in our responsibilities.

That is it. Thank you, Madam President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Sara.

The administrative report will be given by the administrative director, Tamara Shumate.

(Applause.)

MS. SHUMATE: I'm going to walk slowly so I wasn't out of breath when I got up here.

Okay. So those of you that know me, I like to be behind the scenes. I was thinking maybe next time that past national presidents could form a circle around me like the Girls Nation and then slowly start to dissipate as I continue to talk. I'm going to hold you to it.

Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

Okay. So Director of Administration. What is administration? What does that mean to you? I mean, already I'm sure you hear the word administration and you're, like, it's glamorous, it's exciting, it's going to be fast-paced. So it's not all glamour, though. There's definitely some glamour. Much of what we do involves --

Is this in my face a little bit? Yeah.

Much of what we do involves those behind the scenes responsibilities that aren't always glamorous. They do serve to keep the National Headquarters running. Under the Administration Division was IT, all the national officers, the Executive Director, Constitution and Bylaws, Cavalcade Archives and History committee, the administrative assistants and coordinators, office supplies and equipment, shipping and fulfillment and, last but not least, this beautiful building and its grounds. We've learned a lot about this building.

So great. Now you know there's a ton of things that fall under administration. They don't actually sound that glamorous. And you're still not sure

what this has to do you or our members. So let's talk dollars. I feel like everyone can understand dollars.

My team of seven is dedicated to making sure that we are excellent financial stewards of our members' dollars. For example, it is currently working with other divisions to create more opportunities for a virtual meeting. We hope that this adds a component of convenience for our members and obviously less travel means lower costs for meetings.

Cathi Taylor, who you heard from earlier, who I wish I had her speaking skills -- she has such a commanding presence -- she's our archivist and insists on personally cleaning the Cavalcades. She does not trust anyone else with our valuables. I am not kidding. She has a stack of white gloves. There you are. So that means we get to save \$300 a month on cleaning charges. Yeah.

Many of you may not know this but in addition to Angie being our governance specialist -- she's been in the back all day -- she has a ways with financials and she is great at finding those penny pinching areas.

By creating our own business shipping account instead of relying on the USPS to do all of our work, she saves us about \$500 a month. When our team took over the building, we are able to eliminate a property manager, which saves about \$2000 a month.

We're also diligent with all building vendors making sure to get multiple competing bids on repair work. For example, we recently switched handyman companies and that saved us just over \$1000 in the last two months.

Just this week, Anita -- those of you know Anita, she's at the front desk. She's a commanding presence as well. Just this week, Anita went toe to toe with the State inspector's office to dispute -- right -- to dispute an elevator violation that she believed to be incorrect. Her diligence paid off. She won the dispute and saved us \$6000.

(Applause.)

MS. SHUMATE: I know. Although, okay, I feel the biggest lesson here, though, is to not go toe-to-toe with Anita. I mean, that's really the -- especially if you're trying to stand in the way of mission delivery and our members' dollars.

We have amazing staff here who actually volunteers to help us a lot and even volunteers their spouses. Kelly Harrier's husband, Mark, was here to hang up all of our archival shelving that you'll see out in that area. And he did it free of charge and free of our favorite price.

Finally, we work closely with the Finance Committee and the National President and the National Secretary to come up with new cost saving ways to book National President's travel. And just in two months alone, we saved \$4000.

(Applause.)

MS. SHUMATE: Yeah. So while all these savings sound maybe small independently, when you add them up, our administration division has saved \$17,000 in the last two months which we're really proud of. That's a lot of money for us.

(Applause.)

MS. SHUMATE: So the administrative division might operate in the background but I can assure you our members' dollars and adding value to membership is always in the forefront of everything that we do.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right, Tamara, and your staff.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. We have a new division this year, Operations Management, with Stephanie Abisi coming as the director up to the front of the podium. Thank you, Stephanie.

MS. ABISI: Good afternoon. It's hard to follow Tamara. She's so funny. I'm not funny. So sorry in advance.

It's great to see so many familiar faces today. My responsibilities include looking at national organizational projects that impact more than just one division or program and helping bridge connections between stakeholders by developing project and implementation plans. For example, I, along with our webmaster, Travis Perkins, are managing the ALA website project. As you may remember at the pre-convention NEC meeting, the strategic planning committee mentioned that the new plan, new strategic plan, includes a refresh of the ALA NHQ website in the systems that operate it. So as an update, at this point, we have contracted with a vendor and purchased a new content management system.

So in simple terms, compare it to switching the website from a PC to a Mac, meaning everything has to be (indiscernible) from scratch. So while this project is still in its early technical development stages, we have begun dreaming with various staff and members on what they would like our website to do. The overall consensus is that people want a better experience. Users want to be able to find information more easily and be engaging to members and the general public. But with that comes some pretty harsh realities. We have a lot of information on our website which bogs down the search function and returns so many results that it's overwhelming. For example, in 2019, there were 1,083 documents that were downloaded by users, people who came to our website over 156,000 times. And that's just a small fraction of the actual number of documents on our website.

So what does this mean? We have a lot of information on our current site. And some of the less accessed information may no longer be available on the new website but would still be available by contacting anyone at National Headquarters. We're not really getting rid of it; it just may not be on the website.

I mentioned earlier that we want a better experience for our members. So we are hoping to move much of the information that you currently access by user name and password outside of that. So you would be able to find information easier and it'll be cleaner.

Also, our goal is to make the online renewal process clearer to understand and make it easier to make a donation.

So to answer your biggest question, we hope to launch sometime early to mid-summer.

I'm also working with divisions and national leaderships to develop an overall plan for the organization's voluntary education and training program. Earlier results of this work led to the creation of the mission training 201 program which launches this March. This training is intended to start us thinking differently about how to get others to join us in mission delivery. But it is not focused on getting them to become members. It will educate attendees on how to achieve our mission goal of increasing the delivery of services to veteran, military and their families. If you haven't registered, there's still opportunities to attend the Hartford event on March 14th or Albuquerque on March 21st and we hope to see you there.

As Colette mentioned earlier, in December, we again hosted the organizational effectiveness training with over 90 department finance chairmen and department secretaries in attendance. During org training, departments gained insight into organizational effectiveness, department operations and department financial health.

We recognize that there are overlaps between department organizational effectiveness and DLNC, the Department Leadership National Conference. And we know also, in the past, there's been repetitive content between the two trainings. So we are taking steps to compare content and attendees and analyze how changes to these programs can be made to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.

Also, I have to get this plugged in, don't forget about the ALA Academy. How many of you have taken one of the three new courses that we launched in the last year? Great. That's so great to see. We recognize -- I especially recognize that there are barriers in accessing the ALA Academy. And we're working to try to resolve those. But just always remember that since the Academy is free for all members, it's a great training tool. So if you have new members or people who haven't been as involved, please have them take the Academy courses.

In conclusion, I hope this report has provided some general insight into the major projects going on here at ALA and HQ. Madam National President, that concludes my report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Stephanie. Another division with a lot of things going on behind the scenes. But a lot of good things on the horizon.

And now we have our D.C. site director, Tyra Nelson.

MS. NELSON: Good afternoon, everyone.

So I am going to -- there I am. Okay.

So I am excited -- first of all, let me just say to you that I am D.C.'s one-woman show.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSON: So we do everything internal, external to do -- that have to do with the Auxiliary. We are going to make sure that we get the word out one way or another.

One of the programs, or a number of programs, that I have opportunity to manage is National Security, legislative -- let me just talk a little bit, 'cause I got a couple minutes, about me.

I relocated from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. So I had a challenge from the very beginning relocating, uprooting myself, leaving my family and friends, then to also go to an office where they didn't even know who we were. So I had two challenges going. I sat in the office and I said, ooh, am I supposed to be here? Can I do this? But what happened, the Auxiliary -- I'm sorry -- the Legion opened up their doors and made me feel welcome and a part of the family. When I tell you they come to my office, when the door close, I know they need to talk about some things, and that means whatever goes on in this office stay in the office. Then I have some that just come to the office to get a magazine to learn about what we're doing, or if it's anything that they can do to help us to move forward.

So we all know with the legislative, we follow absolutely everything that the Legion does. They're our family, they're our friends, they're the guides. So we do everything that we possibly can that they're allowing us to do so that we can get the word out for our soldiers and family members. The ultimate goal is to make sure that our soldiers and family members are getting what they need. So if that means we have to go to our chairpeople to say, hey, we need for you all to go to your people to get the word out because we need to help in the pay, help to increase their pay, because a number of things have been cut throughout the year, so if we need to advocate for them, that's one of the things that we're going to do.

And excuse me, y'all, I am super nervous. So let me just put that out there so I can oofsah my own self.

(Laughter.)

MS. NELSON: I'm also assisting with the Legion when it comes to the Legion -- veterans' employment and education. We are affiliated with -- and do I have my flags that match? No. All right.

So we are assisting with United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Military Spouse Employment, Heroes to Hire and Yellow Ribbon.

Now, of course, everything that we do and the plans that we have, we sit down, have meetings with the Legion and we follow their lead. A lot of times, some of the doors that have been closed to us are now open because we are connected with the Legion. And we're getting the word out about who we are.

Homelessness. Homelessness is near and dear to my heart. Years ago, I had an opportunity to oversee a homeless program in Philadelphia. People are now learning that homelessness is not just because I decided today that I don't want to live in a house. No. And it doesn't always have anything to do with drug and alcohol. It has a lot to do with mental issues. So those are some of the things that we are spearheading along with the Legion.

Yellow Ribbon. Does anyone know anything about Yellow Ribbon? All right. So Yellow Ribbon, for those of you that don't know, I (indiscernible) Yellow Ribbon for nine years of my career. And I had an opportunity to assist them with pre, post and during. Pre is the soldiers that are deploying and on their way out the door.

(Pause.)

MS. NELSON: So pre are for our soldiers that are deploying. We have different resources for them so when they are deploying they have an opportunity to

know that their benefits are changing and the other resources that their family and friends may need, they get those resources at Yellow Ribbon.

And then we have our post-deployment. Post is for the soldiers that have come back after 90 days of doing their deployment. Now as you know, when you do pre and post, the benefits change again. So from active duty, it's a lot of money. A lot. And from active duty to reserve, the money change tremendously. So with Yellow Ribbon, they put together different resources so the soldiers and family members can understand the difference in their money because their money is going from up to down. And then it also have different resources to talk about PTSD, any drug and alcohol issues that might arise or anything that has something to do different that their soldier is coming back in a different capacity. So they have different counseling sessions and different things set up for them. If they want to change their careers, if they want to go and further their education, those are some of the things that take place at the Yellow Ribbon.

Yellow Ribbon started in 2008. It was a program that was mandated for the soldiers and family members because of some of the issues that they were facing. They needed to have a place to get all of these resources resolved so when they do deploy or come back, they know what benefits they have. But not just them knowing, their family members. They gave an opportunity for the family members to come because sometimes when you're deploying or coming back, you're not really thinking about sharing that important information. So that's why they invite the family members to come out as well.

Then they also have another program for the kids to give them an opportunity to now adjust to their father or mother coming back from deployment. How do I now navigate that relationship that has been separated for a year time? Sometime a year or longer, depending on if they accept another deployment.

So one of the things that I can honestly say, aside from me being nervous, and aside from not knowing at the time what I was getting into -- but, remember, I said to you that I work for Yellow Ribbon for 10 years. So I knew my population that I was going to be servicing. That was one of the tickets or the caviar -- and I don't know if Linda know that -- that helped me to accept the position because that gave me an opportunity to continue to assist that population that grew near and dear to my heart. When I tell you I have friends all over this world, I have friends all over this world. And I'm not just saying it. No. When I mean -- when I told them that I was moving myself to D.C. by myself, I got so much support.

So I just want to say to you, if it's anything that you need from me and D.C., please reach out. I'm going to do my absolute best. One of the things that I started when I do Yellow Ribbon, I do ask volunteers to come with me. So I would definitely love for you all to come -- if you can't come, send a representative -- so you can get a better idea about what we're doing and then to help encourage you to understand why we are doing what we're doing.

Any questions for me? No questions? Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Where do you do the Yellow Ribbon (indiscernible)?

MS. NELSON: Okay. So last week, we did Yellow Ribbon in Baltimore. It's different states that they have the Yellow Ribbon. It's different divisions that have Yellow Ribbon. So one -- in December, I did one in Florida. It's another one coming up in May that's in Pittsburgh. So it's a number of them throughout the year.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who gets you to come to that state?

MS. NELSON: So the good thing is because I used to work for them, they kind of send me invites to come on down and go out and represent the Auxiliary. And the good thing is with me having a good relationship -- 'cause you never know -- you're supposed to leave the right way. You don't burn any bridges 'cause you don't know how it might come back around. Because I didn't burn any bridges, it came around. And we have an opportunity, the Legion and the Auxiliary, we have time on a Friday, when they're doing their registration, to talk about both organizations, the Legion and Auxiliary, because I didn't burn any bridges.

All right. Yes? Glynis? Yes?

MS. SEELEY: (Indiscernible) Washington, D.C. representative K Street?

MS. NELSON: Yes. On the third floor.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you're working hand-in-hand with the Legion?

MS. NELSON: Yes. With everything, Legion, all --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If we know specific (indiscernible) numbers, can we send them to you to reach out to?

MS. NELSON: You can send them to me and I'll reach out to the legislative team.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. NELSON: All right.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you. And the one thing Tyra didn't tell you is she is a great D.C. uber driver for the National President.

(Laughter.)

MS. NELSON: You should've been said -- that would have helped me out a whole out.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I have never seen her nervous. So I should have done it at the beginning. I'm sorry, Tyra. Next time I'll remember.

Okay. Thank you.

All right. To close out our division reports, we have our new human resource director, Shannon Hitchcock. Shannon? Yes. And she was one that raised her hand as a female veteran.

(Applause.)

MS. HITCHCOCK: Thank you all. So I'm -- we're human resources. I've been with the organization for about six months now. So with that, I've kind of been learning the organization but also trying to prove the overall HR effectiveness.

So I'm going to kind of tell you what all I've been working on this past six months. Mainly coming in and reviewing some of the policies and procedures and working with other staff members to ensure that we're remaining compliant and meeting our organizational goals internally. This also includes updating some of our

existing employee personnel policies and formally documenting some of our past practices. Actually, getting them in documents and keeping that on file.

I've also updated our emergency action plans according to our new building and included the relevant points of contacts. So basically, making sure that we're remaining compliant and that we have our policies and procedures all in place and documented.

I've also been working on reducing risk and liabilities and ensuring that we have the correct workers' compensation in place and that includes workers' compensation policies for all other states for which we have employees, not just Indiana. And that greatly helped with our recent annual workers' comp audit.

Our healthcare benefits and life insurance policies were renewed with the carriers as well and making sure that we had the proper summary plan descriptions on file.

Our employees are now receiving their annual increases so making sure that information's going out to the directors and we get that back for our own employees so that they're getting their annual increases and that we're documenting that.

With that, I've created a standard evaluation form to make sure that we are being consistent across that method. And there was also a new performance evaluation process in place for the Executive Director position. And that is allowing us to capture feedback from employees, volunteers and our partners. And we recently tested this with Linda Boone shortly after the national convention and so we captured a lot of great information that's going to help benefit us in working towards strengthening that role. And then also learn there are some improvement opportunities and we're making those modifications on how that information goes out and how it is reported.

Lastly, I'm actually conducting a completely job analysis and determining if we have the right positions and job functions in place. And this will help us with the design of our compensation and benefits packages and indicate if there's any specific training or development needs for our organization in those positions and then preparing us for our future staffing needs as well. So we want to make sure that we're doing a good job of rightsizing the fit for our organizational needs currently.

I'm also reviewing our 401K retirement summary plan description and making sure it's accurate as we're coming upon our restatement period. And that's done every three years.

And then during our department organizational effectiveness training in December, I actually presented information in regards to the new Department of Labor wage and hour regulations in regards to the exemption on administrative staff. And that caused quite a debate. So that -- just kind of reminding everyone there is some new information that is out where all three areas have to be met in order for an administrative position to be considered exempt. And one of the main things is that there has to be a weekly salary of \$684 per week. So that is up from \$455 that's currently -- or it was mandatory in 2019. And the employee's primary duty has to be nonmanual work and directly related to management or the general business operation. And they must use or exercise discretion and independent judgment in

respect to matters of significance. So those areas of criteria have to be met in order for the position to be considered exempt.

So I would just urge you to make sure your department is in compliance with that and follow your state and the federal regulations according to the DOL website 'cause there's some states out there, like California and New York, actually the weekly salary is higher.

And then, with that, what I'm doing is just trying to close the gaps that we have in human resources and correctly align those with our new strategic goals for the organization.

So thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Shannon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I want to take a minute to thank all of the directors for your reports. And, of course, thank you to all the staff that are here today and I see a couple in the back. So thank you for everything you're doing to put on one of these 39 meetings, how many we have, and how many of these would be those authorizations of the 900 and some. So thank you very much. We appreciate all your hard work to further our mission.

Now moving on to new business. And we are only about 12 minutes behind, so good job.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. We have New York NEC, Debbie Morris, will share a report from the Code of Conduct special committee. Thanks, Debbie.

MS. MORRIS: Madam President, members of the NEC, good afternoon. (A chorus of good afternoon.)

MS. MORRIS: At the national convention in August 2019, at the NEC meeting, I moved to appoint a special committee to rewrite the Code of Conduct to include no signatures. Well, as you know, when you ask to appoint a committee, you end up getting on the committee.

(Laughter.)

MS. MORRIS: I wasn't so smart.

(Laughter.)

MS. MORRIS: So the committee was formed and it was Glynis Seeley and Kathy Maser (ph) were also on the committee with me. We formed -- and information was sent to us by Linda. We reviewed it. We had reviewed the Code of Ethics which was currently in the standing rules and it's on the website. Then we reviewed a sample Code of Conduct. We had questions of does the current Code of Ethics cover items in the Code of Conduct, and they do. Do we need the Code of Conduct?

In searches of nonprofit, Code of Conduct examples focus on employees and personnel policies. And it was referred to the Code of Ethics to cover.

So I am going to move -- let's see. We had our conference call on January 15th. Glynis, Kathleen and myself along with our leadership, which was Linda,

Nicole, I think Trish -- were you on it? I can't remember -- and Kelly. And Tamara also. Yeah. Sorry about that.

So we talked about it and we discussed in length. So Kathy made the motion that we present this Code of Ethics name change and it was seconded by Glynis to the NEC meeting.

With this knowledge that it is for internal use for the disciplinary procedures of any infractions that will be addressed by the National ALA Audit Committee.

Now go to page 47 in the pamphlet that was sent to us, the information. And I will read what Proposal 1 is: "Amend Standing Rule Code of Ethics to the Code of Ethical Conduct".

The current word right now is American Legion Auxiliary Code of Ethics. Proposed amendment by striking and inserting "Standing Rules of the American Legion Auxiliary American Legion Auxiliary Code of Ethical Conduct". If adopted, it will read "American Legion Auxiliary Code of Ethical Conduct." This was proposed. The Code of Conduct special committee of the NEC. Rationale: as a result of the vote of the NEC on August 24th, the Code of Conduct was rescinded and a special committee was to be appointed to review and make recommendations to the NEC. After meeting on January 15th by phone conference, the committee reviewed the current Code of Ethics and the standing rules and is making the recommendation to change the title of the Code of Ethics to the Code of Ethical Conduct as well as have the NHQ staff develop ethic procedures to fulfill the statement under the ethics violations. The organization shall adopt the procedure to administer the ethics query process."

Okay. Sorry. My things moved.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Take your time.

MS. MORRIS: Thank you. As soon as I move it, it moved down. Here we go.

I'm very nervous, you guys.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That's okay.

MS. MORRIS: I don't know why I'm so nervous.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Are you an uber driver, too, that I don't know about? (Laughter.)

MS. MORRIS: I could be. I like to drive in New York City. I don't live there.

Okay. Madam President --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Ready?

MS. MORRIS: -- I don't have it. Do you have it on your -- oh, here.

(Pause.)

MS. MORRIS: You guys are great. Thank you.

Madam National President, on behalf of the Code of Conducts special committee, I move the adoption of Amendment 1, a proposal to amend the standing rules Code of Ethics to Code of Ethical Conduct.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of Amendment 1 as circulated in advance. Is there any discussion?

(Pause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Hi, Susie.

MS. CLYDE: So just a question as to -- okay. You guys are Code of Ethics and you're Code of Ethical Conduct. What are the ramifications if somebody breaks these rules?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. That is the second part. So first, we are striking out of the standing rules the "Code of Conduct". That was everything you said to us last fall. It was all the things you shouldn't do. And that happened at the NEC meeting. Okay? So this committee looked at what we currently already had in our standing rules which was a Code of Ethics. So we renamed it because we know the conduct is what you're worried about. And so the second part that Debbie articulated is directing the staff after you agree that this is our format we're going to use with the Code of Ethical Conduct to then go back and write what would be the procedure related to a violation.

MS. CLYDE: Okay.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: But the key is, it's only for a national organization. That template could be modified for your department but as a national organization, we can't tell you how to discipline your own members. That's the key. And that's where we were stuck before. And so we're trying to clear that misnomer that we can be your policing body.

In the audience, they said be the bad guy.

MS. CLYDE: Okay. Because you can't have rules saying you can't do this, can't do that without justification of --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And --

MS. CLYDE: -- what's going to happen if somebody breaks them.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I agree, Susie. But if you read the Code of Ethical Conduct, it's not what you can't do. It's focusing on what you should do to be a good standing member.

MS. CLYDE: Yeah. And I understand that.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So the first step is, are you comfortable going with a Code of Ethics that we have changed the name to Code of Ethical Conduct. The content would not change in that Code of Ethics except for to change the title.

Then if you're comfortable with that, we will direct the staff to then start working on what are the procedure for the violation. We need to step it through. To do all the work one direction and turn around and start over would have been a lot of efforts of futility. Does that make sense? Does that help? Okay.

Glynis, I think you have your hand raised?

MS. SEELEY: I do.

I was just quietly asked why are we doing this. Here's the answer. The original Code of Conduct, the way it was written, in my understanding and from the understanding that I received from a lot of feedback because I did a lot of research

on this, was basically completing changing the idea that the Auxiliary members were going to be kind to one another and it turned everybody into Auxiliary police.

We're not the Auxiliary police. This committee went back and looked at the Code of Ethics and how we should be behaving. A lot of what was covered in the way that the document was written as the Code of Conduct, it was already covered. So what we're trying to do is have this become an ethical conduct conversation and document with the caveat that we still have to go back and do more but to actually just change the format of the way that this was originally written. And that was it.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It's all about perception of the reality. Are we looking forward? As you know, I'm a cup-half-full person versus a cup-half-empty. And the Code of Conduct was all half empty. It was about being bad members not being good members.

Right. Positive reflection on ourselves and our organization. Thank you, Penny.

All right. Are there any other questions?

Okay. Are we ready for the question? Those in favor or Amendment 1 say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Those opposed say no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The affirmative has it and the standing rule has been amended. Thank you, committee members. Thank you, Debbie, for representing --

MS. MORRIS: Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- the work. And there will be more work to be done. Thank you.

Okay. Everybody, breathe. Here we go. Welcome National -- she's already up here -- perfect -- Trish Ward. Constitutional and bylaws chairman. Trish? She did not have another report because she had a lot of work to do in the last few months. So, Trish, the floor is yours.

MS. WARD: Madam President Nicole, thank you so much.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You are so welcome.

MS. WARD: This has been such an exciting day, right? So much going on. It's so exciting. And what more exciting than the language in our governing documents, right?

(Laughter.)

MS. WARD: Feeling good? Feeling bright? Feeling sparky? We can do this. We got this. Ready? Let's do this. Okay.

(Laughter.)

MS. WARD: Madam President National Nicole, we will be presenting four amendments to the standing rules. All members of the National Executive Committee received advance copies of these amendments via e-mail on Friday, February 7th, 2020.

Madam National President, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presents Amendment number 2.

A proposal from the national Constitution and Bylaws Committee to amend the preface of the standing rules. The rationale behind this proposal is a simple technical cleanup from the 2019 convention business.

Madam National President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment number 2 as circulated in advance.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of Amendment 2 as circulated in advance. Is there any discussion?

MS. WARD: (Indiscernible) on 2.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Are there any questions?

MS. CLYDE: Hello again. Okay. So --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yeah. State your name for the court reporter.

MS. CLYDE: Okay. Susie Clyde, South Dakota. Laura Clyde -- whatever my name is. I have an identity crisis.

(Laughter.)

MS. CLYDE: Okay. So we're changing this and I've always thought that it needed clarification of where stuff was in our Constitution and Bylaws. But does this make it easier for us to change things opposed to our delegations voting on stuff?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It does not change the parameters. It's more of a cleanup of terminology.

MS. CLYDE: Okay. 'Cause I do like the explanation. I just --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You don't want --

MS. CLYDE: -- wanted to ask the question.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Are you saying you don't want something taken away from --

MS. CLYDE: Yeah. From the delegation --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- voting power or something like that? No. That would not be the case.

MS. CLYDE: Okay. I've asked.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. No, no. And that is the role of the NEC. As I said to you this morning, I expect you to ask the questions until you feel you've got the proper information to make an informed decision. Okay?

All right. Are there any other questions?

Those in favor of Amendment -- are you ready for the question? I'm sorry. All right. Those in favor of Amendment 2, say yes. Say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Those opposed say no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The affirmative has it and the standing rule has been amended.

All right. Trish, please continue.

MS. WARD: Madam National President, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presents Amendment number 3: a proposal from the national Constitution and Bylaws Committee to change the composition of the executive committee to the National Executive Committee. The rationale, being that the executive committee to the NEC should be made up of current members of the board who have voting rights. The Executive Director or any other position that has valuable information can be invited to attend the meetings of the executive committee to the NEC to share information and opinions that will assist in developing the most appropriate recommendation to the NEC.

Madam National President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment number 3 as previously circulated.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of Amendment number 3 as circulated in advance. Is there any discussion?

MS. WALLACAE: Madam President, Eva Wallace, Department of Washington.

I move to consider an executive session, the revised proposals to change the composition of the executive committee and to suspend the rules for discussion purposes to understand the impact. Executive session is to include past national presidents, national parliamentarian as well as officers.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. There is a motion on the floor to go into executive session which would include, if I heard correctly, the past national presidents, the NECs, and the officers who are members of the NEC and for the parliamentarian to retain in the room.

MS. WALLACE: Yes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Is there a second.

MS. PARK: Madam President, I second the motion.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Cheryl Park, Oregon, national division western vice president.

All those in favor say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The affirmative has it and the executive session will commence once the room is cleared of the extra individuals.

Thank you, Trish.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So NECs, you remain. Officers remain and the PNTs remain as well as the parliamentarian.

(Session break.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The court reporter will --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Department of Texas. We had a wonderful 100th bash and they had extra treats. So there were some treats that were distributed. And I know there wasn't enough for every single one in the room but they brought

everything they had left because that meant that the National President didn't eat all 'cause she had birthday cake to eat.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And the bracelets from Kelly. Thank you for the bracelets, Kelly.

All right. Thank you.

Okay. So for court reporting purposes, Amendment number 3 that was the revised that was sent out after the original packet, the NEC has approved that amendment to be adopted.

Trish, the floor is yours. Number 4?

MS. WARD: Madam National President, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presents Amendment number 4. A proposal from the national Constitution and Bylaws Committee to amend standing rule 8, subsidiary organizations, to remove reference to Audit Committee charter. The rationale behind this proposal is a simple technical cleanup pursuant to the National Audit Committee charter rescinded at the 2019 national convention.

Madam National President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment number 4 as circulated in advance.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of Amendment number 4 as circulated in advance. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question?

Those in favor of Amendment 4 say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Those opposed say no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The motion has been adopted in the affirmative for the standing rules.

Okay. Trish, please continue.

MS. WARD: Madam National President, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presents Amendment number 5. A proposal from the national Constitution and Bylaws Committee to add a new standing rule number 6, titled Executive Director. The rationale states that although the National Secretary position has customarily been responsible for both management and governance, assigning management responsibilities for National Headquarters to an Executive Director will allow the National Secretary to focus on the governance responsibility stated in the Constitution and Bylaws as an officer of the organization.

Madam National President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment number 5 as circulated in advance.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of Amendment number 5 as circulated in advance. Is there discussion?

Are you ready for the question?

Those in favor of Amendment number 5 say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Those opposed say no.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The affirmative has it and the standing rule has been adopted.

Trish, please continue.

MS. WARD: Madam National President, that concludes the amendments for today's meeting. However, I do have a few educational items to present in preparation for the upcoming business at national convention.

The objective here is to inform and educate so that all of you can, in turn, educate the members of your department.

First up, we have a bylaws amendment. And this proposal seeks to officially establish by name the executive committee to the NEC. You all have the rationale. But really, what this does is officially name the executive committee to the NEC in the bylaws. We've had this committee for quite some time so it was recommended to us that we go ahead and establish it in the bylaws.

Another proposed amendment to the bylaws would be to add Executive Director as an official position. Now you've just voted on adding the Executive Director's responsibilities to the standing rules so think of this proposal as the companion amendment to the one you just approved. You approved the responsibilities of the position. Now we need to establish the actual position in our governing documents.

The question I hear most often about this proposal is why should we separate the Executive Director and the National Secretary positions. It really comes down to standard operating procedures of nonprofits. We really need to keep the governing body and operations separate so there isn't even an appearance of conflict of interest. Of course, the Executive Director could still attend all NEC meetings and the NEC could easily go into executive session if they need to discuss matters without the Executive Director. Right? You guys --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Do you have a crystal ball?

MS. WARD: You got that one down.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I could use that every once in a while for a weather report for travel.

MS. WARD: The Executive Director would participate in the discussions and provide information but would not have a vote. Ultimately, this change will make it easier for nonmembers to understand our structure and how we operate.

A third proposal will be to amend the Constitution and Bylaws by changing the name of National Executive Committee to Board of Directors and the National Executive Committee member to board member. The rationale here is to change the name to Board of Directors because that is most commonly understood -- sorry, team. That is the most commonly understood name for any organization's governing board. Our governing structure is not an easy one to learn. If we want to grow membership and build our voluntary base, we need to be more accessible to nonmembers.

People have a hard time joining something if they don't understand it. A hundred years ago when we named the board the NEC, it wasn't that confusing. But

in today's culture, calling our governing board the Board of Directors not only is culturally correct but it also aligns us better with Indiana corporation status which is a good thing because the national organization is incorporated in Indiana.

Finally, we have a proposal to amend the standing rules by adding the Audit Committee responsibilities to the standing rules. The Audit Charter was rescinded during the 2019 national convention. The charter contained information regarding committee specifics and responsibilities. Now that the charter is gone, we need to make sure we are capturing the Audit Committee's responsibilities in our governing documents. The standing rules contain responsibilities of our other committees so it is appropriate to add Audit Committee info there.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Chairman Trish. I thought when I asked her to take on the role, we were going to be dealing just with eligibility.

(Laughter.)

MS. WARD: Madam President Nicole, that concludes my mid-year report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Great job. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Moving on. A couple items remaining on our agenda this afternoon.

I have worked with the finance department for 10, 11, 12 years. I don't want to count how many. I have seen many changes. You heard things articulated today of how we've streamlined things but there's so much yet to do. So I made it clear yesterday to the Finance Committee.

And, Sara, would you please come? Okay.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sara is a crier. She cried when Tim left. She wouldn't let Stu leave for quite some time. But the key is that we are at a point where Sara needs to focus on being the Director of Finance and have that opportunity to do that job and not have those other additional responsibilities that our organization could be accomplished by having a volunteer help us with.

And so, Sara, thank you. April 1st we will be transitioning. Sara is not going anywhere. She hopefully maybe will have a little family time.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I want to say everyone, please join me in thanking Sara.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Love you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: She has blossomed. She's a gourmet chef. She has been in so many industries. And now to take this on. So hopefully, she may be able to breathe come April 2nd.

So with that being said, it is as the National President that I present to you a candidate for National Treasurer for the confirmation of Marybeth Revoir from the Department of Illinois for the office of treasurer for the remaining 2019-2020 administrative year effective April 1st of 2020. Marybeth is not here. She's working.

And she works extremely hard for our organization. Has, has been. And I will give you just a snippet of her experience.

Marybeth Revoir is from Hickory Hills, Illinois, a lifelong member of the Auxiliary joining since four months of age under the service of her father, a Korean war veteran. She is the director of administration at P. Troost Monument Company in Hillside, Illinois. Prior to coming to Peter Troost, she was vice president of a construction -- world-renowned, family-owned construction firm based in Chicago. Marybeth has served in numerous leadership roles at the unit, district, and department levels including, in Illinois, she has been the treasurer for the past 29 years. We have confirmed with this opportunity that she would not have to give up that role in her department. That was something I was concerned about and she was concerned about as well. Her dedication to her unit department as well as national.

So Marybeth has served on our national foundation board for many years and has been the treasurer for the last several in that capacity.

The question may be asked so I'll clarify it right now. She would remove herself from that treasurer role on the foundation but as National Treasurer, she would be on the board but would not be their officer as the treasurer. And we confirmed that with Chris as we were going through this process.

So the question is on the confirmation of Marybeth Revoir as the Office of National Treasurer as a volunteer, April 1st, 2020.

All those in favor of confirmation of Marybeth Revoir, say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All those opposed, say no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you. I have a call to make later tonight, so thank you very much. And thank you again, Ms. Sara.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Is there any other new business? Okay.

I have some new business. First, thank you, presenters. Thank you for doing your due diligence. Thank you, chairmen. Thank you, NEC, for being with me today and really being engaged all day long. As I said, I didn't have pull up Cornelius.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So when we look at what we're here to do, I have a couple clarifications. Angie Graham did some research for us. Emblem sales do have male cut shirts and caps for Auxiliary members.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Do you know that?

Since I had to go to a meeting at lunch, I didn't get a reaction. What did you think of the shadow box?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You know, (indiscernible) and I have been worrying about that for four years.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The story is that shadow box, the same company that built it, the same designer is still working there and our same account rep was still on to take care of it. So in September, when I was in D.C. going to Sister More Saving (ph), Nurse McGinn picks me up and we drive to Silver Spring. So we actually saw it. And that was part of your teaser last fall and on my Facebook pages to see how they were rejuvenating the pictures that needed to be refreshed because of sun damage which we won't have that now since it's on an interior wall.

So good. I'm glad you enjoy it. So please talk it up. Make sure you take your souvenir. I call it the placemat.

And then, for me, I thought a year ago that we would have a National Secretary have one of everything before I became National President. Well, we know that didn't quite happen because Linda has been with us for a year and a half and will be with us through D.C. but is going to get to go home and go back to retirement.

MS. BOONE: I have to sleep with my husband.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You have to -- that was her comment.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I know they're going on their European cruise in May. So as I look at -- this is someone I met when I was 16. When I became National Junior president, she was the junior chairman. And so, as Cathi said, I think a year ago, she kind of scares a lot of people initially --

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- so think of a 16 year old. All right?

So we have the common knowledge of the executive world so looking at things made a little bit differently. But we also know no matter where you are in your career in your life, the heart and the passion for this organization are why you come back.

Fifty some plus member, year member. The best part is, she has something on me. She is the youngest national president we have ever had. Everyone thinks it's me. It's not.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And the second one is sitting right over there who's six weeks older, Jeannie Haas.

MS. HAAS: Uh, three weeks.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Oh. I thought it was six. I apologize. Everywhere I've been, please put the little asterisk, it was three weeks.

But the important part is, heart and passion and dedication. So where we are today is different where we were a year and a half ago. We talked with Kelly about trust today and communication and moving us forward. So we have a National Treasurer who is a volunteer. We have a National Secretary who is a volunteer. We have an Executive Director who is a paid employee. And we have a Director of Finance who is a paid employee. And so, on behalf of the staff, the NECs, the past

National Presidents, volunteers, chairmen, et cetera, here is a gift from us. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Ooh wow, nice watch.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It's an --

MS. BOONE: I love watches.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And it's an engraved watch with ALA '20.

MS. BOONE: Oh, nice.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So she knows, if she ever forgets, how long she stayed. It was in the centennial year of service. So thank you.

So with that being said, Madam National Chaplain, can you give us a word and a benediction to help us because we have worked really hard today and I think we could all use some guidance.

MS. CASADEI: Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your guidance in all of our work this weekend. We thank You for the members who participated and were able to come.

As we part and begin our journey home, we especially thank You for guiding our actions and our tongues, especially our tongues, as we engaged our filters so as to not offend anyone.

We thank You for Your gift of the American Legion Auxiliary. May God's blessings be upon all of us and remain with us always.

And finally, Lord, bless our wonderful president as she continues her travels. Keep her safe, healthy and happy. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We are adjourned. Thank you very much.
(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned.)

APPENDIX A



**SUMMARY OF MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED**

February 22, 2020

**American Legion Auxiliary
National Headquarters
3450 Founders Road
Indianapolis, Indiana**

2019-2020 MID-YEAR NEC MEETING

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2019-2020
in Indianapolis, Indiana
February 22, 2020**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted

M/S/C = Moved/Seconded/Carried

M/S/C to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as circulated in advance in NEC board packet emailed 2/7/20:

- to ratify Unit Charter Cancellations (30 charters)
- to confirm National Appointment changes as amended

National Finance Committee Policy Recommendations

- to move the American Legion Auxiliary Confidentiality Policy to the Audit Committee
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Investment Policy
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary National President's Special Project Policy as amended

National Audit Committee Policy Recommendations

- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Accounting Principles
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Tax Filing
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Conflict of Interest
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Fraud Whistleblower
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Action and Disaster Recovery
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Record Retention and Disposal
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Social media
- to adopt the updated American Legion Auxiliary Whistleblower Protection

M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Finance Committee to rescind the 2010 Post-Convention NEC motion "that no deductions be made in the per diem of a States Dinner tickets of Past National Presidents attending the States Dinner."

- M/C to accept the external auditor’s Fiscal Year 2018 audit reports of both the American Legion Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation, as orally presented by Mike Alerding, CPA; Mike Staton, CPA; and Chris Menzel, CPA.
- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Special Committee on the Code of Conduct to amend the title of the “Code of Ethics” in the Standing Rules to “Code of Ethical Conduct.”
- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to amend the preface to the Standing Rules by striking and inserting

These American Legion Auxiliary Standing Rules are duly adopted by the appropriate national governing body of the American Legion Auxiliary to provide guidance to the American Legion Auxiliary, its Departments, Units, subsidiaries, and affiliated entities. Standing Rules have the same importance as the National Constitution & Bylaws and may be amended as frequently as needed.

Certain Standing Rules can only be amended or rescinded by action of the National Convention delegates, as specified **in: Constitution Article VI. National Convention Section 2; Bylaws Article V Committees Section 3; and Bylaws Article IX Finances Section 1.** ~~therein. Standing Rules that specifically state “As provided in the National Bylaws” can only be amended by action of the National Convention delegates.~~

Except as noted in the previous paragraph ~~when otherwise specified in the Bylaws or these Standing Rules,~~ a standing rule may be amended or rescinded by a two-thirds vote of the National Executive Committee, or, if notice has been given, by a majority vote. In addition to these Standing Rules, supplementary national policies or rules may be adopted as they are needed from time to time by the National Executive Committee or National Convention.

- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to remove the reference to the rescinded National Audit Committee Charter by striking in Standing Rules VIII. Subsidiary Organizations, American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, Paragraph Two.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, classified in a different Category of tax-exempt organizations by the Internal Revenue Service than that of the National Organization, has its own tax-exempt determination (ruling) from the IRS. The Foundation shall comply with all legal and regulatory filings as required. Members of the Foundation’s audit committee may be the same as those serving on the ALA National

~~Auxiliary~~ Audit Committee. A representative from the Foundation board of directors shall participate in meetings of the **ALA national National Auxiliary** Audit Committee. ~~The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation shall abide by the National Audit Committee Charter.~~

M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to change the composition of the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee by striking and inserting ALA Standing Rule V. National Executive Committee, 11.

As provided in the American Legion Auxiliary National Bylaws and enacted by the National Convention, there shall be a national intermediate body, the ~~executive committee~~ **Executive Committee** to the National Executive Committee, which shall be subordinate to the National Executive Committee.

The National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, and **five (5) National Division Vice Presidents, and two (2) National Executive Committee persons who will be appointed annually by the National President** ~~National Finance Committee Chairman~~ shall comprise the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee.

The purpose of the executive committee to the National Executive Committee shall be:

- 1) to review, research and make recommendations to the NEC on matters requiring NEC action; and
- 2) to address and act on time sensitive matters subject to ratification by the NEC.

M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to amend by striking Standing Rules VIII. Subsidiary Organizations, American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, Paragraph Two

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, classified in a different Category of tax-exempt organizations by the Internal Revenue Service than that of the National Organization, has its own tax-exempt determination (ruling) from the IRS. The Foundation shall comply with all legal and regulatory filings as required. Members of the Foundation's audit committee may be the same as those serving on the ALA National ~~Auxiliary~~ Audit Committee. A representative from the Foundation board of directors shall participate in meetings of the **ALA national National Auxiliary** Audit Committee. ~~The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation shall abide by the National Audit Committee Charter.~~

M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to add Standing Rule VI. Position of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director is responsible for:

- Implementing the policies and directives of the National Executive Committee
- Providing effective management of national headquarters.
- Hiring, disciplining, and terminating national headquarters staff.
- Leading the organization in a manner to accomplish the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the organization in conjunction with the board.
- Signing all notes, agreements and other instruments made and entered into and on behalf of the organization, according to approved policies.
- Communicating and reporting to the National Executive Committee and other stakeholders on a consistent basis.
- Other duties as assigned.

M/C to confirm the appointment of Marybeth Revoir as National Treasurer for the remainder of 2019-2020 administrative year.