



SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

**American Legion Auxiliary
Ninety-Eighth National Convention**

**August 24-30, 2018
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**American Legion Auxiliary
National Officers
2017-2018**

National President

Diane Duscheck, Department of Wisconsin

National Vice President

Kathy Dungan, Department of Mississippi

Division National Vice Presidents

Central: Trish Ward, Department of Kansas

Eastern: Karyn Porempski, Department of New York

Northwestern: Peggy Miller, Department of Wyoming

Southern: Diane Spencer, Department of Kentucky

Western: Nancy Michalski, Department of Nevada

National Chaplain

Evelyn Espinola, Department of Colorado

National Historian

Susan Campbell, Department of North Carolina

National Secretary

Mary "Dubbie" Buckler, Department of Indiana

National Treasurer

Sara Riegel, Department of Indiana

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**PRE-CONVENTION
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2018**

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I want you to know that this gavel was made for me. This is the one they normally give --
(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And this is from the Department of Washington -- no, Oregon. Oregon. Willie Williams made this for me. And he turned it, put it together.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Isn't that nice? So we're breaking it in. The National Executive Committee Meeting will now come to order. Please place all electronic devices in silent mode. And we'll stand for opening ceremony.

(Ring of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Evelyn Espinola, national chaplain, will lead us in our invocation and a moment of silence for our fallen heroes and those serving our nation today for the protection of our freedom. Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman, Martha Corriher, will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, followed by Constitution & Bylaws Chairman, Denise Delaney-Wrolen, leading us in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Evelyn, would you lead us in prayer.

MS. ESPINOLA: Let us pray. Lord, let us take a moment to thank you for this opportunity to be here working together toward the common goal of enriching our veterans and our military. Guide us, Lord, so that we may be united in a spirit of mutual respect and exchange of ideas and goals, not as individuals but as a family and organization we strive to be.

In our discussions here this week, let us not forget for whom we do this for. Help us to work together to be successful in our obligations. We seek your guidance in our thoughts and decisions. We pray for a most productive meeting. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

MS. CORRIHER: And salute.

VOICES: 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.

VOICES: (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.

VOICES: 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 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our

associations during the Great 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 accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We are compelled to never forget that, while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured, and may still be enduring, the agonies of pain, deprivation, and imprisonment. Before we begin our activities this morning, we pause to remember our POWs and MIAs.

(Moment of silence.)

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You may be seated. And this meeting of the National Executive Committee is convened.

It's hard to believe that we are here in Minneapolis, Minnesota for our last meeting together. You've taken an added responsibility to work for the organization by being on the governing board of the National American Legion Auxiliary and I appreciate your commitment to the national organization about to begin our 96th Annual Convention.

Today as we conduct our business, it's my hope that you'll ask questions and make informed decisions about each issue presented. Your input is valuable. Thank you for the work you've done to accomplish everything so far and I look forward to a productive meeting today.

If you believe that a secret vote, a ballot, will give the NEC an opportunity to vote their true sentiments, when a vote is about to be taken, you may move that the vote be made by ballot. Okay?

Please remember to make your way to the microphone in the center aisle each time you wish to speak as this is the only way that your remarks can be heard for the court reporter's transcripts of the meeting. When you entered the room today, your attendance was recorded electronically by our hard working national headquarters team. If you have questions regarding your attendance, please see someone from headquarters at the end of the meeting.

It's my pleasure to introduce the head table. So first off, we have Kathy Dungan, National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Patricia Ward, Central Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Karyn Porempski, Eastern Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Peggy Miller, Northwestern Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Diane Spencer, Southern Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Nancy Michalski, Western Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Evelyn Espinola, our National Chaplain.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Susan Campbell, National Historian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Mary “Dubbie” Buckler, National Secretary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Sara Riegel, National Treasurer.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Chris Dickey, our Convention Parliamentarian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Scanning the crowd. Patricia Smith, personal page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We have Bonnie Dorniak, personal page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: She was waving and not rising. Virginia Kodl, personal page. She is waving.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And Char Kiessling, personal page.

Past national presidents, please stand and be recognized at this time.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It is so good to see everyone here this morning.

We will be utilizing a consent agenda this morning. Information about the consent agenda and how it works were circulated in advance. Along with the following items listed on the consent agenda, the unit charter cancellation since February of 2018; and a resolution of non-financial support for the posthumous recognition of Dr. Hielscher, a Trailblazing ALA founder.

Before I ask for a vote on the consent agenda, please make two changes on the charter report. This is on page 6. So on page 6, please remove South Carolina, Unit 236, from the charter cancellation list.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All right.

Here’s the good news. The department notified us that instead of closing, Unit 236 is becoming an e-unit. So yeah, woohoo.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Celebrate that one. And then due to the incredibly slow snail who didn’t deliver a report snail mail from Kansas, we have the following charters to add to the cancellation list.

Yeah, ohh.

Department of Kansas, I’ve got five of these. And I’ll go slowly so you get them. So there’s -- and this is Kansas, all of these. Silver Lake, Unit

160. 160. Rogers Varner, Unit 242. So it's number 242. Wikoff-Vermillion, Unit 129. Fort Dodge, Unit 107. And Grover Zion, Unit 105. So you have Unit 160, 242, 129, 107, 105. Okay?

Now does anyone wish to remove anything from the consent agenda?
(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Then the chair will now entertain a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

If you would go to the microphone in the middle so that we can hear who you are.

If someone would like to entertain a motion to adopt the consent agenda --

MS. HERMAN: Department of Montana. I make a motion that we accept the extended agenda as it was given to us.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you very much.

Is there a second to that motion?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And that was Alaska.

The motion has been moved and seconded to adopt the consent agenda as corrected.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

Motion carried.

The Chair is pleased to report that the Minutes Approval Committee met and approved the minutes of the NEC meeting from February of 2018. This committee is comprised of the NEC members from the Departments of Washington, Mississippi and South Dakota. Thank you, ladies, for doing a wonderful job this year.

I congratulate the NEC for being financially responsible in their actions this year. Let me remind you of the fiscally conscientious decisions you've made this year. And I have to tell you that I started writing these remarks in February, as soon as we had that last NEC meeting 'cause I thought everything that was going on was so exciting. So moving the NEC meeting from Washington, D.C. to Indianapolis is a cost savings of \$40,000. That was my thought, too. So this is a dollar equivalent. If you look at the \$9 national dues, it would be 4,444 members whose dues came into the national organization that paid for that extra \$40,000. So that was a savings.

Like us, the American Legion has also moved their NEC -- well, has also had their NEC meetings in Indianapolis because they, too, recognize the high cost of calling in such a large number of members to Washington, D.C.

Our own D.C. conference has not been cost effective for quite a number of years to the point that few Auxiliary members attended the D.C. conference unless they were being authorized to attend. And National was paying for their trip. In fact, even though our most recent NEC meeting was held in Indianapolis this year, Auxiliary members were still encouraged to attend the Legion's D.C. conference and more than 50 members chose to attend on their own. I think this participation means you made the right decision. I, too, agree that it was time to turn away from members feeling

they were entitled to a Washington, D.C. trip funded by the national organization. Thanks to our decision to move the mid-winter's NEC to Indianapolis, The American Legion was able to renegotiate their D.C. hotel contract and both the Legion and the Auxiliary saved money.

This NEC cost savings ties directly to the purchase of the new building. The 2016-2017 NEC was presented information regarding purchasing a building to further save money for our members. And they supported the building purchase by a vote of 57 to 1. It was a fiscally responsible decision.

And the new building is beautiful. It has larger meeting space than our current building that we can use for NEC meetings and the secretary's conference. And that space is in the process of being updated to meet fire code requirements.

The ability to hold more meetings at national headquarters is one of the great selling points listed in the proposal to the NEC prior to the vote on the building. There are also hotels and restaurants within walking distance, another cost saving measure. And we realize that the cost of renting office space for the next 10 years and the purchase price of the new building were almost identical. Plus, now we have an investment asset.

The new building also allows a large space for a cavalcade, space we don't now have.

During a recent department visit, the department and NEC was very complimentary regarding the affordability of travel for the NEC to travel to Indianapolis for the meeting. She explained that even with the national organization paying most of the expenses, the cost of the Washington, D.C. trip was just too much for her department to afford. She was so happy that Indianapolis was the new location of the mid-winter NEC meeting.

Because we all need to do our part to be custodians of our members' dues, this president saved the organization \$10,061 by flying economy class on parts of the Far East trip.

In supporting the ALA belief and continuity, I asked the National Secretary to be part of the foreign travel business trips to the Far East and Europe at no additional cost to the organization when compared to previous years' foreign travel. This gave the Auxiliary two working members to evaluate the foreign trip.

Making fiscally responsible decisions for the organization's benefit, not our own individual benefit, is what being a member of the national executive committee is all about. So thank you for your sound decision making and for being excellent caretakers of the Auxiliary. The money that was saved will go far to increase scholarships and work other mission related projects.

It's my pleasure to report that the NEC -- the Executive Committee to the NEC -- conducted all of their business meetings electronically and therefore they handled all their business with no cost to the organization. Members of this committee include representatives from both management and governance, so both staff and volunteers, all with experience and background in organizational history and financial expertise so that sound decisions could be made. The committee includes the National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, and the

Finance Committee Chairman.

Now as you know, the form of The -- American Legion former judge advocate, Phil Onderdonk, retired after 35 years of impeccable service and he was replaced by Kevin Bartlett, a 28-year member of The American Legion who served in the U.S. Navy. And he's going to be joining us today. So you can see him, you can meet him. It'll be very nice to have Kevin with us. He's not here yet. You know how it goes here. He's got his meetings and I'll come zipping right over. So we will come back to him.

So the Chair is now going to call on Peggy Thomas, Chairman of the National Finance Committee.

Hey, Peggy, catching a little off guard, I know. I shouldn't say that. She's prepared. She's just sooner --

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: Madam President and to all the members of the National Executive Committee.

The National Finance Committee continues to meet the challenges of good fiscal planning, to meet today's needs as well as future fiduciary requirements. The committee is comprised of five appointed members each serving a five-year term. Currently, the committee is made up of three past national presidents, which includes a retired vice president of a corporation, retired insurance executive and a retired CPA. The retired CPA is also a dual member which we are very proud of.

And thank you, ladies, for all your hard work and dedication. And now I will ask each of you to stand as I introduce you. Sharon Conatser from Illinois; Helen Riedlinger, South Dakota, Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, Wisconsin and Paula Raney. And I am from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you, ladies, for all your hard work, as I said.

The committee reviews the draft budget and makes any adjustments that may be necessary to reflect new or changing goals. The committee recommends a budget to the NEC's consideration and adoption. The National Finance Committee oversees the financial policy of the organization, reviews the annual audit of the Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation and makes physical policy recommendations to the National Executive Committee for action to ensure the ALA organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and government requirements.

In addition, your National Finance Committee is responsible for investment planning, reviewing financial statements, monitoring member benefits and fundraising campaign. The National Finance Committee designates one member as a liaison to the ALA Foundation board. Another liaison member is assigned to the National Audit Committee.

Due to responsible oversight, the National Finance Committee was able to continue fun, fun visits to departments by divisional vice presidents. We were able to continue the department secretary training at national headquarters another year. Your Finance Committee strongly believes in the value of ALA Mission Training to our members and national Junior meetings.

Nearly 500 members attended the six Mission Training sessions put

on by ALA National. And I repeat: 500 members attended. Attendance at the six national Junior meetings put on by ALA National grew in fiscal year 2018 with more than 150 attendants, three times the number attended when only one meeting was held each year.

The successful fundraising efforts by our direct mail vendors continued this year with three appeals for the ALA and one for the Foundation. And as of June 30th, the total amount was \$330,000. And that's a lot of money.

Every year, about one-half of the direct mail donations come from nonmembers. Shame on us. We thank our generous donors, both inside and out. Our members continue to use their Auxiliary credit cards and since its inception through December 2017, 45 million has been charged by cardholders resulting in a member of 25,000 in revenue each year to the ALA as a reward for our members' use. Ninety percent of the proceeds are shared with the departments every year as a result of a change enacted by the Finance Committee. As you may recall, previously, 50 percent was shared with departments and now it's 90. Starting in 2017, that amount was, as I said, it was raised to 90 percent to give back to the department.

So we always say, if you don't have a card, USAA card, go get one and use it. Responsibly, of course.
(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee also spends considerable time reviewing the fiscal analysis of purchasing a building for our national headquarters which you heard Madam President speak of versus continuing to lease office space. The committee toured the property and determined it was more cost effective to buy the property than to continue renting. Based on the recommendation by the National Finance Committee, the NEC approved the purchase with the closing taking place last November.

The National Finance Committee sincerely thanks our membership and the NEC for passing the national dues increase which takes place in the 2019 year.

And Tim Bresnahan, our controller, will give highlights on the operating income and expense and income and investments.

Tim, the floor is all yours.

(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: How are we all doing this morning? Good.

I just have one more comment about the impressive spending of the credit cards, and Linda will probably appreciate this. When you use your card, make sure you go to AmazonSmile and you'll get a double bonus and the Foundation will get more money. Right, Linda?

Okay. I'm going to go over the -- give you a synopsis of where we are at as of June 30th regarding our operating income, expenses, investments and contributions.

As of June 30th, our operating income -- we brought in \$6.1 million. We budgeted to bring in 6.3 so we're at a two percent worse than budget variance. Our operating expenses as of June 30th, we spent \$5.3 million. We budgeted to spend \$6.1 million. So we're better than budget by 13 percent.

We project the year to end as follows. We project that we'll have an income variance of \$300,000 which equates to four percent worse than

budget. But we also project that we'll come in better than budget by five percent on expenses or around \$450,000.

Our investment income, as of June 30th, we brought in \$600,000 actual. We budgeted \$515,000. Right now, we're 16 percent better than budget on investment income which is good. We project that at the end of the year, we will be better than budget by 10 percent on investment income. That's the projected. And there's some timing on everything but we'll see. That's my projection.

I just want to point out, our investments, our assets, our nonprofitable investments are \$33 million. I always like to point out at this point that \$3 million of that \$33 million is endowed. And it's endowed for the Children of Warriors scholarships.

Also, we have \$1 million of board designated funds which would be for the AEF grants and Spirit of Youth scholarships. And then we also have, right now, as of June 30th, 2018, \$7 million in unrealized fair market value, unrealized gains. And that is just what it says. It's unrealized. We all know the world's -- it can change in a heartbeat. So I like to point that out. It can change with world events. It can change with the U.S. political climate, political climate in the world. It can just change quickly. A computer glitch.

So really, once you take that all the way from the \$3 million, we still have wonderful reserves. There's \$22 million in reserves that's usable.

I did also want to point out that our investments -- 27 percent of our investments are at fixed income. Fifty-five percent of our investments are in equities. Fifteen percent of our investments are in alternatives. And three percent is in cash. I did also want to point out that 14 percent of our investments are in international investments and that currently, as of a report that the finance committee received just last Thursday, we got about a 6.5 percent return on our investments since inception. And that's good.

Contributions. Before I cover the contributions, I do want to sincerely thank -- I know Peggy did. But I want to thank you all for your contributions to the national level and the national funds because I know that you all give at all levels in the organization. So thank you very much.

Direct mail, like Peggy said, is \$330,000 as of June 30th, net. Spirit of Youth contributions are \$7,000. NPSF, National President's Scholarship Fund contributions, as of June 30th, are \$17,000. And AEF contributions as of June 30th are a wonderful \$141,000. So thank you.

And that is my report.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Are there any questions?

(No audible response.)

MS. THOMAS: This concludes the report.

Madam President, before Tim leaves the stage, I want to say he spends countless hours working beyond the normal shift in order to make sure that we get concise and good numbers. So let's give him a good round of applause.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you, Tim. And now you know.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Peggy and Tim.

During our February 24th mid-winter NEC meeting held in Indianapolis, I shared with you that the chairman of the Audit Committee informed of a recommendation that came out of their meeting. The recommendation involved the appointing of special committee to make recommendations on two of the Audit Committee's concerns. First, to review the pay ranges within job classifications at national headquarters. And second, to modernize executive management titles.

Pay ranges have not been reviewed in a decade and after a decade of inflation, I agreed with the committee that it was time. As for executive titles, I've been attending NEC meetings for about 25 years listening to our financial advisors repeatedly saying the Auxiliary is a multi-million dollar business and we've not embraced the corporate structure. I thought it was time to address this.

So I agreed with the Audit Committee's recommendation and I appointed a special committee to review titles of the top three executive staff at national headquarters in looking at their positions relative to their corporate responsibilities. I appointed Peggy Thomas as chairman, Kathy Dungan, Linda Boone, Patty Waltz, Marybeth Revoir and Pam Jackson.

As some of you know, Peggy was appointed the first chairman of Future Focus Committee four years ago. I appointed her to chair this special committee because she was already versed on the suggestion to modernize titles which is actually a topic I brought up four years at one of the very first Future Focus meetings. The topic had never been addressed so I brought it up again and formed the special committee. It seems as though upper management has been blamed for my actions and that's very unfortunate. So let's be clear. Looking at this was my idea.

Peggy presented her report to me and I now call on her to share the two outcomes with you, one of which will require a vote.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you, Madam President.

Our committee on title studies and so on had several conference call meetings to discuss modernizing job titles of a top executive decision at national headquarters. After much discussion, the consensus was to make no recommendations regarding title changes at this time.

Our committee was also tasked with making recommendations to adjusted pay ranges within job classifications at national headquarters. This had not been done for 10 years and many employees and many employees were now at or above the midpoint of each pay range. Ideally, the cluster should be below or near the midpoint.

The consensus was to assign this responsibility to the National Finance Committee to establish a standard procedure for annually reviewing and adjusting pay ranges based on the market analysts going forward.

I do want to take a moment to thank Patty Waltz especially whose expertise and human resource was invaluable. Patty had been the HR director for the American Legion for many years and she is now retired. She does HR consulting and is an expert on matters of compensation, benefits and job classifications, ranges and so on.

So, Madam President, I move to adopt the following recommendation: that the Finance Committee with the assistance of the national headquarters staff develop standard procedure for the annual review

of pay ranges within the employee job classification with the assistance of the national staff.

Madam President and members of the NEC, it's important to note that this recommendation does not change anyone's salary or wages at national headquarters. It only establishes a procedure for adjusting the ranges within the existing job classifications previously established by a special HR committee.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Become the motion comes from a committee, no second is needed. So the question is on the adoption of the recommendation to develop a standard procedure for the Finance Committee to review annually the pay ranges within the employee job classifications with the assistance of national staff.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The ayes have it and the motion is adopted.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Peggy.

Give the lady a hand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And actually, that whole committee did a lot of work. We really appreciate it.

At our last NEC meeting, I also tasked the Future Focus Committee to bring recommendations to simplify our national program. Future Focus chair, Sharon Conatser, and I talked recently and she reported that the committee did not have a consensus on recommendations at this time. So she's going to come up and give a report on her committee.

Sharon?

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Madam President, Diane. As you know, the Future Focus Committee and members of the Goal 4 Strategic Planning committee were tasked with proposing possible changes to our program. The diligent work of Goal 4 committee members produced numerous suggestions. This information was forwarded to the members of the Future Focus committee by email for their review and consideration. Members of the Future Focus committee asked that a meeting be set during the next administration for the Future Focus committee, the implementation team and Goal 4 committee members to vet the ideas.

Madam President, thank you for allowing me to give this update on behalf of the Future Focus committee.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Sharon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So Sharon said we want to put together Future Focus, implementation, Goal 4. And so what an opportunity this is. We have time available this afternoon during the Constitution & Bylaws Pre-con meeting to present ideas for optimizing mission delivery. In other words, for simplifying the national Auxiliary programs.

The main objective of this strategic plan Goal 4 strategy is to make it

easier for members to serve the mission. Goal 4 and strategy captains, Melanie Taylor and Laura Casey, have worked very hard over two years compiling and formulating proposals based on input from many members. Goal 4 will have an opportunity to float their ideas and proposals and receive input from attendees during the Constitution and Bylaws Pre-con meeting.

Oh. And one quick note. The Goal 4 strategy D team will be down a member at this convention. As some of you may know, team member, Laura Casey, decided that the perfect time for the stork to deliver her new baby girl, Ophelia, was right before convention. So I think it was last week. Thursday. Good timing, right?

So, seriously, though, we're all happy for Laura and she truly takes the strategic planning seriously. She's just sorry she can't be here because for some reason, she has other things to do.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: During the Goal 4 presentation, Implementation Team chair, Janet Jefford, Constitution & Bylaws chairman, Denise Delaney-Wrolen, Sharon and I will be at the front of the room. We're going to be listening to the exchange of ideas. We're looking forward to hearing your wishes. We want to hear what the members want for the program. Sharon and I also are going to be bringing our laptops and we're going to try to take copious notes for future reference. We are not going to be giving our opinions because we want to hear your opinions.

So this will be a time for Goal 4 attendees to openly discuss ideas and I'm looking forward to enjoying a great idea exchange.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Is there any other new business?

You want to come over to the center microphone, Jan?

MS. MAHONEY: Can you hear me?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I can hear you, Jan. Can you identify yourself?

MS. MAHONEY: Madam National President, Diane, members of the dais --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Jan, can you identify yourself with your department so that we can record who you are?

MS. MAHONEY: I'm sorry?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Identify yourself with your name and department.

VOICES: Who are you?

MS. MAHONEY: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought I did that. I'm sorry. Jan Mahoney.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Department of --

MS. MAHONEY: Department of New York.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

MS. MAHONEY: Thank you. I'm so sorry.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Go for it.

MS. MAHONEY: I'll start again.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

MS. MAHONEY: Good.

Madam National President, Diane, members of the dais, my fellow National Executive Committee women, good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. MAHONEY: I'm going to be presenting a motion to return the NEC mid-winter meetings during the Legion D.C. conference. And these are my reasons why.

The American Legion Auxiliary, along with the American Legion --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Jan, we're going to take your motion and get a second first. So don't go anywhere.

MS. MAHONEY: Oh, I'm sorry. Second --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Don't go anywhere. And then you can start debating.

So we have a motion to return the NEC meeting to Washington, D.C.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible). I second the motion.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

Jan, you have the floor. You may speak on this.

MS. MAHONEY: Okay. I'll get this right yet.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We all will.

MS. MAHONEY: These are my reasons why.

The American Legion Auxiliary, along with the American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Riders have worked tirelessly to unite as The American Legion Family. We are stronger together as a family as we go to Washington, D.C. to show our force and to be the force and to be the voice as we advocate for our veterans and military.

The NEC meeting is open to all members to listen to the important information given to our NECs as they are the voting members. Transparency should be the main goal in how our national headquarters operates. By moving the meeting to Indianapolis just for the NECs, it closes that open door.

Advocating on the Hill brings in more support for our legislative agenda and the American Legion Auxiliary is a driving force. Holding the meeting in Washington brings in more members from all of our family.

We all understand the financial ramifications of having the meeting in Washington. But we must also realize the investment in our organization's members.

In National's own words, we cannot save the ALA by paring back until we reach our projected demise. Let's strengthen the ALA by investing in our members as they gather and show support in Washington with the Legionnaires and sons. The world is watching as we show who we are, what we do and why we matter.

Having our NEC meeting in Washington and supporting our American Legion family, as we all stand together and support demonstrating all five centennial strategic plan goals, builds brand loyalty, strengthens departments and units, develops leadership, creates an internal culture of good will and it will enhance membership.

May I please quote the vision of the American Legion Auxiliary? I quote:

"The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of

fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.”

I move that the NEC vote and discuss on returning the NEC mid-winter meeting back to Washington, D.C. during the American Legion conference.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Is there other discussion?

MS. CUPPLA: Kelli Cuppla, Department of Florida.

My discussion on this is that I went two years ago as the NECA and I got to attend. I'm from Maryland originally, D.C. area, and, yes, it is a beautiful area and it's nice to see all the museums and to visit with your congressman and senators and I understand that.

But you also make a bigger impact in your local area than you do up on the Hill sometimes because you can't even get in to see a representative.

Also, listening today about the savings, I mean, \$40,000 is huge when you think about that. The rooms up there run about \$279 a night. I'm sure they're not that price in Indianapolis. And I just think for the general membership, it's better if we try to save money. We're telling them that we're raising dues and we need to try to look like we're trying to be cost efficient as well.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We appreciated knowing about this concern. And in order to help everyone make informed decisions, we're going to keep discussing this. I've also asked Tim and Sara to look at financial impact of this so that we can make informed decisions. So you can make your comment. We'll have Tim and Sara get ready to make their comments or bring us some financial information.

MS. WALLACE: Eva Wallace, Department of Washington.

I'm fully in favor of this resolution. I have been traveling back to Washington, D.C. for many, many years whether I was in NEC or a legislative chairman. And I felt when I went back -- I flew back from Indianapolis to D.C. -- that we really lost something. Yes, the officers were still going and certain committee chairmen were going. But I think, as members, we're losing a connection that we need to have not only with the Legion but going on the Hill and representing your state and your department and meeting with your legislators. And, yes, we did meet with our legislators. We met with every one of them. We go as a team. We have always gone as a team. And not to have our Auxiliary represented would be a big loss to our department and to what we represent as an American Legion Auxiliary and an American Legion family.

MS. CONRAD: I'm Denise Conrad, NEC for the Department of Ohio.

I wonder if we might consider a compromise. I think that there are a lot of our Auxiliary ladies that would like to attend the Washington conference. It's unfortunate that it happens to be on the same weekend. And that made it difficult for a lot of them to travel from Indianapolis to Washington, D.C. If our intent is to be a family and we want to be in D.C., we could still have our NEC meetings in Indianapolis but allow it to be a different weekend so that the time frame is such that they can travel with the Legion family to Washington, D.C. for the awareness assembly.

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada.

Yes. It's cost saving to be in Indianapolis but there are many of us that work very, very hard with our department to create Legion family. I personally think that one of the things that was missing from not being able to go to Washington, D.C. was the voice of the women. Yes, there were women Legionnaires. But when we add the Auxiliary, there are more women voices.

One of the things that's been on the legislative agenda for years and years and years is the survivor widow benefits tax. None of our Legionnaires mentioned that because I asked. So one of our huge legislative agendas was completely overlooked. It's written in the drop sheet but nobody spoke to our representatives about it. So the three Legionnaires from Nevada that did go, I specifically asked whether or not they raised that as an issue. Oh, no. We forgot that one. Well, we as women need that voice. And, yes, our department commander was a woman. She presented the rest of the Legion agenda and forgot that part. So -- because it wasn't something that was important to her. So when we have more women, we have more of a voice.

So -- and I understand that it saves the money. At the same time, though, I think it's a good investment in the voice of women.

MS. LLOYD: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning.

MS. LLOYD: My name is Lauren Lloyd and I'm the NEC from Washington, D.C.

I am fully aware of the cost of living and one of the most expensive places in our nation. I'm personally -- and I am personally aware of what Kelli from Florida said about the local impact having a greater voice in your local representative's office, personally and impactfully, because you actually have the ear of your representative and they will remember you better locally with a face as a local community member which I am advocating that more of you, if you don't do that on a local basis, do it, because they'll remember you more and they will share with the D.C. staff about you. I can attest to this personally.

I love having everybody in our city. And I would love for the D.C. department to be more active in being a part of that. But I do have to recognize, you're looking at -- you have to look at fiscal responsibility, personal responsibility and ownership of a passion to be committed to the Legion family. And I don't think that responsibility should rest fiscally on the national headquarters, personally.

I do believe that we can come to a solution that might work for everyone. So I thought carefully before coming up here because I don't like to present a problem without a solution.

I do think that keeping the NEC meeting in Indianapolis is fiscally responsible and it makes it a great time to kind of get to know each other at the headquarters' location. And I do agree with the lady who spoke about moving the date to make it an opportunity for those of us who want to attend the convention -- the conference in D.C. to attend. I do think it's important that we stand with our Legion family members to show them what a powerful voice we have to add because a lot of times, like the person in front of me said, those issues that are important to us are not mentioned. But we can do that by attending the meetings that are already in place, not creating more fiscal responsibility and not creating more burden of creating an agenda for

meetings that people are not going to attend.

So I suggest this. Have a specialized meeting in conjunction with the Legion's conference in D.C. to be a part of the legislative committee that would be open for anybody who's an ALA member to attend and be able to share their concerns. If we are all there and they know that you're not paying for us to be there, that makes more of an impact, in my mind, that we're passionate and we really believe what we're fighting for. And so, if there's a way to create a special event and to pull in those spouses that are there for the conference that are not current ALA members. We can actually get a lot of our strategic goals in one meeting.

I'm all about efficiency. In D.C., we have a saying: there's always something to do and too much to do. But if we coordinate with the rest of our Legion family, try to make a bigger voice and a bigger presence, yes, it's beautiful, to see people from the Legion Family walking together on the Hill. I love it. It warms my heart. And it does make an impact. But I do believe that it can be solved if we did something different than we have done before which kind of falls into that Future Focus thing. We don't have to do everything like we've done it before.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Lauren, did you want to make an amendment?

MS. LLOYD: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes. (Indiscernible) make an amendment.

I apologize. My remembrance of parliamentary procedures is not so great.

So I would make an amendment that we look into the possibility of a special meeting at the D.C. conference with the American Legion for American Legion Auxiliary members and those interested parties.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I move to amend that.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Lauren, we're trying to get your verbiage.

MS. LLOYD: Oh, sorry.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. So if you can just help us with that, we want to write it down.

MS. LLOYD: (Indiscernible) mic.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yeah. Just come up here.

You want a special meeting in D.C.

MS. LLOYD: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And you're talking about the Auxiliary (indiscernible).

MS. LLOYD: Yes.

(Conversation heard away from mic.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So what brings you all to town today? (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We're writing. We've got this down now. We're writing.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I just want to let you know that the

national judge advocate has arrived. So if I can have your consent, can we lay this on the table until after he speaks because he has a schedule and wants to be in and be out. So you ladies will get to line up again.

So we want to welcome American Legion Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And as I mentioned before -- yeah. Give him a hand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So our judge advocate is a 28-year member of the American Legion who served in the U.S. Navy.

We're glad to see you here.

JUDGE BARTLETT: Thank you.

Good morning, everyone.

VOICES: Good morning.

JUDGE BARTLETT: That was the most perfect abbreviated bio I've ever had.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: So this is a unique opportunity I have to discuss things with you. First off, I want to let you know a couple things. When I started out as an attorney 20 some years ago, I did criminal defense. So I helped bad guys.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: And, you know, when you help out bad guys, you got the law, breaking the law and this gray area. That's where we operated in. But one day my son, who was four, said, "Dad, I got in trouble. Why you helping out bad guys like me?" So I stopped.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: 'Cause he was in time out.

And then I moved on and I ended up -- I also do contract law. And, you know, in contract law, you got to dot the i's and cross the t's which means you have procedures to follow and there is no gray area.

So I have the unique history of being able to work in both arenas and have.

So this came about because people -- things took place in the country. And I just want to start out -- I do have things written down so when I look down, I am reading and following along with my notes. And I've written more opinions and have spent more time with your national secretary than Phil has in the last 10 years.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: You know, when I started this job, he said stay away from the ladies.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: I said I've been married 20 -- well, yesterday was 27 years. And I said, yeah, I know. I need to.

(Applause.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: Because I'm always wrong, right? The guys are always wrong? You know? I mean -- okay.

But I'm not wrong here. As the national judge advocate, we were

federally chartered. And with that federal charter, we're allowed to come up with and did develop the ALA. But The American Legion owns all the trademarks, all the names and all the emblems associated with the ALA and the American Legion.

Now we -- me -- my position is empowered to protect all that. And that's what I do. At the same time, the ALA, as an organization, has chartered departments which uses the emblems we use and the trademarks and all that which then, in turn, came up with the units which uses the emblems, trademarks and all that.

So when you follow the logic, the opinion of the national judge advocate, whether it's myself, Phil or somebody else that's in the chair, has the authority to write opinions because we control the trademarks, the emblems and everything that makes us well known.

Now going to your Constitution & Bylaws of the ALA -- and I'm going to quote this. I think it's Article 8, Section 5:

Each unit of the ALA "shall be responsible for verifying eligibility in deciding its members."

We in the Legion like to say we're the judge of our own membership. Just like our little club -- 'cause we're a club. This is a club. You all have a club. Right? This is a fun club that you get together.

Now there's other clubs within our club. The DEC is a separate club. And the DEC is the judge of their membership just like this national body and whosoever on the national body is a judge of their membership. So there's clubs within the clubs. You know, you got to go through the hoops, the chairs, whatever, to move up the ranks and get into a different club and become somebody else and do all that stuff, right? A pain in the ass, but -- (Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: That's my own personal comment.

Nevertheless, let's go back to the beginning. Criminal. Contract. Rules. Follow them. If they're not followed, then we have a rule breach. And when you have a rule breach, in criminal law, we call that fruit of the poisonous tree. Everybody watches TV shows. You see when the cops -- oh, we don't need a warrant. Let's go. Whatever. And then they go see the judge. We want this in. And the defense attorney says no, we can't put this in. There was no warrant. And the judge is, you're right. So everything that comes from that illegal use or not following the rules is called through the poisonous tree and tossed out.

Now when it's bad guys, that stinks because sometimes you really want to get the bad guys and you can't. But you still got to play by the rules. Just like in contracts or in our organization, you have to play by the rules.

Now some of the things I want to address here relates to a letter that's been going around. And it's been from a situation that took place in South Dakota. And it was sent to many past national presidents and I got a copy of it. Somebody sent it to me. And it came to my attention that they were asking me to set the record straight because the rule's in the gray area.

The letter, when I read it, was one-sided, incomplete and didn't have everything that took place. Everything that came through national regarding this issue was sent to me. I saw all the emails. As I said, I've spent more time than Phil has in the last 10 years because I read all the emails. We spent

countless hours, countless hours -- she was in France one time, as somebody can attest, who woke up in the middle of the night I think to use the facilities, right? And you were, like, you're talking to Kevin?

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: We have to get up in three hours.

This situation that took place was handled very seriously because when a department takes action against a national person, that person does have standing to talk to me because my job is to protect the national organization.

So a ruling was asked for if what was done was proper and correct. Well, as Phil has done in the past, both for your organization and for our organization, if something is done correctly, an opinion can be issued. If something is done incorrectly, opinion can be issued. The point is to clarify things. And the idea is we need to present the proper steps or to clarify what was done wrong.

Now in regard to the recent events in South Dakota and another state, which you may know about, the national secretary sent me all the emails. She also sent me the responses she was going to be sending out and I reviewed them and they were done correctly. The questions that were asked were answered. And that's the problem that many of us, with the situations you're in, understand. We can have a conversation and in four minutes decide what's going on. But you've all seen that McDonald's commercial. "Bring me fries. Bring me fries. I want fries." You know, it's how you read it. But when you talk about it, you understand. But reading had to be done because questions were posed.

Now one of the things that has to be mentioned is, there was an attorney contacted in South Dakota which elevated everything. And what I mean that elevated everything, now we've got a situation where we're calling in legal and we have to take things a little bit more carefully. You know, the basics for our organization is to follow all the rules: federal, state, your governing documents, your resolutions, everything that's there. You got to follow the rules. Otherwise, there's going to be problems. And nobody likes the problems.

So when you get this other attorney involved, they want to make sure because if we've got national people talking out of line, out of step, on a different -- on a department level then someone's going to may be able to make the connection, national's in charge, and we're not in charge. As I like to say when I refer to our national constitution which I always keep in my pocket and highlight the part right here, you know, we only can give -- "We cannot control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of the organization. We give guidance. We give suggestions unless rules are broken. Rules have to be followed."

Now the letter that was -- it is circulating -- complains I did not ask for facts about what happened related to the incident. When it's fact-based, whatever is behind those facts aren't necessary to be followed -- or they're immaterial. You know, you don't need to really concern yourself. The steps are this. As I get people calling my office saying, Bob's an idiot, okay, so? Well, we want to throw him out. Is Bob in your post? No. You can't do anything about him. He's not in your post. And just like here, in the

Auxiliary, if Mary's an idiot and Mary's not in your unit, you can't do anything about it. If your unit loves you, if your unit loves you, you can be any kind of person you want out here. Of course, that also means you're probably sitting in the back of the room or you're going to be leaving 'cause nobody wants to be around an idiot. But if your unit loves you, you're fine.

Now I was only asked about the authority from the DEC if what the DEC did was correct. And here, I said, the questions that were focused on to answer were:

Did the DEC have the authority to do what the DEC did?

Did the DEC follow the law and the governing documents?

And looking at the facts of the steps that were taken to cross the t to get to the i or the i to get to the t, the steps were not followed. Why we got to the start is immaterial. But in these cases, both of these cases, they jumped the gun. The DEC can discipline members of their DEC. They can't remove them from their unit but they can from the DEC because they control -- they're the gatekeeper for the DEC.

National -- if they have people come forward to sit at the NEC and they don't want to sit them at the NEC, that's NEC's decision. But they can't throw them out. Okay? I want to make that crystal clear.

The organization, the unit organization, controls membership for that individual. Beyond that, it's how well and what you do to wherever you go. If you would like to become a national president, I would say just not being a jerk.

(Laughter.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: Okay? If you are, it's not going to happen.

Now one of the things I do want to say is, I've worked with your president. I've worked with your national secretary. They're wonderful women. There was a lot of work done. Their knowledge, the professionalism, everything was above board. There was no influence. The facts were provided. I dealt with the facts.

As I told you at your leadership conference, everybody in this room should be happy and lucky that we have the women up here, the national secretary right here, your president up here to be working for you.

The second day I came into the office, I was told I was going to be working with you. And I looked at Phil and said, wait a minute. You know, I was told I was supposed to stay away from the women when I was a young Legionnaire. Now I have to go work with national organization?

Well, it's been a pleasure. Thank you. Thank you. Thank all of you for everything that you do. I'm going to be around. I kind of stand out. I'm the young guy in the red hat.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: Thank you.

But what I'm saying is, I stand out. If you want to talk to me, ask questions. I've got nothing to hide. I went to a couple of department conventions this summer. And one, I know I was going to the hornet's nest and that's why I wanted to go, but it was the same exact thing. People were lying. People weren't telling the truth. People weren't following the rules. And they had questions. And I just stood there and answered all of them.

And if I tell you, I don't know, that means I don't know but that also means I'm going to find out the answer.

Some people have known me a long time and she knows that's how I've been and always will be. My mom said to me before I came here, she said, remember, you're just some guy. I said, yeah, I'm just some guy that happens to be very lucky and very fortunate, but at the same time, you all have some fortunate people sitting up here. And what I would like to say is, have a good convention. Come see me if you need anything and let's just follow the rules, because at the leadership conference -- where's my kindergarten teacher? She was there. Come on. You're not here now. That's disappointing because she was the one. I'm supposed to be in charge telling you what are the rules of kindergarten. Say please. Say thank you. Be nice. Share your toys. Be a friend if you want to be a friend.

Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

JUDGE BARTLETT: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Many thanks to the judge advocate. Yes, the phone calls at 2 and 3 in the morning several nights in a row. I still don't have it straight in my head what time it was here. No clue.

So thanks to Kevin for making time in his busy schedule to share important information with us. We truly appreciate him coming in this morning.

And now we're going to go back and take off the table -- if you have no objection, we're going to pick up where we left off, okay?

We have the motion. Here is the motion.

So we have a motion now. And just to review for your parliamentary procedure, once I read this motion, I'll be asking if there's a second for it. And then we debate this motion not the first one. Okay? Okay.

So the motion was -- this is a substitute amendment has been moved that the ALA Legislative Committee hold a special meeting in Washington, D.C. open to all ALA members and spouses in conjunction with the Legion Washington, D.C. conference to express their concerns and support to the Legion legislative agenda.

Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I heard a voice. Who was it?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Alaska.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Alaska. Okay. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Can you do that. We have people who can do that.

It goes "A substantive amendment has been moved" -- and now it's been moved and seconded -- "that the ALA Legislative Committee hold a special meeting in Washington, D.C. open to all ALA members and spouses in conjunction with the Legion Washington, D.C. conference to express their concerns and support to the Legion legislative agenda."

Okay. The way it was presented, it was my opinion that it is a substitute amendment. That being that it is an amendment to strike the

original motion and insert this new language. So it would strike the motion to hold the mid-winter conference in -- the mid-winter NEC in D.C. And rather than -- then substitute this new language.

So a substitute amendment is handled a little bit differently. You handle debate and any amendments to the substitute. And once you complete that, then you move to debate and -- amendments on the original motion. Then you take a vote on whether or not you want to consider the substitute or the original motion. And that is a majority vote. And then once you do that -- so you're deciding which -- so you have the original and you have the substitute.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. So you discuss the substitute and you see if you want to make any changes to it. And once you're finished doing that then you discuss the original and decide if you want to make any amendments to that. And then you vote as to which one you want to finally be your motion. So a majority vote, you decide which one of these you want to be your motion. And once you decide that, then whichever one you come up with becomes the motion that you end up taking a final vote on.

So it's a little complicated but that's the way it's handled.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President, I need a little more clarification. I'm sorry. So when a person comes to the microphone and moves to amend the motion, then the parliamentarian can declare if it's a substitute motion or if it's an amendment to the original? That's what I don't understand.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's just my opinion. You don't have to take my opinion. If the chair wishes to consider differently -- right. So I don't -- I'm a parliamentarian. I don't make any rulings on things. It's just my advice as how I view it is that it's related to the same issue but it is -- the way she presented it -- 'cause we asked her some questions about what she wanted to do. And --

(Voices heard away from mic.)

MS. LLOYD: I wanted to clarify. I'm not trying to say we shouldn't have a mid-year NEC meeting. I'm just suggesting that we keep the mid-year meeting in Indianapolis on a different date to not conflict with the American Legion's date so we can attend a special meeting of the legislative committee open to all ALA members and interested spouses of American Legion members, who are not currently members of ALA, to create a more unified Legion family.

I think -- did I say that correctly?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I think it pretty much comes back to what you said, yeah.

Okay. So our debate on the floor now is on this amendment, the substitute amendment, that the ALA Legislative Committee hold a special meeting in Washington, D.C. open to all ALA members and spouses in conjunction with the Legion Washington, D.C. conference to express their concerns and support to the Legion legislative agenda.

Yes, ma'am?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I can't hear you.

There you go.

MS. CASADEI: Hello. Mary Anne Casadei, the Department of New York.

I request that the chair consider it as a motion to amend for the purposes of this meeting rather than a motion to replace. I think it would simplify it for our members and for our voting body.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Sharon?

MS. CONATSER: -- Sharon Conatser, Department of Illinois.

The only thing that I didn't hear in that amendment was changing the date for when the American Legion D.C. conference is. So if we could get that in that amendment, I think it might be -- that's the part I did not hear in the amendment. It's not in there, is it? I didn't hear it, did I? It's not in there.

Her amendment said that she wanted to change the date of the February NEC to a date not to conflict with going in to Washington, D.C. American Legion conference. Am I right?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. CONATSER: Okay.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. So that -- is there any objection to amending it and making sure that we put in that next phrase?

Okay. Do you have the phrase?

Obviously, this is sort of a friendly amendment. We don't have to go through another motion on this.

Does anyone object to adding that in?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. It's simplified. It's good.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And just a reminder to everyone. Only the NEC is allowed to do the debate. Okay? Those are the only people we'll be hearing from.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's -- yeah. Past national presidents are included because you're on the NEC voice no vote. Yes. And then we have the NEC. But the rest of the assembly, no. Okay? Okay.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Can I read it again?

"A substitute amendment has been moved that the ALA Legislative Committee hold special meeting in Washington, D.C. open to all ALA members and spouses in conjunction with the Legion Washington, D.C. conference to express their concerns and support to the Legion legislative agenda;

"And, further, that the ALA NEC meeting be held in Indianapolis at a time that does not conflict with the Legion D.C. conference."

Okay. We're good?

Anita (sic)?

MS. OWENS: Hi. Anita Owens, Department of Georgia.

And I'm talking with others. There's a confusion on this in that our original motion was out there to move the NEC from Indiana back to the D.C.

at the D.C. conference and have our NEC meeting there. That was the original motion that was on the floor.

And then we have an amendment that comes up which, to me, is two different subjects. One is, let's modify the original motion to still hold the NEC meeting in Indianapolis and at a different date.

Secondly, there is a motion that we establish a meeting at the D.C. conference to express our concerns with the legislative issues which is separate entirely from a NEC meeting. And I think we're confusing the issues here by mixing them together.

So I'm going to make a motion that we change the date of the NEC committee meeting mid-year so it is not in conflict with the D.C. conference. That's it.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So you want to change the date of the NEC meeting to a different date.

MS. OWENS: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And that's in this --

MS. OWENS: That's just -

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: That's in this one that we just have now that I read.

MS. OWENS: But it's got something else attached to hers. And I think they're separate issues. I think we need to simplify the meeting -- amendment to the original motion.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's muddy.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Dubbie, do you want to make a clarifying statement here?

MS. WALLACE: With all due respect to Robert's rules for just a minute --
(Laughter.)

MS. WALLACE: -- the reason the mid-winter NEC meeting had been established on that date that it was, was because many people are authorized to come to Indianapolis and the travel from Indianapolis to Washington, D.C. was going to be less expensive. That is the reason that that date was established. That is not set in stone. We can certainly move the date for the NEC meeting to a different time. So I want to be clear about that. There's no rule about when that meeting has to be held. And I at least want you to understand, if that date was selected, as a convenience to people who were authorized to come to Indianapolis which, for some parts of the country, that's, you know, cutting off half of your travel from Indianapolis -- from west coast to Indianapolis, Indianapolis to D.C.

So that was established thinking that that was being helpful to people financially who wanted to go on to Washington, D.C.

It is absolutely not a problem -- and I don't want that to muddy your discussions here. It is absolutely not a problem to move the NEC meeting to a different weekend or to a different time. It's always -- we've always done it on a weekend in deference to people who have jobs and other weekday commitments. So it's unlikely that we would ever select a mid-week date for

your NEC meeting. That's just not practical for most people. We really do try to be practical and considerate of our members. That's one of the things we try to do.

So, to be clear, we can move the NEC meeting. That, in fact -- if that is the -- by consent, if that is the wish of the body, that can be done as -- when we get back, we can come up with a different date and we can circulate that. We can even do that probably while we're here so that at the post-convention NEC meeting, that date could be announced.

Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And just as clarification, Anita -- that's okay. To do yours, we would need to vote down both of the motions on the floor and just start again with a new motion. Okay.

We'll take these two and then I'm going to ask Tim and Sara to give information. So we have two people standing here in line waiting.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, I'm sorry.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And then we'll have Tim and Sara --

MS. LLOYD: So to clarify -- and I apologize for not knowing the correct language.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's all right.

MS. LLOYD: I rescind my amendment --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay.

MS. LLOYD: -- to -- yes. To make this simpler.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Because the motion has already been seconded, now it belongs to the body.
(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So -- okay. Because the motion has already been seconded, it belongs to the body. So it's now been rescinded -- withdrawn -- okay.

So here's the bottom line, ladies. Do you have any objection with us withdrawing this motion and -- withdrawing this amendment, the substitute amendment? Okay. You're okay with that?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. You're all there nodding. We're good. Okay. We're done with that.

We're going to go back to the main motion now. And I'm going to ask Tim and Sara, who I mentioned before have looked at information about D.C. conference and that. Do we have some financial background to give them so that we know -- information that we need to know about differences and where the -- where our conference is held?

MR. BRESNAHAN: Well, I'm not as --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. And I am confused, too. So we're looking at the difference between the NEC meeting -- can you stay there? We're looking at the difference between the NEC meeting being in Indianapolis and D.C. So we have more information.

You're on.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Okay. Well, I was going -- I actually want to commend everybody 'cause I think this is a healthy conversation to have. So thank you for bringing it up.

Just real quick around a couple of things that -- and Stephanie could always correct me if I get this wrong. But by having the meeting in Indy, we were actually able to do more training. You all spent a little bit more time there. I think 98 percent of the attendees actually spent two nights.

And then also, I just wanted to point out that somebody asked earlier, it cost for having 48 rooms in D.C., it costs \$14,000 per night to hold the meeting in D.C.

So I know the conversations -- that's just adding more detail for you and just the facts. And so that was it.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Eva?

MS. WALLACE: Now I can talk. Eva Wallace, Department of Washington NEC.

I'm still not in favor of this because I felt like we were at that NEC meeting and we spent several hours doing business which is what we're supposed to be doing. And I was -- but what we missed out on was the workshops that we had in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the awareness Washington, D.C. conference, whatever you want to call it, that I've gone to for years and years. I felt that those workshops brought great value to the leadership of this organization beyond what we have at our mission training. To me, that's not at the same level as what the ones are that are in Washington, D.C. I thought that we were addressing different levels of information that was being shared.

But also, I would like to say -- and this has happened to me and it's happened to several others -- is when I'm in Washington, D.C., we are meeting with our congressmen and senators. We are actually having sit down meetings with them in conference rooms or with our aides. When we go -- in Washington, when I go to make appointments in my state with these people, I never get to see the congresswoman or the senators. It's a different level. When we come to them in Washington, D.C., they really understand that we are advocating not just for a (indiscernible) service officer. Maybe there was issues of discussion that were pertinent to our state. But when you go to Washington, D.C., you're talking about the entire Legion and what we're talking about as our focus points that we present. And we present that as a family. And I think that is extremely important to continue to give that message in Washington, D.C. And I felt that the workshops that we've had in Washington, D.C. at that level were much better than just sending a meeting for a day and leaving very early the next morning.

MS. JACKSON: Madam President, Ellen Jackson, Department of Michigan.

My question is has anybody considered and asked what the impact was on our legislators that we were pulled out. What effect did that have to them saying if you don't care to come to the conference and speak then why should we listen? So you're pulling out the American Legion Auxiliary, all these members, from the legislative in talking to them. And when I went, we talked to them. Our Legionnaires had booklets of all the concerns and they sat down and talked to us. What impact did that have on them and what did it say to them? That we don't care, we're not coming there?

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hang on.

MS. SEELEY: -- again.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hang on, Glynis. Hang on, Glynis.

Hang on, Glynis.

To answer your question, we don't have input from congressmen, no, Glynis?

MS. SEELEY: I can add a piece to that real quick. I saw my state senator at a Memorial Day service. And because I had been going to Washington in years past, he walked over to me and said it's really, really nice to see you here for this service but where were you in February 'cause I saw the Legionnaires but I didn't see you. And your voice is always welcome in my office.

So that's just my own personal interaction with one of the state senators from Nevada.

One of the other things that I actually wanted to mention was that Washington, D.C. trip for me, it's a five and a half to six hour flight to go to Washington from Nevada. Most of the time that I went, most of you are well aware that the NEC is reimbursed for one evening and to pay for the conference or the meeting, and that's it. The rest of that was all on my own personal dime. Washington, D.C. trip usually costs me about \$1500 every year. My suggestion would be the possibility of looking into contracting with a less expensive hotel. Yes. The Washington Hilton is historic and it's a really nice hotel and it's got really nice conference rooms, but what of the possibility of looking into maybe something that doesn't cost \$279 a night. For two reasons: one, it still saves the Auxiliary some money nationally; secondly, it may actually get some more of the NEC to stay longer during that period of time because instead of spending \$1500 out of my own personal money, maybe it will only cost me \$1000. So that may actually have more people staying instead of leaving the very next day after the approved our national (indiscernible) meetings.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And as a clarification to that, just so you know, that we ride on the shirrtails of the Legion.

MS. SEELEY: Right.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: They contract the hotel so we go with their contract. Every -- and just as clarification also, everyone was welcome to go to the D.C. conference. We didn't say you can come to the NEC meeting; you may not go to Washington, D.C. I think the difference comes in as who's paying for the trip. I think that's what we're really talking about. Yeah.

MS. BUSKE: I'm Luella Buske, NEC from Illinois. And I call for the vote.

(Applause.)

MS. JACKSON: Madam President, I would like it by ballot, please. Ellen Jackson, Department of Michigan.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. So first, we have a motion to call for the vote. Is there a second on that?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All in favor that we call for the vote.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Does anyone have an objection to using

a ballot vote?

Okay. I'm backtracking. Is there anyone that's not in favor of doing the vote now?

(No audible response.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Okay. So ballot vote?

Is there any -- the second person asked for a ballot vote. Is there any objection to a ballot vote?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh. All those in favor of a ballot vote, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Those opposed to a ballot vote.

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I have no clue.

Okay. Those who would like ballot, would you stand, please?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

Those opposed, stand up. Okay. So we won't have a ballot vote. Those that are opposed, that's the winning side. Okay.

I don't have the original motion anymore. I'm looking for your original motion.

MS. JACKSON: Ellen Jackson, Department of Michigan.

Can I get clarification? Because at the beginning of the session, you said if we asked for a ballot vote, we would have a ballot vote.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And then we have to vote on it. And that's -- that's a Roberts Rules of Order thing. It does say that you need to be -- yeah. We need to vote on that.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So the original motion is that the mid-winter ALA NEC meeting be held in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the Legion D.C. conference, right? Okay. And we've called for the vote. So all those in favor of this motion, signify by saying aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Those opposed?

VOICES: No.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We'll do another standing vote.

Kathy? Kathy Dungan, do you have (indiscernible)?

Okay. All those in favor of having the mid-winter ALA NEC meeting in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the Legion D.C. conference, would you stand, please? And Kathy and Diane are going to help us count.

Okay. I'm going to repeat the motion again for you. Thank you.

It was that the mid-winter ALA NEC meeting be held in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the Legion D.C. conference.

And we did that. Yeah.

So all of those opposed to this motion, stand.

Kathy, Diane. Motion failed? Okay. The motion fails. Thank you very much.

Is there any other new business? What, you think you've had

enough?

Dubbie, do you have any updates?

MS. BUCKLER: I'm going to be direct and address some things that are overheard in whispering when National Judge Advocate gave his remarks. I am not the one that forwarded the letter to him. That letter came to him from a number of sources and he did inform National President Diane about the letter. We were not copied on the letter. So I just want to be real clear about that because voices can carry up here.

We have about 10 minutes before the Pre-con meetings start so I'm going to blitz through -- real quick, I want to give you a building update because that's the number one thing that I'm asked about.

The -- you all agreed to purchasing the building. I do want to let you know that the Executive Committee to the NEC, that was one of the few times where there was any actual business conducted by the Executive Committee to the NEC and the NEC knew within hours of that as immediate Past National President Mary can attest because there was a great deal of time spent discussing that. And as soon as the recommendation was that the NEC consider that proposal, as quick as all of that could have been typed and put into something and sent out to you, it was.

We will probably not be moving into the new building until November, sometime hopefully before Thanksgiving. That's dependent upon a number of things.

The building is 25 years old. It was in very good shape. All the information that was sent out very clearly described what had been done. Major stuff had been done. Nonetheless, as you can all imagine, when you take things off of walls and people move out and you walk around and look at carpet, there's some things that have to be done. And we knew that. And I just want to make sure you all know that when you hear us talk about we're having some renovations done, that was all taken into consideration. That was all part of everything that was circulated in advance. So that whole fiscal analysis that was presented about purchasing the building, it built in spending money to do necessary renovations. So necessary renovations are being done.

When they moved out, a bunch of cubicles -- the cubicles need to be removed. We knew that. When you start looking at that and realizing what the carpet looks like where people lived for 25 years, it -- there are some things that just need to be done.

One of the main things is the building had to be re-evaluated for meeting fire code. Fire code changed in 25 years. Parts of the building did not meet current fire code. So there has to be some fire suppression walls built. That falls within what we anticipated. We didn't anticipate exactly that but it's called a contingency. Kind of like you never know what you're going to find until you start, you know, opening doors and looking inside stuff.

So the things that are being done are within -- what has been budgeted to do that. Again, the anticipated move is in -- it's going to be in November.

I'm going to mention at convention -- I just want to give you a quick heads up. At the National Finance Committee, we discussed -- for those of you seeing pictures of the new building, if the Past National Presidents here are cars parked in the parking lot, there is a sidewalk up to -- and I'm the front

door -- there's a sidewalk up to the front door. And there are two strips of what had been landscaped. Strips that are about like from the podium to the microphone and half as wide. Maybe about -- not quite as wide as that carpeted area.

Instead of spending several thousand dollars which is what the previous occupants had done landscaping that every year, the decision is we are going to brick that. And we're going to be offering people the opportunity to buy a brick. So just let you know, that'll be -- more about that later in the interest of time.

So my other remarks I'm going to be making are remarks at convention and, in the interest of time, I won't do that now because there are some announcements and then there's an announcement that you're not expecting.

The pre-convention NEC meetings begin at 10 o'clock. Check your rooms for agendas. Obviously, you're all in here so we'll have to move quickly.

The Constitution & Bylaws pre-convention meeting is today at 1 p.m. right back in here, correct? Heads nodding. Right back in here. Okay.

Division caucuses begin at 3 o'clock.

Real quick. There's a 2018 edition of the Constitution & Bylaws which is now available for purchase from emblem sales. I just want to remind you that we were frugal. We try to be frugal about lots of things. Instead of reprinting and having to pay for copies that had already been printed, we just were including inserts and sending out updates. Well, it's now been reprinted. So if you order a C&B, you're going to get the 2018 mid-winter edition.

I also want to make a comment, as the budget -- as the financials are presented every year -- and Tim does a marvelous job talking about reserves. The best practice is to have two years of whatever your annual budget is in reserves. So some people hear that number and they go, wow, that's huge. But if anything were to happen, you only have enough money to operate for two years. And that's -- I just want to remind you what -- why that money is there.

And finally, I would like to ask -- well, I would like -- I would like the national president to join me up here. I would like to announce that our national controller, Tim Bresnahan, will be leaving the organization in mid-September. He and his wife have had many discussions because of -- she's diabetic and he -- they just decided they wanted more time together. This is a grueling, grueling organization at national headquarters. And those of us who are -- those of us who work at national headquarters work a long, long time. Long hours.

Gosh, I can't get through this.

And it takes its toll. The way people are treated sometimes adds to it taking its toll. So Tim originally wanted to leave earlier this year. We have a wonderful, wonderful headquarter staff. You hear me say this often. We work together. We love each other at headquarters. We are our own support system. We are a team and we understand team concept.

And I said, Tim, please would you stay through convention and stay through kicking off the next year's audit, and he did. So I want to thank him. Where is he?

(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you very much. I've never spoken from this mic. So --
(Laughter.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: First, I do want you all to know this was an agonizing decision. But my priorities in my life are God, my family and then work.

(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: And we have been discussing, thinking and praying about this for two years. And we decided that I need to spend more time with my family. So that's what I'm going to do.

I do want to make sure you all know that I sincerely -- it's been my privilege and honor to be your national controller.

Also, just the ALA mission is so necessary with the world we live in. It's been so necessary in the past. It's necessary today and it'll be necessary in the future.

So my prayer for all of you in the ALA is -- well, not for all of you -- I pray the ALA will be around for about 100 more years. I would pray that for you. I don't know if that's going to happen. But I do wish you all the best and I thank God that I got to work here and I thank God for all the people I got to know here and work with at national headquarters and the volunteers. And so I just thank you all very much. And I think I need to stop talking now. So --

(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you.

MS. BUCKLER: I have always made it a point as a female executive not to touch male employees. This is the first time I am touching Tim and I'm going to give him a hug.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And I don't know if you heard Tim. He said she's touching me.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And I have to give Dubbie a lot of credit. She has -- Marta just recently stepped down also. But Dubbie got like three more years out of her just because they have a good working relationship. Well, please don't leave now. Please don't leave now. So Marta really hung on for a long time.

And as she said, Tim wanted to leave months ago and she's, like, please don't go.

So thank you very much, Dubbie.

And now, if you would stand with me as national chaplain offers prayer. And, Evelyn, please pray for us.

(Ringing of the bell.)

MS. ESPINOLA: Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, as we come to the end of our time together, we thank you for what has been accomplished here. May the matters discussed

serve as a catalyst to move us forward and cause us to advance and see growth in all areas of our organization and our lives.

May we leave here and recognizing You are the God of our wisdom and You are willing to lead us forward. In all of this, we pray. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you for your dedication and good work. It's been a pleasure serving with you this last year. And this meeting of our National Executive Committee is adjourned. Have a great convention.

(Ringing of the bell.)

(Applause.)

(Adjournment.)

(Whereupon, at 10:01 a.m. on August 25, 2018, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 2018

VIDEO: And welcome to ALA Proud, the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. We asked ALA members and friends across the country to send videos describing what makes them ALA proud.

VOICE: I am ALA proud.

VOICE: I'm ALA proud.

VOICES: We are ALA proud.

VOICE: I'm proud because of the work we do.

VOICE: I'm proud because we help veterans --

VOICES: -- and their families --

VOICE: -- and especially their children.

VOICE: I'm proud that we're working to end homelessness among male --

VOICE: -- and female veterans.

VOICES: We're looking for solutions.

VOICE: We're finding solutions.

VOICE: We work together with the American Legion --

VOICE: -- the sons and the writers --

VOICE: -- to solve problems together.

VOICE: And that makes me especially proud.

VOICE: (Singing) I'm proud to be an American.

VOICES: Proud of our nation.

VOICE: I'm proud of all of our men and women in uniform.

VOICE: I'm proud of our five ALA divisions --

VOICE: -- of our 52 departments --

VOICE: -- of our districts and counties --

VOICE: -- who've grown more than 8,000 units.

VOICE: I'm proud of how our unit works together as a unit --

VOICE: -- with mutual respect.

VOICE: And I am so proud of our ALA juniors.

VOICE: I'm a proud junior.

VOICE: I'm a very proud junior member.

VOICE: I'm proud to be encouraging our juniors to be the future leaders of our organization.

VOICE: I'm proud of how we've served our nation across the United States and around the world.

VOICE: I'm proud of our Auxiliary emergency fund.

VOICE: It's helped a lot of members in need.

VOICE: I'm proud we have a foundation that raises funds to ensure the ALA will be here to serve the next generation of heroes.

VOICE: I'm proud that our unit was able to get an ALA foundation grant to help our local veterans.

VOICE: I'm a proud ALA foundation founder.

VOICE: I'm proud of the American Legion families' National Poppy Day.

VOICE: I'm a very proud VAVS volunteer.

VOICE: I'm proud that we work with the VA to support care and therapy afforded by the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival each year.

VOICE: I'm proud of all of our ALA girls stay programs.

VOICE: I am very proud that I was an ALA girls nation senator.

VOICE: I'm proud of the many opportunities we have to share our stories through ALA media.

VOICE: I'm proud that we're building awareness of the ALA brand within our membership and with those outside our organization.

VOICE: I'm very proud of our military.

VOICE: Go Army.

VOICE: Go Navy, Hooyah.

VOICE: United States Marine Corps.

VOICE: U.S. Air Force.

VOICE: Coast Guard pride.

VOICE: I'm proud that we are changing for the better.

VOICE: I'm proud we're looking ahead.

VOICE: I'm proud of who we are.

VOICE: I'm proud of what we do.

VOICE: I'm proud of where we're going.

VOICE: And I'm proud of why we matter.

VOICE: I am proud to be the first paid up for life American Legion Auxiliary member to be national commander of the American Legion.

VOICE: And I couldn't be prouder that we've been helping veterans

--

VOICE: -- homeless veterans --

VOICE: -- women veterans --

VOICES: -- helping military --

VOICE: -- helping families --

VOICES: -- for nearly 100 years.

VOICE: Without a doubt, I am ALA proud.

VOICES: We're all ALA proud.

(Video ends.)

AUTOMATED RECORDING: Good morning, and welcome to ALA Proud, the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Please welcome your National President, from the Department of Wisconsin, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I love that everyone's had their coffee already, haven't they?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Good. I'm happy to be with you today on our 98th American Legion Auxiliary Convention. Did you love the video?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So did I. One thing that makes us ALA proud, it's such a great theme for this convention because ALA proud means something different for each one of us. Now, I'm sure that many of us are

proud of some of the same things, but there are so many ways to contribute to this organization, to help, to lead, to lend a hand and make things happen.

There's literally something for every member, all designed to benefit those we serve. And for me, and I know for you as well, the personal satisfaction of making a difference in the lives of service members, veterans and their children, makes all of our hard work worthwhile.

Being ALA proud is an incredible, satisfying experience. We've got a lot packed in the next few days, and I think you'll leave Minneapolis with determination and a spring in your step to spread ALA department -- or ALA pride in your departments, units, and with everyone you meet. As leaders of this organization, that's our job.

The people I'm about to introduce are the very definition of ALA proud. So by decade, I'd like you to please welcome the past national presidents of the American Legion Auxiliary. From the 1990s --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- we have Linda Boone from the Department of Oregon, our 1992-1993 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Linda Newsome from the Department of Maryland, our 19- --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- 1995-1996 national president. And Virginia Hobbs from the Department of Kentucky --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- our 1998-1999 national president. Thank you, ladies. You can dress them up, but you can't take them out.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: From the 2000s --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- we have Kristine West from the Department of New Hampshire, our 2000-2001 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, from the Department of Wisconsin, our 2007-2008 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Desireé Stoy from the Department of Ohio, our 2008-2009 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And Rita Navarreté, from the Department of New Mexico, our 2009-2010 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ladies. From the 2010 decade, we're getting closer all the time --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- it's a long line -- Carlene Ashworth, from the Department of Texas, our 2010-2011 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Peggy Thomas, from the Department of Virginia, our 2012-2013 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Nancy Brown-Park, from the Department of California, our 2013-2014 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Janet Jefford, from the Department of Connecticut, our 2014-2015 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Sharon Conatser, from the Department of Illinois, our 2015-2016 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And Mary Davis, from the Department of Washington, our 2016-2017 national president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ladies. Let's give all our attending past national presidents another round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's my distinct honor to introduce a very special guest. Matt Williams grew up with music in his life. Born and raised in Alabama, Matt's mom bought his first drum set when he was just 18 months old. He grew up playing piano and keyboards.

In 2004, at 18 years old, Matt joined the U.S. Army and was deployed on his first tour to Iraq in 2005. His second Iraq deployment occurred in 2009, and his third to Afghanistan in 2010. On August 30th, 2010, Matt's squad was hit by an IED, resulting in two of his best friends losing their lives.

After the IED attack, Matt came home for a few months to recover from his injuries, and also to battle some PTSD and depression. Following his time at home, Matt returned to Afghanistan in January of 2011, to complete his deployment. Matt's military service concluded on June 15th, 2012.

On July 4th, 2012, three weeks after Matt left the Army, his father passed away in his sleep. As you might imagine, his world was shattered. Every day was a battle between the day he lost his two friends in Afghanistan, his failed relationships, and his father's sudden death, coping with something that seemed impossible, so Matt directed his life at what he knew best: music.

As American Legion Auxiliary members, we know so well music has a special healing power in veterans' lives. Matt's southern charm and thoughtful lyrics have inspired quite a following, many of whom are military veterans. Now a resident of Michigan, Matt tours the country -- (Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Let's hear it Michigan.

So now Matt tours the country and has an enthusiastic following, and I suspect that will include you after today. Please give a very warm ALA proud welcome to Matt Williams.

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MR. WILLIAMS: Where's my Michigan people at today?

(Cheering.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, I see us. We got any Alabama people here today?

(Cheering.)

MR. WILLIAMS: There we go. I'm from Enterprise, Alabama, just in case you guys wondered, so now I live in Grand Haven, Michigan. Look, I'm going to get you guys to like battle it out before this is over with.

(Laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: So, yeah, I don't guess I really have to talk too much up here. She did a fine job of telling you all about me. This is my good friend and guitar player in my band that travels with me all over the country, Mr. Nathan Deale. He's going to be joining me up here.

I don't claim to be a guitar player, so I pay people to do that. But, hey, you know, it's a real honor to be here, guys, I really -- I'm really honored to be here with you and to celebrate this really cool event for you guys. It's really neat.

I do a lot of work with veterans in the Grand Rapids area. I do a lot of work at the veterans home there. I travel all over the country doing work with veterans, so this is one of my things. I enjoy it. I love giving back, so I am a country music artist now. So yeah, left the military, so this is what I do full time, and I love it. There's nothing like it. It is just a totally different world.

So we're going to sit up here and sing a few songs for you today. I am. Nathan's not going to sing. I mean he may. I may just pass this over to him. I've never sang at 8:00 in the morning, so we're going to -- I was in the shower in my hotel room like la, la, la. So, yeah, I sounded like a canary this morning. But we hope you guys enjoy it and again, thank you for being out here with us today.

I guess I should turn my volume up on my guitar. Is that coming out through there? No? Yours is.

(Laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Y'all didn't know it, but that was actually part of the show. I told you I don't usually play.

(Singing.) Well, I'm drivin' down that backwoods country road.

I don't know where to go, and I don't care
'cause my baby is by my side, holding my hand saying drive this car to anywhere.

And as the wind blows through her pretty blonde hair I can't help but stare in my rear view.

Now, she turns up the radio dial, hears her favorite song and smiles, singin' every word without a care.

And as I'm driving this car, she's driving away with my heart. And she don't understand what she does to me. That girl's my best friend, man I swear she's heaven sent. She makes me smile 'cause she loves me for me. Yeah, we have the best times of our lives when we're just drivin'.

And as we drive past (ready) that Alabama line she says honey do you mind if we stay a while 'cause I know that this is where you keep your heart and I want to meet the ones who made you who you are

And as I'm driving this car, she's driving away with my heart. She don't understand what she does to me. That girl is my best friend, man I

swear she's heaven sent. She makes me smile 'cause she loves me for me. Yeah, we have the best times of our lives when we're just drivin'.

And as I'm driving this car, she's driving away with my heart. She don't understand what she does to me. That girl is my best friend, man I swear she's heaven sent. She makes me smile 'cause she loves me for me. Yeah, we have the best times of our lives. When we're drivin' this car, she's driving away with my heart. She don't understand what she does to me That girl is my best friend, man I swear she's heaven sent. She makes me smile 'cause she loves me for me.

Yeah, we have the best times of our lives when we're just drivin'. Yeah, we have the best times of our lives when we're just drivin'. (Song ends.)

Thank you.

(Singing.) How many miles must I put on these old boots before I find what I'm looking for. Every other day it's just the same routine, I get up, put 'em on, and walk out that door.

How many hands must I hold before I finally find the one, someone that I can give my heart to love that won't turn around and run.

Tell me, how many times must I sing about love and heart break and someone telling lies. There's no real answer why. That's just the way this game is played. That's the game that we call life

How many times must I hit the ground before I can't get back up. Well, I've been fortunate this far, I'd say one day I'm gonna run out of luck

Tell me, how many times must I sing about love and heart break and someone telling lies. There's no real answer why. That's just the way this game is played. That's the game that we call life.

Tell me, how many times must I sing about love and heart break and someone telling lies. There's no real answer why. That's just the way this game is played. That's the game that we call life. That's just the game that we call life. (Song ends.)

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. All right. So I'm going to give you guys a song I -- as she talked about earlier -- I lost two of my men in Afghanistan in 2010. The eight year anniversary is coming up here in a couple days. But I wrote this song and I've never released it because it's probably -- besides the one I wrote for my father which is now the number one song on my new album that came out on July 4th, it's one of the hardest songs I've ever had to sing. And so it's -- but I think this is a good atmosphere for you guys to hear it. And this song right here is called Whiskey on My Breath.

(Singing.) I can't erase it, never will replace it, the last time I saw your face was in a hot and dusty place across the ocean, where time stood still. I couldn't believe in one blink of an eye was my only chance to say goodbye.

So I'll drink the whiskey to drown my tears. I think about you every day since they took you both away. It just ain't fair, me losing you. Even when I die I won't forget, so I'll just walk around with whiskey on my breath.

It was an honor to fight with you. You were the soldiers that I wanted to be. And we were family and brothers in arms. And I was a shoulder on which your life broke down and cried.

I'll drink the whiskey to drown my tears. I think about you every day since they took you both away. And it just ain't fair, me losing you.

Even when I die I won't forget, so I'll just walk around with whiskey on my breath.

And I'll drink the whiskey to drown my tears. I think about you every day since they took you both away. And it just ain't fair, me losing you. Even when I die I won't forget, so I'll just walk around with whiskey on my breath. I'll just walk around with whiskey on my breath.

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Ah, thank you guys. Appreciate it. That's a tough one to sing, you know. And my two guys were Martin -- well, First Lieutenant Mark Noziska and Staff Sergeant Casey Grochowiak. Mark is buried in Grand Island, Nebraska. And Casey is buried in Pompano, California. I think I said that right. Pompano. I hope I said that right. But two great guys, you know, and so I honor them with that song there. So thank you guys so much.

This next song I have for you is called That Ole 85.

(Singing.) It was a two-tone '85, short wheel base and two-wheel drive, where as a boy me and grandpa would pass the time. There were memories that were made that in this life can't be taken away. And I will hold every single one fresh in my mind.

There's just something about that old Chevrolet where grandpa did his best to show me the way to be a man, help me understand that words can cut deeper than any knife, read letters in the bunk will be your guiding light. It's a shame I can't turn back the hands of time so me and grandpa can take a drive in that '85.

I remember the early morning drives to a deer stand when I was nine, the radio playing, we both just sang along. Now, he'd say keep it between the lines and hold on tight, son, you're doing fine, keep it under 50, we got plenty of time.

Now, there's just something about that old Chevrolet where grandpa did his best to show me the way to be a man and help me understand that words can cut deeper than any knife, read letters in the bunk will be your guiding light. It's a shame I can't turn back the hands of time so me and grandpa can take a drive in that '85.

Now, you stood by my side through wrong and right. Ain't nothing in this world can replace what I felt inside. Now, when you let me drive your old Chevrolet, you did your best to show me the way to be a man and help me understand that words can cut deeper than any knife, read letters in the bunk will be your guiding light. It's a shame I can't turn back the hands of time so me and grandpa can take a drive in that '85. So me and you can take a drive in that ole '85. Just one more time. That ole '85. With my granddad one last time. (Song ends.)

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. All right. I don't know how much time I have, but I think this is about it. I'll tell you about this song, and then we'll leave you with it.

So where are my Michigan people at? All right. How many of y'all from the Grand Rapids area? There's like two hands and this one lady right here. All right. So WGVU and PBS got a hold of me last year. Was it last year, it was last year, right? Yeah, and they asked me to do this big show

called LG Michigan that they had at Fifth Third Ballpark in Grand Rapids, and they're like hey, would you mind writing us a song? You know, I was like sure, man, I can do that, because I just write them all the time, you know?

And I do, so I was kind of messing around with Tim, the guy that called me, I was like yeah, I can write you one. So they gave me these parameters and they're like would you write something along the lines of this? And I called him on the phone laughing, I was like man, I already wrote that song. You know, I was like I've got it right here. So I sent him a quick demo, basically the same way you're about to hear it right now, and there were a bunch of Vietnam veterans in the room, they were kind of like listening to the song, wanting to see if it was the right fit. Well, apparently it worked, because every single grown man in the room were crying, so I was like well, I guess I guess I did my job right, you know? And so we went and recorded this song in the studio, and so it's all nice and beautiful.

But I did the big show, we did the big show last year at Fifth Third Ballpark and it was amazing. It was just phenomenal, I loved it. It was scorching hot, but it was fun. But this song right here, you know, I promote this at every show that I do across the country. You know, I tell people I'm on iTunes, anything that you want to go buy, download, stream, you can go get it. You can find this picture.

(Laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: And you know, obviously, this is how I make a living, right? I play music, but I'm going to see how -- I'm going to see like how hard core you ladies in this room are today, okay? Y'all ready for this? You ready? If you love America, can I get a big hell yes?

VOICES: Hell, yes.

MR. WILLIAMS: Bravo. My God. Check this out. You know, ladies, if you love America, if you don't buy any song that I do, go buy this one and I'm going to tell you why. I donate 100 percent of the sales of this song to the West Michigan Veterans Engagement Program, so none of it goes to me, all right?

And like I said, I promote that at every show that I do. You know, I tell people hey, you know what? Yeah, I make a living, but if you want to actually make a difference in this world, the only way I can make a difference is by music. This is what I do. But if you want to make a difference, go buy this song and it's going to help veterans. You know, whether it be the veterans home there in Grand Rapids, or helping them find education. Maybe it's just getting, you know, getting a homeless veteran a meal or some warm clothes, you know?

So this right here is called, Carry On, and I'm going to leave you with it today, and I hope you enjoy it. And we have had a blast, but I want to say this, that was the best hell yes that I have had, all right? That was the best one. You ladies are on point and I'm going to, when I get back to the stage, I'm going to, back here, I'm going to get yelled at because I had you say hell yes. He's going to be like you didn't tell me that was in your show. I'm going to go sorry. It's better to ask forgiveness than for permission I've learned.

(Cheering.)

MR. WILLIAMS: I've been married three times. I'm on my third marriage and I have figured that out, all right? And now I have a daughter and it's just like tenfold. She comes up like daddy, you don't do that, and I'm like, you know what? I'm sorry, all right? I didn't ask you, but I'm sorry.

So, guys, it's been so much fun. I really appreciate you having me out here, so I'm going to leave you with Carry On, and I hope you enjoy it.

(Singing.) Well, he volunteered to risk his life, to wear that flag with honor and stand up for us and fight. Wasn't just an ordinary man, to me that man's a hero when he raised his right hand.

He wore the red, white, and blue on his shoulder. He gave us all his best. We laid him down in this southern ground with his medals on his chest. And 21 guns cleared the sky so he could fly on home. His body's light and breathless, but the memory of a soldier will carry on.

I saw the tear stains on his mama's folded flag. I gave a slow salute, a bible verse. His daddy sat there after everyone had gone, just picking rocks out of the dirt.

He wore the red, white, and blue on his shoulder. He gave us all his best. We laid him down in this southern ground with his medals on his chest. And 21 guns cleared the sky so he could fly on home. His body's light and breathless, but the memory of a soldier will carry on.

They gave it all because they knew what it was for, and thanks to them I see the sunshine on my door.

They wore the red, white, and blue on his shoulder. They gave us all their best. We laid them down in this southern ground with their medals on their chest. And 21 guns cleared the sky so they could fly on home. Their body's light and breathless, but the memories of the red, white, and blue on their shoulder. They gave us all their best. We laid them down in this southern ground with their medals on their chest. And 21 guns cleared the sky so they could fly on home. Their body's light and breathless, but the memory of a soldier will carry on. Oh, carry on.

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you so much, guys. I really appreciate it. It was an honor to be here with you today, and I hope I represented my two home states, Alabama and Michigan well for you, okay?

I'm Matt Williams, this is my buddy, Nathan Deale. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

AUTOMATED RECORDING: Ladies and gentleman, the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention will resume shortly as we reset the stage and prepare for our business meeting.

The 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here to begin our business meeting is Convention Chairman from the department of Minnesota, Sandra Fredrickson.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Good morning, delegates and guests. Welcome to Minnesota for the very special 98th Annual Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary. Before we begin, I would like everyone to please ensure your electronic devices have been placed on silent mode. Thank you.

It is my honor this morning to present to you the 2017-2018 national officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

National Historian, Susan Campbell of North Carolina.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: National Chaplain, Evelyn Espinola of Colorado.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Central Division National Vice President Trish Ward of Oklahoma.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Eastern Division National Vice President, Karyn Poremski of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Northwestern Division National Vice President, Peggy Miller of Wyoming.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Southern Division National Vice President, Diane Spencer of Kentucky.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Western Division National Vice President, Nancy Michalski of Nevada.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: National Treasurer, Sara Riegel, of Indiana.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Our National Secretary, Mary “Dubbie” Buckler of Indiana.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: And National Vice President, Kathy Dungan of Mississippi.

(Applause.)

(Rapping of the gavel.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Please rise as our National Colors are presented by the National President’s Pages. Afterward, please remain standing for the introduction of our National President.

(Colors presented.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: This morning it is my special privilege to introduce a wonderful lady from the great state of Wisconsin. Our National President served her entire year with American Legion Auxiliary pride by faithfully working our mission every day, and treating every member of the organization with respect and kindness.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our National President, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDRICKSON: Madam President, I present this gavel so you may officially open the 98th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. Thank you, Sandra. The 98th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will now come to order. And you’re already standing.

Evelyn Espinola, our National Chaplain, will lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN ESPINOLA: Good morning. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, first and foremost, I give you -- thank you for the wonderful attendance and for the safe travels of our members here today.

Lord, we are meeting today to conduct matters of business. Guide our hearts and our minds in the spirit of fairness, right thoughts, and speech. Give us your guidance and wisdom upon our activities so that our affairs may reach a successful conclusion.

Thank you for being our source of guidance today. In your holy name we pray, amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Remain standing as Martha Corriher, National American Committee Chairman, leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and then remain standing for the National Anthem performed by Matt Williams.

Martha, please lead us.

MS. CORRIHER: Thank you, Madam President. Please join me.

VOICES: 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.
(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Hello. I'm going to do the National Anthem for you guys.

(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.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: How does it feel to have sung along with Matt Williams?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: National Constitution and Bylaws Chairman, Denise Delaney-Rohan, will lead us in reciting the Preamble.

VOICES: 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 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories of the incidence of our association during the Great 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 accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

(Rapping of the gavel.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning, and welcome to the 98th National Convention. It is so great to see all of you again, how have you been?

VOICES: Good.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. For some of you it's been weeks since I've seen you, and for others it's been months. So I have many thanks to extend to you. First off, I want to thank you for embracing servant leadership. Many of you decided that the traits in servant leadership were important enough to begin emulating by complimenting others, building trust, listening carefully, and serving first, and it ties right into the Strategic Plan Goal 2 of Good Will.

Second, I loved meeting the Legion Family in each of your departments. Thank you for that opportunity. And last, thank you for supporting the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Endowment. The Auxiliary will benefit from your generosity for countless years, helping with veterans projects, supporting the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and sending young ladies to ALA Girls Nation. The endowment broke \$1 million this year, pretty exciting.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And speaking of the Strategic Plan Goal 2 with Good Will, this morning you were greeted by the national chairmen when you entered the hall, right? Okay. Tuesday morning keep your eyes open for the past national presidents to greet you, and on Wednesday the national officers are going to be on the floor. So we are so glad you're here.

I just want to let you know the gavel this morning is from the Department of Oregon. There's a wonderful gentleman by the name of Willy Williams --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- who made it and gave it to me, so this is yeah, wow, that's what I said too when I got it. So thank you Willy, and pass the word to Willy, thank him for the gavel, tell him we used it here.

So enjoy the convention. There's some great guests that will come to speak to us who are quite inspiring. And as you come and go for the rest of the week, please introduce yourself to the people that you don't know yet, so you can make some new friends and multiply your enjoyment.

So, I'd like you to join me in welcoming this year's convention appointees. First off, the National President's Pages, and if they would come out here to the area behind me -- we have Patricia Smith.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Bonnie Dorniak.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Virginia Kodl.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And Char Kiesling.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We have Past National President Carlene Ashworth as our Distinguished Guest Committee Chairman.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Past National President Rita Navarreté is our Distinguished Guest Vice Chairman.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And Past National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan is on the Distinguished Guest Committee.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ladies. We also have Chris Dickey as our Convention Parliamentarian. Thank you, Chris.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And now for a few greetings from some very special guests. First, please welcome two famous Minnesotans, Ole and Lena, to welcome you to the great state of Minnesota.

(Performance by Ole and Lena.)

LENA: Ole, Ole, Ole, look at all these people.

OLE: Yah. Yah, you betcha, Lena, lots of people.

OLE: Holy smokes. Are we going to have enough tater tot hot dish this year?

OLE: Oh, yes, Lena. Oh, look (indiscernible) for all these people.

LENA: Ole, over there I see the sign that says Hawaii.

OLE: Oh, Lena, isn't that where they grow them there pineapples?

LENA: Yah, yah, you betcha, Ole.

OLE: Well, Lena, do you think they brought some along, so we can stretch the tater tot hot dish?

LENA: Ole, really? Pineapples don't go on tater tot hot dish. Oh, I hear Ole, there's a Wisconsin person here too.

OLE: Yah, Lena?

LENA: Well, do you think maybe she has some of that extra there -- that extra cheese along to stretch the tater tot hot dish?

OLE: No, no, Lena. Uff da, she looks pretty lean. I'm not thinking she has any extra to spare.

LENA: Well, Ole, I hear all these people throughout are in Minnesota for the American Legion Auxiliary and Family Convention.

OLE: Yah? Yeah, Lena, tell me more.

LENA: Well, Ole, the American Legion Family does so much for the veterans, their active duty deployed, and the families and the children and youth and their communities. So, Ole, I'm thinking these people are pretty nice.

OLE: Yah? Yeah, Lena, what are you saying?

LENA: Well, Ole, I'm thinking that they will understand if we can't make the tater tot hot dish stretch this far.

OLE: Uff da, Lena, do you think so?

LENA: Oh, you betcha, Ole. They look like some pretty nice people, but holy smokes, there's a lot of them.

OLE: Yah, Lena. Let's give them a nice Minnesota wave and welcome them all to Minnesota.

LENA: Okay.

LENA AND OLE: Welcome to Minnesota.

(Applause.)

MS. ARENDS: Thank you. Thank you. When I'm not dressed like this, I'm Donna Arends, the Past Minnesota Department's President, and Ole, my sidekick here, is Mary Kuperus, last year's Department Membership Chairman. So seriously, President Diane, all other dignitaries, delegates, alternates and guests, we welcome you.

This is how Membership Mary and I ruled in Minnesota this last year. We so enjoyed our presidential tour with President Diane, and we just tried diligently to get the word out of what we do in Minnesota for -- with a fun-loving group to attract others to join us.

We of course are very dedicated to the American Legion family missions. However, we feel one attracts more with honey than with vinegar. So please do not hesitate to ask anyone from Minnesota to help you throughout your stay here with any questions, issues, or concerns, and thank you for being here and all you do for the American Legion Auxiliary and our families.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I couldn't believe she began those comments with so seriously. Okay. A big thank you to Ole and Lena, and our Minnesota Department President, Donna Arends.

Please welcome our National Convention Chairman, Sandra Fredrickson.

MS. FREDRICKSON: President Diane, national officers, national chairmen, national staff, all dignitaries, guests, and especially you, the Auxiliary members, welcome.

Can you believe it? Wow. The 100th Anniversary of the American Legion right here in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It's with great pride and honor to represent the American Legion Auxiliary as your Convention Chairman. Madam President Diane, thank you for this chairmanship.

I would like you to meet our Co-Chair, Robin Dorf. Robin will be showing you what our volunteers' shirts and scarves look like. If you have any questions or any needs, please contact any one of those volunteers wearing those types of items. The scarves are mainly for you to pick out who the Pages are. Robin, thank you for everything you've done, and thank all of you pages, committee chair, and vice chairs, couldn't have done it without you. Thank you.

And also don't be afraid to ask the Minnesota Legionnaires or SAL members or any of the writers, they will help take care of you. We want to make this a memorable convention for you here in Minnesota.

Do you -- do enjoy our exhibit of some of the Minnesota Auxiliary history located in the same area as the Minnesota Legionnaires, in the exhibit hall. Do take a look at the cabinets that are sitting in there. They are made by our disabled veterans at the Hastings Minnesota Veterans Home. The cabinet for the Auxiliary was paid for through strategic planned fundraising. You will also find one of our fundraisers, our American Legion Auxiliary 100th Anniversary Cookbook, there.

We do hope you take time to familiarize yourself with all of the happenings here in Minneapolis and the surrounding areas. Do take a little time to enjoy downtown and some of the sights. We are the Land of 10,000 Lakes, and within our states we have 201 mud lakes, we have 154 long lakes,

and 123 rice lakes. What else would you expect? We have so many lakes here that a name is bound to be repeated.

You will hear would you like a pop, which is soda to most of you, uff da, you betcha, while you're here in Minnesota. And if you go near one of our lakes, you will see our beautiful state bird, the loon. Either that or you may run into a crazy loon from Minnesota.

(Laughter.)

Actually, we do have two state birds here. One is -- secondly is the giant Minnesota mosquito. They say we have the largest in the country.

Just remember, when you leave Minnesota, we hope you will have experienced Minnesota nice. We especially want you to recognize our veterans, all veterans. We as the Auxiliary members honor the 100th Anniversary of the founding fathers of our great organization, the American Legion. If you haven't thanked a veteran lately, please do so. They do appreciate it.

Also do keep in mind this convention leads us, to just a few short months away, our very own American Legion Auxiliary 100th Anniversary. To secure our future, the pride we carry forward this day, this week, will be the pride someone else will pick up and carry forward. Your decisions made here this week will affect decisions of tomorrow.

Step out of the box, think positive, enjoy the reasons you are here. Just remember, our thoughts and ideas of today will not be the thoughts and ideas of tomorrow. What do you see? Can you imagine it? What will it look like in the next hundred years? Are we ready? There's constant change and we too, the American Legion Auxiliary, must be thinking of what our future generations will do and how they'll do it.

The one thing we can remember, the one thing constant in life is change, enough though we may not like it, we know change is good.

In closing, your Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary members are here to help you and support you the whole time you're here. Again, welcome, enjoy this American Legion Family Convention, the 100th Anniversary of our counterparts, the American Legion.

Madam President Diane, have a wonderful and most successful convention. Thank you for this appointment as National Chairman of this American Legion Auxiliary 98th Convention.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And finally, welcome our Immediate and Past National President from the Department of Washington, Mary Davis. (Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Good morning, National President Diane. On behalf of the national presidents, we wish to congratulate you on your wonderful year of leadership for the American Legion Auxiliary. We are sure you have enjoyed your year, a whirlwind of experiences and comradeships with members around the world. We know this year will long be remembered, not only by you, but those you met throughout your travels.

Our wish for you is a wonderful, fun, informative convention, and when the whirlwind stops and another takes up the command, that you will take your place with us, the Past National Presidents. Congratulations.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yes, thank you. We will again this year be utilizing the electronic voting system. Your delegation chairman should have already picked up your voting keypad before today's session began. And each delegate should have a keypad. Remember, that Convention Standing Rule No. 14 states that voting keypads are not to be removed from the assembly hall. Each department's delegation chairman is responsible for all the keypads issued to their department. Departments will be charged \$100 donation.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: That's how you get them, isn't it? So you're going to be charged \$100 donation to the ALA Foundation Endowment Fund for each missing keypad, so be sure to count them before you turn them in to the election committee at the end of the day, and if you want to slip in another \$100 or something, just go ahead and do that.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We'll be using the number one key for a yes vote, and the number two key for a no vote. If you choose to abstain from voting, simply do not press any keys. If you press the wrong key on the keypad, wait a moment, and then press the correct key. The keypad will only register the last key pressed.

So let's take a minute to familiarize ourselves with the electronic voting keypads by doing some practice votes. Does everyone have a keypad? Okay. If this is your first time at American Legion Auxiliary National Convention, please press the number one key. If you've attended previous American Legion Auxiliary National Conventions, please press the number two key. Make your selection now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Has everyone cast their vote?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Did you get a little green light on your keypad when you cast it? Yep? Good. So voting is now closed. Please show the results. Wow, 589 have been here before and 134 first-timers.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: First-timers, can you wave to us so we know who you are? We want to make sure we say hi to you. Excellent. Glad to have you here.

Now, for our second question, this is a true and false question almost, okay? The American Legion Auxiliary 2018 National Convention is currently being held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Press number one for yes, number two for no. Please vote now. Okay, number three means I have no clue. Now you can vote.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Voting is now closed. Show us the results.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Most of you are okay, a couple of you need some help. Those of you who voted no, please talk to someone on either side of you and they'll help you out, or find someone in the gray and purple shirts or the scarf, okay?

For our final question, if you're a delegate from the Department of Wisconsin, please press the number one. If you're a delegate from a Department other than Wisconsin, please press number two. Vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And voting is closed, show us the results. Okay. So we have 25 from Wisconsin, 701 not from Wisconsin. They should have had a number three for those who wished they were from Wisconsin.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So I would say so now it looks like we've all got it down, right? Okay, great. Remember, be sure to count all your keypads before turning them in at the end of today's session.

So our first item of business is going to be the adoption of the reports which organized the convention. The credentials report will be presented by Credentials Chairman Diana Sirovina, from the Department of Wisconsin. Diana.

MS. SIROVINA: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. SIROVINA: Madam National President, the Credentials Committee met on August 25th, 2018. The following is our report:

Alabama 9
Alaska 8
Arizona 16
Arkansas 8
California 21
Colorado 10
Connecticut 9
Delaware 8
Dist. Of Col. 6
Florida 31
Georgia 11
Hawaii 6
Idaho 7
Illinois 24
Indiana 35
Iowa 21
Kansas 15
Kentucky 12
Louisiana 10
Maine 10
Maryland 21
Massachusetts 10
Michigan 24
Minnesota 28
Mississippi 9
Missouri 14
Montana 8
Nebraska 20
Nevada 7

New Hampshire 12
New Jersey 12
New Mexico 9
New York 34
North Carolina 12
North Dakota 12
Ohio 33
Oklahoma 8
Oregon 10
Pennsylvania 48
Puerto Rico 6
Rhode Island 7
South Carolina 9
South Dakota 13
Tennessee 9
Texas 18
Utah 8
Vermont 10
Virginia 13
Washington 11
West Virginia 10
Wisconsin 24
Wyoming 9
TOTAL 755

MS. SIROVINA: Madam President, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, I move that the role of delegates hereby submitted be the official voting attendance of this convention.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The question is on the adoption of the Credentials Committee's report as presented. Is there any discussion? So the question is on a motion to adopt the report of the Credentials Committee. All those in favor, press the number one key on your voting pad. Those opposed, press number two. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Voting is now closed. Please show the results. We have 717 in favor, 6 opposed. There's a majority in the affirmative, so the motion is carried and the Credentials Report for the 2018 National Convention has been adopted. Thank you, Diana.

MS. SIROVINA: Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Rules Chairman Teresa Isensee will present the proposed rules for this convention.

MS. ISENSEE: The Rules Committee met on Saturday morning. The rules are printed on pages 124, 25, and 126 of your convention program. Madam National President, by direction of the Rules Committee, I move the adoption of the National Convention Rules as printed for 2018.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So the question is on the adoption of the National Convention Rules for 2018 as printed. Is there any discussion? All those in favor, please press the number one on your voting keypad. Those opposed please press number two, and please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Voting is closed. Please show the results. 716 in favor, 6 against, so there being a two-thirds in the affirmative, the motion is carried and the Rules for the 2018 Convention have been adopted. Thank you, Teresa.

MS. ISENSEE: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: National Secretary Dubbie Buckler will give the Program report. Dubbie?

MS. BUCKLER: Please refer to the agenda that was distributed to all of the delegation secretaries during registration. The delegation secretaries were charged with distributing this agenda to their delegates and alternates.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So the Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the Program with previously distributed agenda?

VOICE: Madam President, I move to adopt the Program with the previously distributed agenda.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Is there a second?

VOICE: Second. Second, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So the question is on the motion to adopt the Program with the changes noted. Are you ready for the question? The question is on the motion to adopt the Program with changes noted. Those in favor, please press one on your keypad. Those opposed, press the number two. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Don't you love the music? Voting is now closed. Please show the results. We have 711 in favor, 17 opposed. The affirmative has it, and the Convention Program is adopted. By adoption of these reports, the 98th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary is officially organized for conducting business.

Here with us today is our 2018 Girls Nation President from South Carolina, please, please welcome Hoda Abdalla. Hoda is a rising senior at Lexington High School participating in many activities, including Spanish Honor Society, Health Occupation Students of America, and is Yearbook Editor-in-Chief. Hoda?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hoda, would you mind telling us a little bit about your Girls Nation experience and your relationship with the American Legion Auxiliary?

MS. ABDALLA: Of course, thank you. Thank you, Madam President, Diane. It truly is an honor to be here at the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. And I truly believe that the women of the American Legion Auxiliary that I have the privilege of standing before today are the true embodiment of the best of America, Americans fighting for those who are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country, Americans dedicated to promoting patriotism and Americanism through community involvement and youth programs.

And because of the commitment of the American Legion Auxiliary, young women from across the country can join together at our nation's capital, to learn about our system of government in a week that truly captivates what it means to be an American, a week of passionate policy discussion, networking opportunities, and meeting with our country's elected officials.

And although your policy stances were often challenged, there was one thing that united us all, and that was our love and dedication to our country. And I can only hope that all of America will follow this example. And at the end of this week I soon realized that it was not a goodbye, but a where will you take me next because I know that the experiences that I gain from the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation will last me a lifetime.

I will forever be grateful for having the experiences of having productive policy discussions on broadening my perspective on the issues that our country faces, for realizing the power of one voice in our country, for the experiences of meeting with Senators Graham and Scott who represent the great state of South Carolina, for visiting the White House and meeting Vice President Pence, for visiting the Holocaust Museum to take a moment to pray for all the lives that were lost in a tragic time in our world's history, for donating pieces of fabric to Stitches of Love for our veterans, and for standing hand-in-hand with women from all over the country at Arlington National Cemetery where our fallen soldiers lie, singing God Bless America.

This week truly enlightened us, as our responsibilities as Americans. And as a first-generation American, I do not take this responsibility lightly, but I wear it as an honor that I vow to never take for granted.

(Applause.)

MS. ABDALIA: Thank you. So I would just like to take a moment and say thank you. Thank you to my parents and family for the guidance that you've given me, as I would not be here without you.

Thank you to ALA Post 7 in Lexington, South Carolina for believing in me in times when I didn't believe in myself. And thank you to the countless volunteer and staff at Palmetto Girls State, and at ALA Girls Nation for all you do and your dedication towards this program.

And thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary for fostering the Future Leaders of America and your commitment to assisting in furthering my education. And most importantly, thank you to all who have served our country, a country that has given my family and I so much, as we are forever indebted to you for your sacrifice. Thank you, and I will forever be ALA Proud, and may God Bless America. Thank you all.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Hoda. Are your parents here?

MS. ABDALLA: My mom is here, yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Is your mom somewhere where you can have her be introduced?

MS. ABDALLA: I don't know where she is.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hoda's mom, where are you? Here's Hoda's mom right in the center. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: On behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary, Hoda, we'd like you to have this gift, and you can open that here. Want me to hold your cards? You don't have to take this off, just pull this. There you go. We didn't want to make it easy for her.

(Laughter.)

MS. ABDALLA: Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So it's an ALA Girls Nation necklace.

MS. ABDALLA: Thank you all so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Isn't it refreshing to see what's going to be happening in the future? Yeah.

For over three decades Hawaii was the only state in the union without an ALA Girls State program, and of course, that meant that Hawaii had no representation at ALA Girls Nation. That changed a couple of years ago.

So this is a story of appreciation for ALA Girls State programs across the country, and a group of women who were determined to bring the program back to Hawaii, with benefits for their youth. Let's watch.

(Video.)

VOICE: In Hawaii, aloha means love, peace, and compassion, and it's often used as a greeting and to say goodbye. What began in the 1960s, ALA Hawaii Girls State proudly educated young women about the inner workings of government and leadership. Yet sadly, after 1982 our 50th state said aloha to the program. For 34 years Hawaii was the only state without an ALA Girls State Program. That also meant for 34 years there was no representation from Hawaii at ALA Girls Nation.

But in 2016 the American Legion Auxiliary welcomed back the program, and we happily say once again aloha to ALA Aloha Girls State. This is a story of hard work, perseverance, and dedication for the benefit of young women of Hawaii, by a group of people who saw a need and did something about it.

Surprisingly, the efforts to renew the program began with the application form for the United States Military Academy. On the official admissions form it asks candidates to check a box if they participated in either American Legion Boys State or ALA Girls State.

VOICE: I met Keanna Stuart when she was a junior in high school, and she was interested in attending the United States Military Academy at West Point. And as a mentor to youth here that are applying to the Academy, we wanted to help Keanna become as competitive as possible. And West Point values programs such as the ALA Girls State Program. Unfortunately, we didn't have one here in Hawaii.

VOICE: Yet, Keanna wanted to be a part of it, even if it meant traveling to the mainland to do so. She received special permission to attend ALA Oregon Girls State.

VOICE: After Keanna returned from attending her ALA Girls State Program in Oregon, she was very excited, and myself -- actually incidentally an alumna of the ALA Girls State Program in Maryland, her high school AP government teacher and the Department of Hawaii president, along with the ALA Current Director Brister Thomas, we all decided that we needed to reinstate this program.

VOICE: We knew fundraising was key, and we were fortunate enough to find significant sponsors that allowed us to begin the process.

VOICE: Before her introduction to the group, yet another Auxiliary member in Hawaii wanted to bring the program back. Haylie Culp attended

ALA Missouri Girls State, married her high school sweetheart, and traveled with him to Hawaii as a military spouse.

MS. CULP: When I found out Hawaii no longer had an ALA Girls State Program, I knew I needed to find a way to help make this possible, so I reached out to the American Legion Auxiliary National President at the time, Sharon Conatser, and she connected me with a group of people in Hawaii who were already working to make this program happen.

VOICE: It took a great team, incredible amounts of work, lots of prayer to make this happen.

VOICE: And it wasn't easy.

VOICE: After we secured our initial funding, we started to develop our program. Haylie, who was truly a Godsend to this program, approached our university to host, and then we were on our way.

VOICE: On the mainland, most people had heard of the prestigious ALA Girls State Program. Here in Hawaii, because our program was dormant for over 35 years, most people haven't heard of it, and that's something that we're actively trying to change.

VOICE: And Hawaii has unique logistic challenges.

VOICE: Girls from neighbor islands can't just hop into a car to attend, so there's the added expense of flying them here as well. The process of finding applicants is challenging as well. On the mainland, units sponsor their girls. That's something that we're hoping to once again do here as well.

VOICE: And although there have been expected growing pains, the 2018 Program had 22 enthusiastic participants.

VOICE: ALA Aloha Girls State has been such an amazing experience for me. I've learned so much throughout my time here about the government, working with others to achieve goals, and I've met so many great people.

VOICE: Thank you, American Legion Auxiliary, for providing me and girls like me with this opportunity to learn from inspiring women, and help inspire others in our community.

VOICE: The value of attending ALA Aloha Girls State, ALA Girls Nation, and being a junior member of American Legion Auxiliary has just been so rewarding. I've learned strategies to lead in my school, my community, and then how to have my voice heard on a state and even on a national level, and I'm so pleased to be able to give back to this program that has given me so much.

MS. CULP: It is so gratifying to know that the girls in Hawaii once again have the opportunity to attend an ALA Girls State Program, just like I did in Missouri.

VOICE: And you'll be happy to know Keanna was accepted at West Point, and after graduation will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Welcome back ALA Aloha Girls State. In respect for their history of the program, in 2019 the name will once again be ALA Hawaii Girls State.

VOICES: Mahalo, American Legion Auxiliary. Aloha.

VOICE: For more information about ALA GIRLS State, please visit www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-girls-state. (Video ends.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: What a great story. Thanks to all who had a part in reviving ALA GIRLS State. I've heard that preliminary work has begun to bring back American Legion Boys State in Hawaii as well. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Just recently, ALA Hawaii Girls State was recognized by a proclamation from the mayor of Honolulu. The impact of the return of this ALA Hawaii Girls State Program to Hawaii is already significant.

Kyung Mi Lee, the 2016 Hawaii ALA Girls Nation Senator, is an alumna of the first year the Hawaii Program was renewed. Kyung ensured that she would become an American citizen, since her time at ALA Girls State and Nation, and is now a student at Yale University, with three other ALA Girls Nation Senators.

Isn't that great?
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The ALA Girls State Program focused on making grassroots connections and forging relationships with the communities to increase membership as well as awareness.

Let's welcome ALA National Girls State and Girls Nation Committee Chairman, Dr. Lisa Chaplin, for more information.
(Applause.)

DR. CHAPLIN: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

DR. CHAPLIN: Madam National President Diane, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Chairmen, and all of ALA Girls State Volunteer Program staff are proud to continue to provide these marquis programs to our nation's young women. All emphasize patriotism, citizenship, and stewardship to their communities, states, and nation, and above all, service to our veterans, the military, and their families.

ALA Girls State Programs continue to incorporate mission-based service projects that focus on our core values, and many have found innovative ways to do just that. Here are a few of those:

The Department of New York ALA Empire Girls State created a TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program Survivors, quilt, for which each of the delegates made squares.
(Applause.)

DR. CHAPLIN: The Department of Illinois Girls State Delegates contributed to the One Pet/One Vet Program, which is a --
(Applause.)

DR. CHAPLIN: -- which is a not-for-profit charity organization in central Illinois, that specializes in training companion, emotional support, and certified service dogs, and then pairing them with veterans coping with PTSD.

Delegates learned about this organization and participated by donating leashes, treats, toys, and gift cards to be given to the organization as they assist returning veterans.

ALA North Dakota Girls State Citizens assembled heart pillows and tie blankets for the VA hospital and nursing homes.
(Applause.)

DR. CHAPLIN: And ALA South Dakota collected items to be distributed through the Sioux Falls Veterans Healthcare System, to veterans who are transitioning from homelessness to HUD-VASH housing, which provides them rental assistance through the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Applause.)

Promoting membership in the ALA for all who are eligible is always a part of the ALA Girls State and Girls Nation Programs. This often starts with a membership application included in a welcome packet. The importance of membership is woven throughout the programs by emphasizing our mission of service through demonstrating what we do, how that defines our brand, and essentially who we are, and then by putting it all together, demonstrating why that matters and to whom.

ALA junior members are consistently recognized for their role, and to further enhance membership efforts. Our ALA Girls State and Girls Nation Programs display our brand with pride, not only through our service projects, but by our emblem.

The 2018 Girls Nation session featured a service project that involved our senators folding flags and donating fabric to be given to Stitches of Love. The fabric will be made into pillow shams for distribution to deployed service members through the Landstuhl Hospital Care Project.

They later had the opportunity to meet that organization's founder and hear firsthand why service projects like this matter. They learned the poppy story, then all contributed a single poppy to the wreath that was later laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, followed by a patriotic service in the adjoining amphitheater. What an amazing way to promote patriotism while representing our brand.

We visited the Holocaust Museum, and senators later reflected not only on the atrocities of World War II, but also took time to reflect upon the role our country and how those who served impacted the world to restore freedom and preserve it. They honored the flag each morning and evening, and remembered fallen heroes with a tribute each day.

ALA Girls Nation senators met with their counterparts on Capitol Hill, and visited the Eisenhower Executive Office Building to meet Vice President Mike Pence.

In addition to all this, ALA Girls Nation senators very efficiently conducted senate business, campaigned for office, voted in their election, and those elected took their oaths of office. It was a week of learning and growing, discovering strengths, forging friendships, and making memories to last a lifetime.

Madam President, this concludes my remarks. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Lisa, thank you. I had such a wonderful time at Girls Nation, and thank you for your report.

DR. CHAPLIN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Now, just so you all know it, I want you to know that we're live streaming our sessions of convention. So here's the thing. You are on camera and people are watching what we're doing.

So what I'd like you to do is on the count of three, we're all going to wave. There are people watching at home in Minnesota and everywhere, and

we want the Minnesotans to enjoy it and show that we're actually here. So on the count of three, when you wave, can you do a you betcha also?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yeah, I know you can do this. Okay.

So one, two, three.

VOICES: You betcha.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good job.

As advocates for our veterans, it's our duty to ensure legislators are thinking about what our military faces while deployed, and what they will need when they return. So here to tell us what was accomplished this year, please welcome National Legislative Committee Chairman Carol Edwards. (Applause.)

MS. EDWARDS: Madam National President, the dictionary defines legislative as a deliberative body of persons who are empowered to make, change, or repeal the laws of a country or state.

When I reflect upon the American Legion Auxiliary's mission, and consider who we are, what we do, and why we matter, I envision a group of women that have been empowered to advocate on behalf of our veterans, service members, and their families.

Through the legislative program, we can do this. We are empowered and motivated. Through our efforts, we continue to see incredible achievements on behalf of our veterans.

At the National Convention last year in Reno, President Trump mentioned key issues that the American Legion has had major input on. However, for me personally, the highlight was the opportunity to witness firsthand the historic signing of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

This year we also had the signing of the Forever GI Bill, also called the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistant Act of 2017. Already, 1.7 million individuals have taken advantage of the post-9/11 GI Bill. This will give many more that opportunity.

There was the passage of the VA Mission Act, expanding Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program to veterans injured in service before 09/11/2001, and the approval of the American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin.

But legislative work does not just happen on the national level. It is at the department level that we need to raise awareness of our mission, and increase our brand loyalty. And the Department of Florida literally rocked -- (Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: — by advocating on American Legion issues and priorities concerning our veterans and military families.

In Florida, at the department workshop, Legislative Chairman Dee Bell presented the American Flag Painted Rock Project to raise awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary. Three hundred rocks were painted with the American flag on the front and the Florida website on the back.

In addition, districts, units, and juniors alike embraced this challenge. Rocks were placed in VA Hospitals, amusement parks, and while vacationing in Europe, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean Islands. After finding a rock, individuals were encouraged to go to the department website and gain

knowledge about the American Legion Auxiliary, how to become a member, and our numerous programs.

Utilizing social media, some people posted on Facebook when they found a rock. Departments had information booths at their fall and winter conferences, and they used the opportunity to sign members up for legislative alerts.

Another department created their own legislative council, and the Department of Ohio encouraged every unit to create a legislative council. We have had some great achievements, but our work is not done.

On June 13th, Roscoe Butler, American Legion Deputy Director for Healthcare in the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, testified before the Subcommittee on Health, to voice the Legion's support for five pieces of pending legislation, including a bill addressing the severe staffing shortages plaguing the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 5521, the VA Hiring Enhancement Act, seeks to address the shortcomings in the recruitment and retention of qualified medical professionals. The bill will speed up the hiring of newly recruited doctors, and allow them to immediately begin treating veterans at the completion of their residency, by allowing the VA to make binding job offers up to two years before the physician completes their residency program.

If changes are not made in this hiring process, studies indicate that by 2030, the Veterans Administration will be facing a shortage of more than 100,000 doctors. This is just one of the many pieces of legislation that I encourage you to keep an eye on in the coming months.

As Sarah Dorfman Markel, Legislative Chairman for the Department of Virginia said, "Who can say no to a large group of well-informed and passionate ladies?"

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Carol. Members helping members is an idea we can all get behind. This year the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund was busier than ever due to devastating and unprecedented hurricane season. Please welcome the National Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee Chairman, Elaine Mackenzie, to tell us more. (Applause.)

MS. MACKENZIE: Madam National President, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established in 1969 as the result of a generous legacy gift from ALA Member Helen Colby Small, of Burlington, Wisconsin, in a shining example of how our members help each other every day.

Throughout the past administrative year, our members all over the nation have been inundated with disasters. Hurricane Harvey, which sparked extreme flooding in Houston and the surrounding area in August and September, caused massive damage to the homes and businesses of our members.

In September, Hurricane Maria created a crisis in the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico, and then Hurricane Irma hit Florida. Other disasters members experienced were the western wildfires, tornadoes, droughts, flooding, and other severe weather events.

Aesop said, "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." We can all be ALA proud of our members who reacted to these disasters, and raised money and sent their donations to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Members and units in 50 departments employed all manner of creative ways in which to raise these funds.

The Purcellville, Virginia Unit #293 ADF Chairman pledged to match the unit's donation to the fund. This act then encouraged other unit members to make their own personal donations.

The Saukville, Wisconsin Unit #470 held a dinner dance raising over \$1,500. In Arizona, the Peoria Unit #62 held a lasagna dinner and raised over \$1,000. Unit #1990 in Nesbit, Mississippi started a dance and exercise program, where the class fee is designated to the AEF. And Oak-Orchard Riverdale #28 in Delaware produced a variety show and they invited other units and community members to participate, raising \$3,500.

The Department of Minnesota held a silent auction at its fall conference, and raised more than \$5,000. This activity had the added impact of involving the entire American Legion family.

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: One of the most touching gifts to the AEF this year came as a result of Amesworth, Iowa member, Mary Sypherd's volunteer work. Her employer paid her over \$4,200 for her volunteer hours, and she passed this check along to the AEF.

(Applause.)

MS. MACKENZIE: Many units reported making a flat per member donation, and some made memorial donations to the AEF. These and other donations helped the fund to provide disaster grants to members in all five divisions. Not every member who requested a grant needed it because of a weather-related disaster. The fund was able to provide grants to members throughout the organization whose life circumstances changed suddenly, requiring them to seek help.

Our units work very hard to educate members, not only of the need for donations, but how to seek help for themselves. Brochures were shared at Post homes, and this way information was shared with the whole American Legion family. Reports were given at unit meetings, reminding everyone of the AEF's importance to the lives of our members.

While we can hope for a quieter weather year, we all know that the need for the Auxiliary Emergency Funds will continue. We can all be ALA proud of our members who will work tirelessly to ensure that the donations keep coming in.

John Adams said, "To be good and to do good is all we have to do." That's what you are doing by lifting up your fellow members when they need help.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Elaine. Did you notice we're deviating?

I'm so pleased to bring our next special guest to the stage. Former U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole is President and Founder of the Elizabeth Dole

Foundation. This foundation strives to raise awareness for caregivers working with our wounded, ill, and injured service members and veterans.

Senator Dole is a longtime member of the American Legion Auxiliary, through the service of her husband, Senator Bob Dole, a former U.S. Senate Majority Leader, and a Member of the American Legion.

Please welcome Senator Elizabeth Dole.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: Oh, my goodness, thank you for that wonderful, warm welcome. And Diane, I'm so grateful for your kind words. You, Dubbie Buckler, Carol Harlow were so nice to invite me to stop by this morning. And you know Dubbie and I serve on the Veterans Affairs Federal Advisory Committee on military families, caregivers, and survivors. And Carol Harlow helped me to launch my foundation as my first executive director. So what a joy it is to be with all of you here today.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: The American Legion Auxiliary volunteers are helping our military caregivers all across the nation, the young spouses, the mothers, dads, and other loved ones caring for our wounded warriors at home. I recently read about the Auxiliary volunteering 9.3 million hours in support of your communities and veterans families living in them.

I'm so proud that the Auxiliary is one of my foundation's grantees this year. You'll be partnering with CVS to provide healthcare screenings and self-care bags to caregivers attending the 2018 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Hundreds of caregivers attend each year to support their veterans, but rarely are they acknowledged, much less given services and support to meet their needs. I think this will be a great model, don't you? And we're delighted to have you as a grantee.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: So let me tell you a little bit about my foundations. It was back in 2010, when my husband, Bob Dole, was hospitalized at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and I was back and forth to the hospital over the 11-month period that he was hospitalized, and I got to know many of the young spouses, the mothers, the dads, the siblings caring for a wounded, ill, and injured veterans.

And I began to take some of them down to Washington to have dinner, just to get them out of the hospital room for a night. And, of course, over that 11-month period, I was being drawn more and more into their lives and the enormous challenges that they were facing.

And so by the end of that 11-month period, I was ready to establish my foundation. I felt a calling really, and we were able to commission the RAND Corporation to undertake the first comprehensive national evidence-based research ever done on military and veteran caregivers.

Well, RAND's results were incredible. RAND told us there are five and a half million military and veteran caregivers, that their challenges are enormous. Once home from the hospital, they are isolated, many of them are bathing, feeding, dressing the wounded. They are providing medications, and none of them trained as caregivers, and they're handling medical injections.

Many of them are trying to prevent triggers that can set off an emotional response that can last for hours. And some are very young, in their

20s and 30s, and they are trying to raise children, they're trying to handle all the legal and financial matters for the family for the first time. It's an incredible challenge. And you think about the contributions they're making, not only to their loved one, but to our nation, and getting no recognition. They're really hidden heroes.

And I think it's a phenomenon that our country has never faced before. Less than 1 percent, as you well know, are serving in our military today. And many who would have died in former wars — thank goodness for battlefield medicine being so improved — these soldiers are coming home, they're surviving. But of that number, so many are experiencing multiple wounds, illnesses, and injuries. It's a very, very challenging situation, and of course we're still involved in the longest war in our nation's history.

So RAND told us, you know, these caregivers are providing about \$14 billion a year as an unpaid workforce, but the enormous challenges they're facing are causing depression, heart and immune system problems, and other health issues. And yet RAND said the best opportunity for that wounded warrior to recover or improve is a strong well-supported caregiver.

So that was our challenge in establishing the foundation, to drive research -- and we continue to do so -- to champion policy, and to raise awareness of the enormous contributions and challenges of these caregivers.

When I mention driving research, we asked RAND once again to tell us areas where additional research is going to be needed so that we'll have the tools to provide support long term for caregivers five, ten, twenty years out. One of the things that RAND told us is that military children, they could find not one piece of research on the effects of caregiving on military children. So as you can imagine, that's become a major issue for us.

But in addition to the policy -- the research, we're driving the policy as well, and I'm very pleased that recently working with the American Legion and the Auxiliary, we were able to get two major pieces of legislation passed that have been signed into law, and these are going to be very, very beneficial to our caregivers.

We have about 300 in our National Coalition, but we also found that it's necessary to try to drive down to the local level where our caregivers live, what we're doing nationally. So we've established a program called Hidden Hero Cities, and we now have 119 cities where the mayor and other local leaders have joined forces with the foundation to identify the military caregivers in that community, what resources are available that could be extended to them, and where there are gaps in services, a strategic plan to fill those gaps. And I'm happy to tell you that this afternoon we'll have St. Paul and Minneapolis joining our Hidden Hero City Program.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: Very, very pleased to have them with us.

Another great way to raise awareness is to have the biggest star in Hollywood helping to chair your Hidden Heroes caucus, and that's Tom Hanks, and I cannot thank him enough for all that he's doing for us.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: Tom has done public service announcements for us. He has given his time to headline several of our events, and also he's given of his

own financial resources. He's a wonderful ally, and has a real heart for our hidden heroes.

We have caregiver fellows from all the 50 states who are chosen each year in a selective process, and they're doing a great job. American Airlines flies them in for us each year, where we have a national convening with the Veterans Administration, and Hilton Hotels puts them up, provides rooms for all the caregivers, so we have wonderful partners who are helping with in-kind services.

I want to mention one last thing because I'm taking too much of your time, I'm afraid, this morning, but I love having a chance to share with you what we're doing because I'd like all the folks in this room to be involved with us in finding these hidden heroes in your communities.

We have a strong partnership with the VA. We call it The Campaign for Inclusive Care. Now, currently, sometimes the doctors and other medical personnel just don't pay a lot of attention to the caregiver, because they're not medical people, you know? But who knows more about that wounded warrior than the caregiver who is taking care of them night and day at home? (Applause.)

MS. DOLE: And when that veteran is being evaluated, if the caregiver is not permitted in the treatment room, and often they're not, then the veteran, who may be experiencing post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, may say everything's great, fine, you know, may not want to share, may not remember. And so much has gone on at home in terms of disruptive family life, periods of rage, all the things that can happen that need to be reported to the health providers. And if it's not reported, it can mean a diminishing of the level of care for the veteran, and also a diminishing of their benefits. So it's vitally important that the caregiver be included in the medical team from day one. (Applause.)

MS. DOLE: USAA gave us a wonderful million-dollar grant to run three pilots this year at the VA, and the VA is on board with us to ensure that these caregivers -- or that the care recipients are provided the kind of assistance they need. So we're training the doctors, the nurses, and the front-line medical personnel on including the caregiver in that team.

USAA is going to support us in continuing to do this after the pilots are completed, throughout the entire VA, the largest integrated healthcare system in America. And we found that Mayo Clinic and others are interested now in doing the same thing outside of the VA, so I think we've got a good thing going here.

(Applause.)

MS. DOLE: Well, you all are wonderful to let me share time with you this morning, and I appreciate it so very much because I appreciate all of you and the great work that you do each and every day. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow. I'm honored to be a speaker at the American Legion's 100th Convention.

God bless each and every one of you, God bless this great land of the free, America. Thank you so much. Thank you. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Many thanks to Senator Dole for coming to see us.

Joining us next is the leader of the nation's largest veterans organization.

The American Legion National Commander, Denise H. Rohan, was elected during the 99th American Legion National Convention. Commander Rohan left her home state of Iowa, for U.S. Army basic training at Fort McClellan, Alabama in 1974, and served on active duty until her honorable discharge in August of 1976.

Denise and her husband, Mike, currently live in Wisconsin, where she's served the American Legion since 1984. Her theme as National Commander is Family First, and I'm happy to say that she's treated me like family from day one. So please welcome our National Commander and friend, Denise Rohan.

(Applause.)

MS. ROHAN: Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. President Diane, officers past and current, what an amazing year this has been, and I want to start by saying thank you. Thank you for the hospitality that you have shown both myself and my aide and husband, Mike, during this journey.

(Cheering.)

MS. ROHAN: It has been an honor to be the first paid-up-for-life Auxiliary member, to be National Commander of the American Legion.

(Cheering.)

MS. ROHAN: Now, when I started out on this journey I thought I knew so much about the American Legion and our Four Pillars, but as I've traveled and I've met so many of you and our Legionnaires, and our son's members, and our American Legion Riders, I have learned so much more. I always knew how those Four Pillars were out there and what they all stood for, but I never really understood how they stand strongly together to form this great nation that we have.

As I just explained to some of the Legionnaires at our National -- or our Executive Committee meeting, I said, you know, it's like a bunch of pieces of a puzzle that finally all came together for me. But then to help them understand, I said it's kind of like, you know, you have a six -- you have six cans, and now I have the plastic ring that holds it all together. They kind of thought that was a good analogy.

(Applause.)

MS. ROHAN: I am so honored to be able to follow Senator Dole. She has been one of my heroes for so many years and all of the work that she does, because she really does exemplify the Family First theme of not just taking care of her family, but also taking care of our nation's families and making sure that the caregivers of our veterans get all the resources that they need to be able to do their jobs.

So when I look at our Four Pillars, and we have Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, and that is what most people look at the American Legion family as doing, taking care of our veterans and their families.

And then we have the National Security Pillar, taking care of our military personnel. By taking care of our military personnel, we are taking care of their families as well.

And then our youth programs. Children and youth, making sure that our children live in a happy and healthy environment, making sure they get the nutrition they need and the care they need, that they grow up knowing that people love them and they take care of them and they want them to be successful.

And our Americanism programs, oh, my gosh. The time that I have been able to spend with our youth champions, the time I got to spend with the American Legion Auxiliary's Girls Nation, and shaking hands with those girls and hearing what they're hoping to do in the future. A couple of them told me that they're going to be president of the United States, which would be absolutely fantastic.
(Cheering.)

MS. ROHAN: Another group of them told me that they were planning to go in the military, another group being doctors, nurses, lawyers, going into our legislation, and that is all possible because, like I said, all of our Four Pillars and how they all work together.

You see, it started here a hundred years ago. A hundred years ago our forefathers knew what it took to have a strong country, what it took to have a strong nation, and they understood. George Washington, when he said, "The chance of someone in their future going into the military will be based on how we take care of our veterans."

So as our veterans are taking care of our youth, and sharing their stories and sharing how they put their lives on hold to give each and every one of us the nation we have, taking care of our military personnel, as our youth are stepping forward, they continue to pay it forward, just like each and every one of us did. We continue to pay it forward, to continue to stay strong.

Now, I know for all of the years that I have spent in the American Legion, that the American Legion would not be as strong as we are today, if it was not for our American Legion Auxiliary. You are a big part of everything that we do.

(Applause.)

MS. ROHAN: You are a big part of our family. You are a major part of our family. You are such an important part of our family and we need to continue to work together as that family because we really are. In order for you to be part of your family, you need to be, we all need to be working together.

Somebody planted something really special inside each and every one of you that taught you to care. They taught you to be there when your loved ones needed us. They taught us to make sure that we're there so when our military personnel are sent off, we're there to say goodbye, and we're there to say hello and welcome back and thank you for your service.

But the American Legion family doesn't stop. We are always there in the middle. When those television cameras go off, that's where our family is. We are there making sure our military families get taken care of each and every day.

This war on terrorism continues to go on, and we understand. We understand you get tired sometimes, but we continue to step up and be there. Somebody planted that inside of you, and I hope that you take a little bit — actually, I hope you take a lot of what’s inside of you and help pass that on.

Train and mentor and support those who will come after you. Teach them what it means to live in this fantastic country that we have. And I believe the hundred years of the American Legion and the American Legion family, we are the ones who have continued to make this country strong.

Each and every one of you are somebody’s hero. Know that. Someone is looking up to you to be the example. You’re their hero. Continue to be there for them. Continue to be there for one another. Continue to be there for the American Legion family. Continue to be there for this great nation.

God bless each and every one of you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I want to say a special thank you to Commander Denise. It has been delightful traveling with her this year. People usually get us mixed up though.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: True. Okay. So that’s the Commander, and this is not. Yeah, president. I also want to say thanks to your aide, Mike. Everyone knows and loves Mike. Thanks, Mike. Good to see you here.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Well, it’s been wonderful to see them. I know that a lot of your departments have seen them, and I’m hoping that you enjoyed them also, so thank you so much.

MS. ROHAN: Thank you. Thank you. Thanks for a wonderful president.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: For decades their volunteer efforts have supported programs that bring the American Legion Family Youth Champions. As a special treat for all of us today, we’ve arranged to have them here this morning. 2018 National Oratorical Contest winner, Carlissa Frederich, will lead us off, and will introduce her fellow 2018 Youth Champions. Carlissa? She hails from Paducah, Kentucky.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yeah, Kentucky. She displayed her passionate desire to learn about the U.S. Constitution with her prepared oration entitled, Limited Government: Our Right and Responsibility.

She’s an avid runner, a dark-chocolate connoisseur much like myself — heart healthy — and has a deep love for this country.

She’s currently a freshman at Brigham-Young University in Provo, Utah, and is sponsored by Post 73 in Murray, Kentucky. Let’s welcome Carlissa to the stage.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. FREDERICH: I am honored to be with you today. The American Legion theme this previous year, Families First, has been a prevalent motto in my life.

First, I think of my family, who have been my greatest cheerleaders. However, as I reflected on my experience in the oratorical competition, I found new meaning in this familiar phrase. I had incredible support from Mark and Jackie Kennedy, Post 73 from Murray, Kentucky, and the American Legion as a whole.

Allow me to share an experience from the national level of the oratorical competition, which exemplifies the caliber of this great organization.

The final performance required delivery of my speeches in a spacious room, without sound amplification. Due to recent illness, I began to doubt the reliability of my voice. A need was conveyed for throat lozenges, and I soon had donations from multiple Legionnaires, representing different posts and branches of service.

This experience culminated with the Legionnaire who ran to the hotel store and purchased a package of cough drops. He conveyed the selfless nature of the American Legion. When my mother tried to repay him, and he shook his head and simply stated, “We are a family here.”

Ladies and gentle — ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be part of this family. The purposes of the oratorical competitions have certainly been realized with me. It has been life changing.

While I initially entered for a merit scholarship, I left with much more: substantially increased knowledge of and love for our Constitution, deeper desire to preserve our founding principles, and be an active, informed member of my nation, greater respect for those who protect me and their supporting families, an increased love for all whom I call family. Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: The 2017 American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain is Trace Henry, from Tupelo, Mississippi. A 2017 graduate of Mooreville High School, in Mooreville, Mississippi, he graduated fourth in his class and maintained a place on the superintendent’s honor roll throughout his high school career.

He plans to attend Jones County Junior College and eventually transfer to obtain a degree in civil engineering. He is sponsored by Lee County Post 49, in Tupelo, Mississippi.

I wish I could welcome Trace. Unfortunately, due to prior obligations, Trace is unable to attend today. Still, help me recognize his significant accomplishments with a round of applause. (Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: The next Youth Champion is 2018 Eagle Scout of the Year, Michael Ankner, from Denver, Colorado. (Cheering.)

MS. FREDERICH: For his Eagle Scout project, he partnered with more than 35 businesses and his troop to redevelop the grounds at the Denver Indian Center. He raised more than \$20,000 for the project, and provided 356 volunteer hours.

A senior at Denver East High School, he aspires to attend a university with a program in military history and international relations or foreign service.

Please help me welcome Michael.

(Applause.)

MR. ANKNER: Gadugi, a divining value of the Cherokee people, means coming together for the betterment of entire community. This value has great power. By working together, we improve our society making life better for everyone in ways we could not alone.

Scouting has instilled in me the power of coming together, of gadugi. I have witnessed the impacts of scouting's vast network of volunteers and supporters, of its merit badges emphasizing civic responsibility, and of its Eagle Scout service projects that bring communities together to achieve what could not be done alone.

The American people also value gadugi. Coming together has been central to the heritage of our great nation since its earliest days. Thirteen states united to fight for their independence, and adopted as their motto E Pluribus Unum, out of many, one. The nation they brought forth is vast, with diverse beliefs and backgrounds, but it is dedicated to the noble cause of liberty and democracy, and that noble cause continues to bring us together to this day.

I am deeply honored to have been selected as the American Legion 2018 Eagle Scout of the Year. The American Legion itself is the living embodiment of citizens coming together for the common good. Thank you for your service to protect our country, your support of scouting education, and the example you set.

I would also like to thank all of those who helped me along my path to Eagle, including Troop 199 and St. John's Lutheran Church of Denver, the Denver Area Council, and the American Legion Department of Colorado and Denver Post 1.

Thank you to all the donors and volunteers that supported my Eagle project, and all the teachers, coaches, friends, and, of course, my family, who helped and taught me along the way.

The joy and honor of serving the community has changed my life. As a senior in high school, I will lead the Colorado Statewide Voter Registration Drive. I will continue to live up to this honor, and to serve our nation and its noble cause in the spirit of Gadugi and E Pluribus Unum, as I enter college and throughout my adult life. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: Our 2018 Boys Nation President, Joshua Cheadle, was elected as President of Boys Nation last month. He hails from Newport Coast, California.

(Cheering.)

MS. FREDERICH: And he exhibits an incredible passion for politics, debate, and business. In his downtime, he enjoys spending time with friends, reading, watching Formula One, and cheering on his New Orleans Saints and Los Angeles Lakers.

He plans to pursue a career in business, finance, or politics. He is sponsored by Newport Harbor Post 291. Let's welcome Joshua.

(Applause.)

MR. CHEADLE: Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for having me. It's an honor to be here, and thank you, California, for that loud cheer.

(Cheering.)

MR. CHEADLE: There you go.

I sit in my dorm room surrounded by some of my closest new friends, as we get caught up in passionate policy discussions, and I realize the power of Boys Nation. Sitting there, I was surrounded by some of the brightest, kindest high school seniors from Alaska to Arkansas, Delaware to California, and Alabama to Arizona, from all over this great nation.

The Boys Nation Program gave me perspective, an understanding of our sacred political process, and an even greater appreciation for learning from and engaging with others. Because of this week that has shaped and will continue to shape my lifetime, I'd like to thank Sandy Schneeberger, and everyone who nominated me and has supported me back at Post 291 in Newport Beach, my teachers at Sage Hill School, my loving and supportive parents and brothers, counselors like Ryan Silver and Tim Aboudara, Jr. and Sr., who like many of you have dedicated decades of their life to the selfless service of others, and the American Legion.

The American Legion Auxiliary has helped create countless invaluable programs to teach about the power of democracy. They spread patriotism into the minds and hearts of young people across this country, and to inspire the next generation of female leaders.

Lastly, I want to thank all of the veterans who have put their lives on the line and stood to fight when the fate of our country hung in the balance, for it is because of their sacrifices that I have the privilege of standing here today and calling myself an American. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: Jared Eddy, from Midland, Georgia claimed the Precision Champion Title with an overall score of 2,475, out of a possible 2,509. He shoots for Old Mill Rangers, and is attending West Virginia University. Please welcome Jared.

(Applause.)

MR. EDDY: Morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MR. EDDY: First, thank you for having me, and allowing me to speak before you this morning. It truly is an honor.

I would like to begin with a huge thank you to my family. I can't stress it enough, thank you for supporting me through everything, pushing me past my limits, loving me unconditionally, funding my expensive sport -- (Laughter.)

MR. EDDY: -- and having patience to watch me grow because where would any of us be today without family, whether that be blood related, a close bond with a group of people, a community, or all of the above.

Thank you to the coaches that aided me along the way, including Lisa Kelly, Sgt. Major Tuggle, Sergeant First Class George Norton, and John Hammond. It truly has been an amazing journey so far, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds.

Thank you to the Americanism Division for all of its volunteers and staff that work to make this experience possible for young men like me. Thank you to Barnett-Harris Post 15 back home in Georgia. Thank you to all the officials here and around the country that give the Youth of America a chance as golden as this one. Thank you for making this convention, all the youth groups, and championships happen.

I will continue my college career studying biomedical engineering at West Virginia University, and then after that, I plan to go on to med school to become an orthopedic surgeon. I will proudly use the scholarship given to me to further my academic enrichment.

Thank you to the American Legion for all of the opportunities you have given me. God bless America.
(Applause.)

MS. FREDERICH: In the Sporter Shooting category, the championship was captured by a shooter representing Zion-Benton High School MJ-ROTC, in Zion, Illinois.
(Cheering.)

MS. FREDERICH: She won a title -- the title with a final score of 93.7, with an aggregate score of 2,314 out of a possible 2,400. Please welcome our 2018 Sporter Shooter Champion, Bailey Hoenig.
(Cheering.)

MS. HOENIG: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. HOENIG: So for me, becoming the American Legion National Champion was more than just a personal goal or outstanding achievement. On July 21st, three days before my journey to Colorado Springs, one of my closest friends, Dwayne, was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him in a coma. His family and I were all overcome with grief, so I told myself that I had to win to give myself and his family a glimpse of hope for our future with Dwayne.

And so I won, and I would like to thank the entire American Legion family, especially the Americanism Commission and its volunteers, for not only all of your hours of hard work and undying support, but also for giving my mother and Dwayne's family something to smile about. You have turned our tears of pain into those of joy and that, for me, means more than just a medal.

Dwayne has since been opening his eyes and squeezing our hands, and I cannot wait to tell him this story. So thank you again.
(Applause.)

MS. HOENIG: So thank you again from the bottom of my heart. This will truly be in my family's and my memories forever. So may the Lord bless Dwayne and bless all of you. Thank you.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I'm going to ask all the 2018 Youth Champions to come back on stage over here so we can get another round applause and get a quick photo. Aren't they amazing young men and women?
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Before they leave the stage, we have parents here. Where are the parents? Okay. Down here in front, some are

over there. Any other parents of these — thank you very much for everything you've done.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: They're amazing. Parents, again thank you for raising those children. Wow.

Well, each year the Child Welfare Foundation Board reviews hundreds of grant applications from worthy non-profit youth-oriented organizations. Here to tell us about their fantastic work is the liaison to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Past National President, Linda Newsome.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. NEWSOME: Madam National President, sow the seeds to make a difference. That certainly describes our work with the American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation. The American Legion Auxiliary is proud of its participation in and support of the American Legion's foremost philanthropic priority in enhancing and educating the public about the needs of children across the nation, the Child Welfare Foundation.

Established in 1954, the Child Welfare Foundation has awarded roughly more than \$15 million --

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Yes, that's with an M -- in grants to assist America's children. During the 2018 calendar year, 147 grant applications were received for consideration by the Foundation's Board. The Board Screening Committee recommended awarding 28 grants, totaling \$600,000.

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored three grants, an additional three with the SAL. Among the recipients is Art with Heart, of Seattle Washington, which was awarded \$30,000 for its project, Art with Heart as Partners in Possibility, which will provide therapeutic intervention to children who have suffered the loss of a parent, drug use, or economic challenges.

Gratitude Initiative of Bryan, Texas, was awarded \$21,000 for its project Gratitude Initiative Promotional Video, which will provide resources to high school students, who are military dependents, on how to apply for college.

Hope Flight Foundation of Castro Valley, California, was awarded \$8,000 for its project, Free Medical Flights, for children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. This project will transport children with serious illnesses and their families from remote areas and fly them to the inner-city hospitals for treatment.

Contributions to the foundation this year totaled just under \$560,000. Sons of the American Legion led the way again with contributions of \$327,594, bringing them to an incredible total of over \$7 million since their first contribution.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Contributions of \$122,250 were received from the American Legion, which was followed by Auxiliary contributions totaling \$71,721, an increase from the previous year. Good job and thank you all.

Together with other contributions and bequests, brought our total to the \$562,053. So with these funds and your continued support of the Child Welfare Foundation, we were able to sow the seeds of our support and our dollars to help the children of our nation.

Madam National President, while this concludes my platform remarks, with your permission, I would like to present two distinguished guests who have joined us this morning. I have it? Okay.

Megan Sweet is a Marine Corps veteran, Legionnaire, and Auxiliary Member of Indiana.

(Cheering.)

MS. NEWSOME: She is the Youth Welfare Program Manager of the Legion's Americanism Division, where her responsibilities include oversight programs, including the Child Welfare Foundation, and she serves as the Legion's Grant Committee member for the Auxiliary's Emergency Fund.

Joining Megan on this stage, as I have said a number of times, is a very special friend of mine. Herbert J. Petit, Jr., is a Vietnam combat veteran who served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966 to 1969. He joined the American Legion Ed Brauner Post 307 in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1972.

He has been active in the post district and department serving as Department Commander in the 2012-13 Legionnaire. And when I served as national president, he was my unofficial aide, although officially he was National Commander Bill Detweiller's aide.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Herbie served as the Chairman of the Louisiana Department Children and Youth Commission for 30 years. In 2004, he received the National Children and Youth Chairman of the Year Award.

Please welcome Megan and Herbie.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MR. PETIT: And Linda, thank you for that warm welcome. Madam President, past national presidents, distinguished guests, delegates, thank you for your strong support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. From your generous donations, we are improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of children throughout our great nation.

At this time, we would recognize those departments that have gone above and beyond the donation year of 2017-2018.

The first award is the Excellence Award. The Excellence Award is awarded to the department with the highest per capita contribution average for this contribution year. The winner, Department of Wyoming.

(Applause.)

VOICE: We did it again. I want to thank all the members in my state that have really pulled together with this. We have a really good chairman that really promotes this program, and I just want to thank all of Wyoming.

MR. PETIT: Our next award is the Meritorious Achievement Award. This award is awarded to the top department experienced the highest

percentage per capita given in this contribution year. The winner, Department of Ohio.

(Applause.)

VOICE: This was a complete surprise for me, but thank you Ohio for getting this award for us.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: The U.S. Udie Grant Legacy Award is awarded to the top department nationally, based on the combined total contributions of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the 8 & 40, and the Sons of the American Legion during this contribution year. The winner, Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Madam President will accept for the Department of Florida.

Our last award, the Garland D. Murphy, Jr. Award, is awarded for the most active department in the nation based on actual contributions received during this contribution year. The winner, Department of Florida. I can't believe we don't have a representation from Florida.

Florida said thank you very much.

(Laughter.)

MR. PETIT: I should say so, they won two awards.

Madam President, put down your awards and come here for a second, my dear.

(Laughter.)

MR. PETIT: Madam President, on behalf of our Chairman, Dennis Boland from Florida and the Committee, please accept this lapel pin for your hard leader -- hard dedication work and leadership promoting the Child Welfare Foundation.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you so much, Herbie. I appreciate that.

MR. PETIT: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: This concludes our awards, and I just want to say thank you very much for your hard work throughout this year and, girls, keep up the good work. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good job.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Many thanks to that whole group, for Linda, Herbie, and Megan, thank you.

Now, let's welcome my Junior Member of the Year, Samantha Hook, from the Department of Nevada. Samantha.

(Applause.)

MS. HOOK: Thank you, Madam National President. Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. HOOK: Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to be here today in front of you. I bring greetings from the Department of Nevada.

My name is Samantha Hook, and I'm a Junior Member from American Legion Auxiliary LD Lockhart, Unit #14 from Las Vegas. I'm in seventh grade at Somerset Academy. I like to play volleyball, and I'm involved with the Student Ambassador Program and National Junior Honor Society at my school. I am currently running for seventh grade president.

(Applause.)

MS. HOOK: My dad retired with 20 years in the Marine Corps when I was 4 years old. I don't remember him being an active duty Marine, but after he retired, he went on to become the Senior Naval Science Instructor at El Dorado High School. So service to his country continued, and I learned more about military service.

I joined the American Legion Auxiliary Juniors after volunteering with several projects. Since then I've led the Pledge of Allegiance at American Legion events, distributed poppies, participated in flag retirement ceremonies, welcomed home deployed troops and honor flights, prepared care packages to deployed troops, traveled to veteran cemeteries to place flags on Memorial Day and wreaths at Christmas, as well as attend events at our local veterans homes, as well as attend events at our lo -- at back to school events and holiday events for children of Nellis Air Force Base and the local National Guard, and attend events for Goldstar children.

As a Junior, I have led a project selling seatbelt covers for female breast cancer survivors, and delivered them to the oncology department at the local VA Hospital.

After the October massacre in our Las Vegas community, I placed flags at the healing garden built in the victims' honor. In the springtime, I returned to plant daffodils. For my Girl Scout bronze award project, I made welcome gift bags for children staying with their parents at our local Fisher House at the VA Hospital.

I'm currently working on a new project, which I call Hats for Heroes, where I'm making and donating hats and blankets to the chemotherapy department at the VA hospital.

(Applause.)

MS. HOOK: Throughout my work with the American Legion Auxiliary Juniors, I've learned that this organization is truly amazing in a way that all of its members put service before self for veterans, God, and country.

I would like to personally thank Ms. Judy Cobb, Ms. Rosanna Surrak (phonetic), and Ms. Hazel Lockhart for their continued support, as well as their friendship. I would also like to thank my mom and dad for making it possible for me to help the people in my community.

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." Thank you everyone in the American Legion Auxiliary for continuously thinking of others and finding ways to help people in your community. You inspire me so much. Thank you again for this honor.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Our Junior Member of the Year did a great job. There should be -- there should be some parents here, where are they?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Over here are parents. Very nice.
Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Samantha, I want you to have this backpack and there's stuff in there for you.

MS. HOOK: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks so much. Thank you for coming in today.

MS. HOOK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We can learn a lot from our Juniors, after all they are our future leaders. This year the AL Juniors were very busy. Here to tell us more is National Junior Activities Committee Chairman, Pam Ray.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. RAY: Madam President Diane, this year has been a year of servant leadership by our Juniors. These young women are leaders proudly working the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary. Juniors are volunteering in VA medical centers, distributing poppies, collecting school supplies, and learning more about our American flag.

Juniors in the Department of Maryland are working with the Casey Cares Foundation, a foundation that supports terminally ill children and their families.

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: I knew you were out there, Maryland. They are participating in the Cammy Jammies Project. Pajamas are collected and wrapped and distributed to hospitals, to be given to children when they are admitted. Over 306 pair of unique, funny, and cartoon pajamas have been donated.

These Juniors also continue to collect gift cards to give the families assistance with groceries, so they are able to use their grocery money for kids' meds and other medical needs.

The ladies of Vermont should be bursting with pride for the Juniors of Hardwick Unit #7. What a devoted group of Juniors. For Veterans Day, the Juniors honored veterans with certificates of honor, thanking them for their service, and they didn't stop there. The American Legion family of Hardwick held a spaghetti dinner to raise funds for a young lady with a brain tumor needing surgery. Together they raised over \$14,000.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: During the dinner, the Juniors presented Madison with her new Junior membership, which the Juniors paid for. Madison is now the Acting Junior Historian, and has recruited her mom, who is now an active member as well. These young ladies are just becoming active, and I can't wait to see what they'll do in the future.

Now, I want to share a story with you called, My Daddy is Coming Home. Aimsley (phonetic) is the young girl from South Dakota that you see here in the photos. When her daddy was deployed, Unit #15 was there and

shared the military child ceremony. Aimsley was very interested in the table, but especially in the cake.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: She tried to eat the ceramic cake on the table saying that their frosting did not taste very good. Aimsley asked the Junior Activities Chairman, "When my daddy comes home, may I please have a real cake on my table?" She was assured the Juniors of Unit #15 would have that cake for her and, as you can see, the Juniors kept that promise. She had her military child's table with a three-tiered cake in pink with lots of sprinkles. When she walked in the gym, she jumped up and down shouting, "I got my cake! I got my cake!" Her daddy commented he was almost outdone by a cake that day. Way to make dreams come true, Unit #15 of South Dakota.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Our Patch Program has continued to grow. This year we had requests for 1,252 patches from 21 states, and the SAL, they've continued to earn the patches as well.

Our 6th National Junior meetings were once again a success, and once again we increased our attendance this year over last year, so thank you. As advisors, we gave the Juniors the tools, but they ran a large portion of the meeting. Moina Michael came and made an appearance and shared her story and the beautiful history of the poppy.

A Junior presented the National Security portion of the meeting, and they created beautiful pillowcases to be sent to our troops. As you can see, the pillowcases varied in their messages and creativity. There's always the question who will receive the pillowcases. Well, this unit in Kuwait was kind enough to send a photo with their pillowcases.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: They were very grateful to have received those. One group of female military personnel brought MREs for the girls to taste.

(Laughter.)

MS. RAY: Yeah. They were surprised, but I must say they did try them. After all, who doesn't love preserved animal crackers?

(Laughter.)

Elections for Honorary Division Junior Vice-President were held again electronically. Congratulations to our winners.

Central Division, Brittney Billerbeck from the Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Eastern Division, Jennifer Tedesco, from the Department of Vermont.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Northwestern Division, Kiana Coleman Woods of Minnesota.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Southern Division, Hope Flores, of the Department of Texas.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And Western Division, Mallory Hinton, from the Department of Utah.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: The National Junior Meeting will once again be held with the Senior Mission Training, so please check the dates and plan to bring your Juniors to one of those meetings.

And once again, congratulations to our Junior Member of the Year, Samantha Hook. I'm so excited that she was able to be here today. Ladies, Samantha is 12 years old and she's very active, not only in ALA, but her community. And she did share how she earned her Bronze Award, but what she didn't share was that project led her to being named Prudential Spirit of the Community Award, and she's also been awarded the Community Service Award for the City of North Las Vegas.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And before she was a member of the ALA, she was already volunteering with the ALA and she wanted to join. So her father, a former Marine officer, joined the American Legion so she could join the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Samantha has shared with you her participation in honor flights and placing flags in the healing garden in honor of the 52 people who died at the Route 91 Harvest Music Festival. What you don't see is in every project she has, she is branded with her ALA pin or ALA shirts.

Ladies, our Juniors are the leaders for the next 100 years of the ALA. We should be proud of where our Juniors are going and what they're accomplishing. Please let them know how appreciative you are of what they do, and let them know what they do does matter.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So thank you, Pam. Well, for a veteran, coming home is the beginning of a new journey, a transition to find a new normal. Here to tell you more about how our members comforted and cared for veterans during this transition is National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Chairman Nicole Clapp. Nicole?

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Madam National President, ALA members, what do the words honor flights, care packages Fisher Houses, service dogs, and comfort mats make you think of? The first thing that comes to my mind is being ALA proud of our veterans, military, and their families.

Through the VA program, the collective efforts to enhance their lives was on display in countless ways by units and departments who use their creativity and generosity to carry out our mission. Our members honor our veterans, which is reflected in the value of 6.2 million volunteer hours, and a projected nearly \$700 million raised and spent.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: The Department of Wyoming believes wherever and whatever some veteran needs, whether it be transportation, food, clothing, assistance with jobs or meals, an Auxiliary member is willing to do their best to provide for them.

Colorado Unit #2 put their philosophy to action and has supported the Pueblo Stand Down for 19 years.

The Department of Minnesota calls themselves Auxiliary Angels and like to work with their hands. They have reached a milestone by sewing their five thousandth heart pillow.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: While in the Midwest, it would not surprise me if some of our members are getting carpal tunnel after making \$50,000 worth of tray favors in Illinois, and clipping over \$335,500 worth of coupons in Wisconsin.

I sure would have like to have eavesdropped on a conversation between 97-year-old World War II veteran, Iona Arsno, and the 2018 USA Miss Maine, Sergeant Maria Gray, regarding how different their service to our country was.

Then in Nevada placing American flags for our heroes' graves is an all American Legion Family event, as is in Kansas, with the assistance of the Boys and Girl Scouts as they decorate 50,000 graves annually.

Once the fast pace of the holidays approaches, Wreaths Across America tributes are such a poignant visual reminder of why the ALA does matter.

Janet Elkston of New York was dismayed by the sight of unrecognizable gravestones in the nearby cemetery due to black mold and green moss. So she took it upon herself to research cleaning methods, and sought donations to begin her quest to restore one gravestone at a time back to the dignity and respect it deserves. Let's take a look at Janet's hard work and unwavering dedication before, during, and after.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Last summer Janet donated over 400 hours of her time. By May of this year already, she had restored 36 gravestones in 600 hours. What a true act of service, not self.

Local units and departments supplied supportive rehabilitation and healing to veterans through arts and crafts. The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Buffalo, New York raised visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans, after disease, disability, or a life crisis. Supporting caregivers of veterans through the Military and Veterans Caregiver Network and other acts remain very important.

Baby showers were a huge service for expecting military females and wives of servicemen. What a cute idea for a cake made out of towels in Alabama.

Lastly, but not least of all, VA volunteer service is essential to the quality care our veterans need. The American Legion Auxiliary is proud to remain the largest organization volunteering services at the VAVS Program in 138 VA facilities, with 267 dedicated representatives and deputies.

In South Dakota and New York, the holiday gift shops meant much more than just the task of picking out presents. In both departments, veterans were ultimately reunited with their unexpected daughters, due in great part to the love and service of our members.

Congratulations to Member Anne Morris of North Carolina for being recognized as the American Legion Auxiliary Volunteer of the Year.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: So in closing, let's add Stand Down, heart pillows, tray favors, coupons, gravestones, creative art, and gift shops to show how our ALA pride is truly demonstrated. Our collective efforts to enhance the lives of American veterans is abundantly evident all across our nation.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you for your report, Nicole.

As Nicole mentioned in her report, veterans across the country struggle with physical and emotional disabilities. By supporting the Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, the Auxiliary is helping veterans work through these challenges with dignity and the camaraderie of fellow veterans.

To encourage departments to support this awesome program, there was a challenge extended to all departments to donate the most funds per capita by membership category to the American Legion Auxiliary's Foundations Veterans Creative Arts Festival fund.

So here's how this will go. First I'll announce the winner from each of the six membership categories, then these six winners will be put into a drawing for a chance to win a beautiful work of art donated by National Veterans Creative Arts Festival gold medalist winning artist, U.S. Air Force Veteran, Rebecca James, of Northridge, California. We are very thankful for Rebecca for her piece of artwork.

And the first place winners for each membership category are -- oh, can we show that?

VOICE: I was told to give this to you immediately if not sooner.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: This is the piece of artwork.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So some department is going to be winning this.

From Group A, having 23,000 members and above, the winner is the Department of Indiana.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Did you already know that? Okay. I'm getting mixed comments over here.

From Group B, having 10,000 to 22,999 members, the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: From Group C, having 6,000 to 9,999 members, the Department of Georgia.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: In Group D, having 5,000 to 7,999 members, the Department of Massachusetts.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: From Group E, having 4,000 to 5,999 members, the Department of Delaware.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And from Group F, having up to 3,000 members, the District of Columbia.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So first off, congratulations to each winning department. Now, the moment you've been waiting for. All six winners have been added in a basket. Do we have a basket? Oh, we have a glass bowl.

They said I was going to draw, but because Wisconsin's in here I'm not going to draw, we're going to blame it all on Vice President Kathy, okay? So, Kathy, we're going to find out who's going to be winning the artwork. And can we have a drum roll please.

(Drum roll.)

MS. DUNGAN: And the winner is the District of Columbia.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So District of Columbia, if you would see someone backstage later on, you will have -- not the note, you'll have the artwork. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So if there's someone here from the District of Columbia to receive the award, I can see you there, would you come around the back and up to the back of the stage, so we can get a picture of you up here? That will be exciting too.

Okay. I have 85 notes here and right at this moment I'm lost. Excuse me.

Okay. Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical facilities use the creative arts as treatment to help veterans recover from physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition, and selected winners are invited to attend the annual National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Since 2000 the Auxiliary has played a key role in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival as a cosponsor of the event, and as a volunteer base working side-by-side with the Departments of Veterans Affairs Festival Director, Liz Mackey.

Hopefully, you all read the Liz Mackey article in the Auxiliary magazine. While it's true that Liz has retired from the VA, she will still be serving the National VCAF Steering Committee, and has been diligent in making sure amazing people are in place while the VA seeks her replacement.

Let's welcome Liz Mackey to the stage, along with Dr. Lief Nelson, Director of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events, and Amy Kimbler, Program Specialist for the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival.

(Applause.)

DR. NELSON: Great. Thank you Madam National President. On behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Liz Mackey, Amy Kimbler, and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival team, it's my honor to say thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary and thank you to all of you. Why don't you give yourselves a round of applause?

(Applause.)

DR. NELSON: Without the VA and the American Legion Auxiliary working together to co-present the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, we wouldn't have been able to successfully do what we've done for the past

18 years in showcasing the rehabilitative benefits of therapeutic arts for rehabilitation of our veterans, so thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. It's always great to see the three of them. Thanks to Lief, Amy, and of course Liz Mackey, and I hope all of you have tickets for the luncheon this afternoon where we're honoring Liz as the American Legion Auxiliary's Woman of the Year. We're looking forward to that.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: As you know, the American Legion's Former Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk, retired after 35 years of impeccable service to the Legion Family, and was replaced by Kevin Bartlett, a 28-year member of the American Legion, who served in the U.S. Navy from 1984 to 1990. Kevin is here with us today to share an important message. Please welcome the American Legion's Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett.

(Applause.)

MR. BARTLETT: Good morning, everyone.

VOICES: Good morning.

MR. BARTLETT: Thank you, National President Diane, National Secretary Dubbie, and hello everyone.

VOICES: Hello.

MR. BARTLETT: On Saturday I had the opportunity to address the NEC, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to address you about a few things. On the way over though, I should tell you, I said something to Phil, my predecessor, and he said, "You're going to go talk to the ladies again? Be careful."

As you also know on Saturday he told me that since I was speaking with the NEC, he said, "You've spent more time dealing with situations with the American Legion Auxiliary in your seven months than I've done in the last ten years."

Now, that could be a good thing or a bad thing. Technically, it's both because I'm here to do a little educational lesson for you that I was asked to do so because of some situations that have taken place in a couple of different departments. And lots of it relates around to the validity and to the reasons why I can do what I do as I occupy the position as your general counsel and as Judge Advocate for the American Legion.

You see, years ago the American Legion was founded and we had a convention here, and in that role the American Legion also gave birth to the American Legion Auxiliary. However, in the -- before that, we trademarked a couple of things. We as the American Legion we trademarked the emblem, your emblem, our name, your name and everything associated with that. So we control the emblems and the name of both the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

My job in this position is to protect our emblems. Our emblems are used by everyone. The national organization has come about in charter different departments, and in those departments we have your units, and within the units, we go down to the smaller level, all of which is using our emblem.

And as a result, since I'm here to protect the emblem, I have the authority to make right what is right and to rule what is wrong. I say that because we've had some situations that have been going on and the authority for me to act in this role is because of that.

So a couple of things have happened. In a couple of different departments they've questioned my authority. And because of this, actually what happened is they did some things, and I was informed of them by your National Secretary because she had concerns that rules were not followed. Rules always have to be followed.

When I started out as a lawyer, I was a criminal defense attorney. We played in a gray area where we could push the envelope and push the rules, you know, like all criminal defense attorneys do. I stopped doing that when my son was four years old, got in trouble, and said, "But Dad, I'm a bad guy, help me."

(Laughter.)

MR. BARTLETT: I quit doing that after that. Now I do contract stuff. You cross the Ts, dot the Is, make everything correct. We follow the rules. Rules are made to be followed, just like the rules in kindergarten. Follow the rules and you'll be fine.

Now, the National Secretary provided me with all kinds of emails about a situation that took place in a Western state from here and a Southern state from here. And I must say that we have spent hours, hours, and hours. When she was in France and I was going to bed at midnight, she's up talking to me and vice versa because this was not a situation that we really wanted to deal with, but it was something that we had to because precedent could not be set.

The questions that we were discussing was twofold: does an NEC have authority to do what they did, and did they follow the law in the governing documents? That's the -- what matters. Just like the tax man follows the tax law the way it's written, how you got there, the facts getting you there are not material. When I was a criminal defense attorney I cared about facts. As a contract lawyer you care about the rules and if they were followed.

And one case that we were discussing, a DEC revoked the membership of some people that were in their DEC, and then they kicked them out of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Let me be perfectly clear, the DEC, according to both your rules and our rules of the American Legion, cannot kick out anyone from your organization.

(Applause.)

MR. BARTLETT: The DEC controls their DEC. The NEC controls the members of the NEC. The unit controls the membership of their members, not the DEC or the NEC. So if you don't want to play nice with others, please play nice with your unit and they will not kick you out. But when you come here and don't play nice with others, rest assured the people here cannot kick you out, as long as your unit does not get involved.

Is that perfectly clear? Thank you.

In another situation that we spent many hours speaking about, the DEC of a particular state removed an NEC. Hope you're following the

acronyms. This NEC was removed without due process. There was not a special meeting called, there was no due process followed, and this NEC officer was removed.

Let me ask you a question. Can they do that?

VOICES: No.

MR. BARTLETT: You cannot do that. This individual was duly elected by their department, and in their constitution and bylaws it said they shall be in NEC provided she can do the job. As far as I know, she can do the job, and no due process was given, no notice was given, she has the job.

You know, back -- how many people watch criminal law stuff with attorneys and have heard the phrase fruit of the poisonous tree? That's one thing we criminal defense attorneys really like because if you get the prosecutor on fruit of the poisonous tree, what that means is everything that happened after you found that fruit is null and void.

In other words, this is where some attorneys call it a technicality, but what it is is the prosecutor and the police not following the rules that protect us all. When they do something that's wrong, everything after it comes under the theory of fruit of the poisonous tree, and the judge will throw it out.

In these particular departments, when they did something that didn't follow the rules, everything after that should be?

VOICES: Null and void.

MR. BARTLETT: Thank you. We are learning and I appreciate it.

To reiterate what I want to say and repeat, the unit controls your membership. Anything to do with discipline for a member starts there.

Before we came down here I got a phone call in my office, and I cannot remember where it came from, but it went something like this.

"Judge, I'm in Post #123, and Bob in Post #789, he's a jerk. I want to kick him out. What do I got to do?"

I said, "Well, first you got to transfer to Post #789. Hopefully he doesn't have a lot of friends, because they might throw you out because now you're going to be the jerk against him, but it ain't going to happen unless you're a member of his post."

So same thing for the units. If you're a jerk, stay in your unit.

(Laughter.)

MR. BARTLETT: There's a lot of material that you have on your website that has been put out. You've got your constitution, you've got your standing rules, you've got your bylaws, and you have a whole bunch of other stuff. Good stuff. A lot of stuff. A lot of stuff. But you know what? The rules that matter, constitution and bylaws, and look -- start with your departments.

I was at a convention this summer and one of the things they talked about since some of those people were in the military was chain of command. Chain of command is important, unit on up. Start there, you can't go wrong. But if you do have issues that you think are similar to what I'm discussing today, contact the National Secretary and she'll get a hold of me.

(Laughter.)

MR. BARTLETT: She's under the bus right now, but that's okay. She also woke me up. Hey, I would like to say though, she's done a lot of work with this. We've spent a lot of time, and I really appreciate and thank

you for being given the opportunity to help you. You are all lucky here to have this people at this -- up here at the podium helping you, but remember the one thing --

(Music.)

MR. BARTLETT: Hello? That's not even my song.

(Laughter.)

MR. BARTLETT: I asked for something a little more upbeat. So remember, remember the rules. Follow the rules. And if you don't follow the rules, maybe one day it'll be your department that I'm talking about and thinking back to this convention and saying were you there? Did you listen? And if you have questions, you know who to get a hold of.

Madam President, thank you. Thank you. Thank you all.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So, thank you, Kevin, for making time in your busy schedule to share important information with our convention body. We truly appreciate him being here this morning.

Before we adjourn -- am I right?

Okay. I was told that I've had more script changes than any other president that our parliamentarian has sat next to, so that's why periodically I'm regrouping here.

So before we adjourn for the day and make our way to the Woman of the Year Luncheon, the Chair asks the National Secretary to briefly announce any convention updates.

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. That means speed listen. These are in no particular order.

Flower Chair Marsha Bible reports that there are a few corsages still available for sale, if anyone would like one.

We also want to make it very clear that Central Division National Vice President Trish Ward was introduced where she resides in Oklahoma. Her membership is with the great state of Kansas, so two departments have the enjoyment of claiming her, we want to make sure both know that.

Lost and found. If you have lost anything, if you have found anything, you go to the convention center command center on the mezzanine level. If you found something, if you lost something, you can also call -- and I'll be announcing this number every day -- you can also call 612-335-6040. I'm going to come back and announce that again because I know some of you are fumbling with -- to get a piece of paper. But it's the command center on the mezzanine level.

Because the Woman of the Year Luncheon is on Monday this year, normally I have a string of announcements about committee -- 2018-19 National Committee's meeting. So I only have two. So before I say the two that I have, if you are serving on a -- you, if you have been appointed to serve on a National Committee next year, and you have high hopes that the NEC will confirm your appointment, look for the chairman that National Vice President Kathy Dungan has appointed to chair those committees while you're still in the room because I can tell you this much, the Community Service Committee will be meeting here by the Vermont sign. Vermont, holler out so they know where you are. Okay. It was a little weak. Try it again. You're like doing the wave.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: Junior Activities will meet at the conclusion of the Woman of the Year Luncheon at Table 2.

At the Constitution & Bylaws pre-convention meeting, which I think most of you in this room attended, because it was a standing room only event, Goals 4 Strategy Captain Melanie Taylor presented some ideas for optimizing mission delivery, and that's code for simplifying how we can serve our mission.

Ideas presented including streamlining some programs, streamlining some national committees. And as discussed at that meeting, the Future Focus Committee, the Implementation Committee of the -- Implementation Team of the Centennial Strategic Plan, the National President, they want your ideas.

So in the next few days, everybody who has registered for National Convention will be receiving an email from the Strategic Planning email address. Please reply to that email address with your suggestions and comments, and this is about as open and transparent as we can possibly be. We really want to know what your ideas are, so that was a very genuine request. Please reply to the Strategic Planning email address. Thank you.

I also -- just a personal note -- want to comment that Constitution and Bylaws Chair Denise-Delaney Rohan, walked softly and slowly up here and that's because she's sporting a new hip. It wasn't because she was reticent to give her report.

I also want to make one other comment and that is about National Commanders Aide Past Department Adjutant, past -- and her husband, Mike Rohan, we have a great claim to him. He was -- how many remember the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps, our VISTA Program? It was a special federal program, and we were the longest serving national organization to receive the grant from the federal government.

Mike Rohan was one of our first volunteers in Service to America, one of our first ALA Call to Service Corps VISTAs, and he served an entire year as one of our VISTAs the first time around. So we have another claim to Mike Rohan, so let's pretend he can hear us right now and applaud him for that.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: The Unit Member of the Year Reception will be in 203AB, here in the Convention Center Room 203AB.

The Woman of the Year Luncheon will be in the center ballroom.

And I'm sad to share that an announcement was made at the NEC meeting on Saturday, after 11 years at American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, National Comptroller Tim Bresnahan, certified public accountant, will be leaving the American Legion Auxiliary next month.

Early into his outstanding work at National Headquarters, then National Treasurer Marta Hedding and I said -- we just realized what a wonderful asset he was to this organization. He was capable, diligent, caring, and so he became the National Comptroller for the American Legion Auxiliary, and has been Director of the Finance Division for the past 10 years.

Tim's a very devout person and in addition to the 50- to 60-hour work weeks he has put in as a Goal Champion, he really believes in those

goals. Those long hours and some improvement we still need in the culture, which was the reason that we had to establish Goal 2, to establish a culture of goodwill over a decade that takes its toll on anyone, and so Tim has decided he wants to do -- go into another chapter in his life. He wants to spend more time with his wife.

And when he got up and made his very brief remarks, and if you know Tim, they were brief, he said he appreciates his friends and colleagues here at the American Legion Auxiliary, and he said he would be praying for the organization's future.

I personally want to thank him in front of all of you. He wanted to leave earlier this year, I asked him to please stay on through the end of this administrative year and he agreed to do so. I've worked -- I've had the privilege in my career to work with a number of CPAs, and I will just tell you and tell everybody watching this live stream Tim Bresnahan is just the best, and so we're all going to miss him. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So thank you, Dubbie. We're truly grateful to Tim and his expertise and his budgeting and his accounting and for the long hours he put in late at night and on weekends, and for his dedication to the Strategic Plan. Like I said, when I hang out late at Headquarters there are usually three of us left. It's Dubbie, Tim, and myself.

So Tim wishes the best for the organization, hoping that we'll all help the Auxiliary thrive for another hundred years as a kinder, gentler, and more caring organization. Tim truly believed that embracing the Strategic Plan would make a difference.

Marta Hedding has also retired after three years of wanting to retire, but I have to compliment Dubbie because of her relationship with the staff, if there hadn't been such mutual respect between the people that are working together, Marta would have retired three years ago, and Tim would have left at the beginning of this year. So thank you, Dubbie, for your enduring dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So you might be thinking so what can we do about this? We can be more supportive of the national staff. We can be kinder when we talk to them. We can both -- be both grateful and complimentary of their dedication and their work.

And right now, thank you to all the national chairmen who presented to all of our -- and all of our special guests, including those from the American Legion. I don't think we have any from the Sons of the American Legion today, but it's been a full agenda we may have this morning, I'm just not remembering.

But this concludes our opening session of the 2018 National Convention. We are now adjourned. I'll see you at lunch and later this afternoon.

(Adjournment.)

(Whereupon, at 11:46 a.m. on Monday, August 27, 2018, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2018

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to Day Two of ALA Proud, the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here to begin our session is your National President Diane Duscheck.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The 98th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will come to order.

(Gavel.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please take a moment to ensure that your electronics are in silent mode. Thank you much. Chaplain Evelyn Espinola will lead us in our invocation.

(Gavel three times.)

MS. ESPINOLA: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. ESPINOLA: I'd like to ask for a little bit of silence, prayer, while I'm reading my prayer. We have a member and a good friend from Nebraska that is on life support. We have a member's mom that passed away Saturday morning, and several others that I got emails from that are sick. So let's just remember them as I pray.

Heavenly Father, we ask for your guidance and help as we plan our activities for this year. Help us through the challenges that may arise. Sharpen our skills for our own well-being and for the safety of those whom we serve. Make the knowledge and skills we have gained this year be effective in promoting good will throughout this new year. We are grateful for this opportunity to honor and thank those who are leaving office for their dedication to our veterans and our organization. Finally, Lord, give wisdom, vision, and courage to those who will be elected to office this year. Reward their work and reward our.

In Your Heavenly Name I pray, amen.

ALL: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please be seated. So how many of you found a little purple bracelet on your chair when you arrived this morning?

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All right. Purple is a great color, don't you think?

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All right. And did you wonder why it was there? Well, we have a very special guest who can explain everything. In July of 2006, Will Bowen handed out 250 purple bracelets inviting people to use them as a tool to eradicate complaining from their lives.

(Laughter.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: His idea exploded around the world and to date more than 11 million purple complaint free bracelets have been sent to people in 106 countries.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Among others, Will Bowen has been featured on Oprah, he's been on NBC's Today Show, CBS Sunday Morning, the ABC World News Tonight, and Fox News Channel. The complaint free movement he began has been featured in thousands of newspapers and magazine articles, including People Magazine, Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal, O Magazine, Self Magazine, and Chicken Soup for the Soul.

Will personally presented the six millionth complaint free bracelet to Dr. Maya Angelou, who provided a forward for his book, A Complaint Free World: How to Stop Complaining and Start Enjoying the Life You Always Wanted. That book has sold more than two million copies worldwide in 28 languages. Will Bowen is a number one international best selling author, a multi number one Amazon best selling author, an award winning trainer, the 2016 Purdue University Executive in Residence, and he is the world authority on complaining -- not that way. It's what causes it, why we do it, and how to get ourselves and others to stop.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Will Bowen. So please, give Will a rousing Auxiliary welcome.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. BOWEN: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MR. BOWEN: Wonderful. I see everybody is up and had their coffee this morning.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: I don't think I've ever walked onto stage and gotten a standing ovation. Thank you very much for that. I want to begin by saying how honored I am to be with you all. And I want to thank Dubbie and the rest of the leadership here at the Auxiliary for bringing me in to speak with you.

How many of you were with me when I spoke to the leadership conference? Please raise your hand. Oh, you guys are going to have to laugh at the same jokes. I'm sorry.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: So glad you're here though. I mentioned at that time that it means a lot to me to speak to you and I'm speaking from my heart. Because my grandfather, Pop, and my grandmother, Nana, my grandfather was very, very active in the American Legion and my grandmother was very active in the Auxiliary. And so I grew up hearing about them and hearing about the conferences and everything that they went to. And I'd like to start this morning by maybe laying aside a fear that you might have.

I've been fortunate enough to travel the world and speak to hundreds of thousands of people in five different continents, and I find that people often have a misconception of what I'm there to do. They hear the words complaining, and that I'm the world authority on complaining, and a lot of

times people go, oh gosh, here it comes. That has nothing to do with what I'm here to talk to you about.

Becoming a complaint free person is not about shutting up and sucking up whatever comes your way. It's about practicing healthy communication skills. Let me let you know too that I never set out to become the world's authority on complaining. I wanted to play the drums for Kiss. (Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: But my life went in a very different direction. Because in July of 2006, I was teaching a class. I was a minister at a church in Kansas City, Missouri. (Cheering.)

MR. BOWEN: Hello, Missouri. All right. And I see my home state, South Carolina, right here as well. (Cheering.)

MR. BOWEN: I was teaching this class on prosperity. Now let me ask you a question, and I've asked this all over the world. How many of you would like to be more prosperous? Please raise your hand. Hold them up. Look around the room. That is called social proof. We all want to be more prosperous. The challenge is that for most of us, prosperity means more stuff. And yet, most of us complain about the stuff we already have. As Wayne Dyer put it so well, if you're unhappy with what you have, why would you want more? So my intention was to help my congregation begin to stop complaining about what they have, appreciate what they have, and through that process attract more.

So I had this idea. I wanted the people to go 21 days in a row without complaining. How many of you have heard that if you do something repeatedly for 21 days it will become a habit? Raise your hand. See, we've all heard this. So my idea was, okay, before we get into prosperity and attracting prosperity, let's begin to stop complaining by going 21 days in a row without complaining. And then I thought, how in the world would you know what day you are on? If you're trying to go 21 days, surely you are not going to make it at your very first attempt. So how would you know what day you are on when you're complaining? And that's when I had the idea of the bracelet.

The idea is you put the bracelet on either wrist, and you're on day one. Your goal is to go how many days in a row without complaining?

ALL: Twenty-one.

MR. BOWEN: Twenty-one. So you put it on, you're on day one. You catch yourself complaining. And so you take the bracelet off one wrist and you move it to the other wrist and you're starting back over on day --

ALL: One.

MR. BOWEN: Exactly. So I handed out, we purchased 500 of these bracelets. We had 250 people come to church that Sunday. And so at the end we had about 250 bracelets left over. And people were coming up to me and hugging me at the end of the service and saying, can I please get some of those bracelets?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: I need them for my fourth grade class. I need them for my Girl Scout troop. I need them for my real estate office. And I need them for my family.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And y'all, within ten days with no advertising or anything, we went through 10,000 bracelets. In fact, I came in one day and the church secretary had her head on the desk and was crying. And I said, Marsha, what's the matter? And she said, we're not in the bracelet business! (Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And we split the whole thing off into its own organization and as you heard Diane say that in the last decade we have sent out over 11 million bracelets to 106 countries and we do no advertising. We still average about 100,000 bracelets a year.

So I tried to figure out how this just took off. And people started writing and asking me questions, is this a complaint? What's wrong with complaining? And I kept thinking, why are you asking me all this stuff about complaining? Ask me about the Bible. I went to ministerial school. And so I began to research and to study. And I have spent the last 12 years of my life reading everything I can get my hands on about complaining. But what I tried to figure out is why does a Sunday talk about an obscure Missouri minister become what People Magazine and 60 Minutes have called a worldwide phenomenon? And I think I've got it figured out. There's two reasons. Number one, please tell me, there's too much complaining in the world. If you agree, please say yes.

ALL: Yes.

MR. BOWEN: Yes. Number two, the world is not the way we would like it to be. If you agree, say yes.

ALL: Yes.

MR. BOWEN: Here's the thing, friends. The two are correlated. We are so busy focusing on, talking about, and putting our creative energy on what is wrong, we are attracting more of what is wrong to us.

Now, people have asked me so much, what is a complaint? Let me begin with the dictionary definition of a complaint. The dictionary defines complain as to express grief, pain, or discontent. Now which world is in yellow? Express. So by its definition, a complaint must be --

ALL: Expressed.

MR. BOWEN: -- expressed. So often people will say to me, you know, I'm going to change my bracelet with every negative thought. And I always think, good luck with that. Because we think on average 45,000 thoughts a day. And let me ask you, are most of them positive or negative?

ALL: Negative.

MR. BOWEN: Thank you very much. So what we attempt to do is to trap the words that come out of our mouth, the negativity. And what happens time and time and time again, from the people who have taken this challenge, is that there is a byproduct of not complaining. The number one byproduct is happiness. That's the number one thing. A man emailed me from Bosnia one time and he said, you know, I haven't made it to 21 days. Heck, I can't seem to get past day eight. But as a result of trying this, I'm

much, much happier. And then in all caps he puts, IS IT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Like this is some side effect we should have disclosed. Warning, not complaining may cause happiness.

So let me give you my definition of a complaint. My definition is to -- excuse me. Let me go on further. There we go. A complaint is an energetic statement that focuses on the problem at hand rather than the resolution sought. It focuses on the problem at hand rather than the resolution sought. But more importantly, there is energy behind it. Let me give you an example.

We're having a very dry year in Missouri. In fact, we're in the middle of a drought. Now, ask yourself whether or not my saying that was a complaint and let me give it to you with a little bit more energy. Can you believe it? We've had almost no rain this year. We're in the middle of the worst drought. We can't go out on the lake. It's just terrible. Do you see the energy difference? Raise your hand if that makes sense. Exactly. Complaining has this how dare this happen to me energy behind it.

This is a very, very key concept of the complaint free movement, and that is that it is not complaining to speak directly and only to the person who can resolve your issue. That is not complaining. Most people, thought, talk to everybody else. People say to me, you mean I can't tell my doctor when I'm sick? And I'm like, no, of course you should tell your doctor when you're sick. You just don't need to tell everybody in your family, everybody in your extended family, everybody you work with, and everybody you used to work with. That's complaining.

Eckhart Tolle put it wonderfully when he said, "Complaining is not to be confused with informing someone of a mistake or deficiency so that it can be put right. And to refrain from complaining doesn't necessarily mean putting up with bad quality or behavior. There is no ego in telling the waiter your soup is cold and needs to be heated up if you stick to the facts," which are always right? Facts are always neutral. How dare you serve me cold soup? That's complaining.

Now as I mentioned, I'm originally from South Carolina and my mama taught me growing up in the South that a southern gentleman is a hospitable man. A southern gentleman is hospitable to everyone. The town that I was born, Manning, South Carolina, has a sign when you pull into town that says matchless for its beauty and hospitality. And I said to my mom, I said, what is hospitality? What does that mean? She said, it simply means to treat people well, to treat them nicely all the time. And so watched my mom and I discovered that it is possible indeed to be hospitable all the time. Just don't tell anybody the truth.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Every Sunday we would go out for lunch and invariably the waiter would come up and say, how is your meal? And my mama always said the same thing, just fine. How's your meal? Just fine. Is your steak done the way you'd like it? Just fine. And as soon as the waiter would walk away my mother would look at me and say, I ordered my steak medium. This is about burnt.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And she'd look at my brother and say, you know, I ordered sweet tea and this is unsweet. And finally, God bless him, my brother finally said, mama, do you see a waiter outfit on me?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Who should my mother be talking to?

ALL: The waiter.

MR. BOWEN: Now let me ask you a question. Who should you be talking to instead of whomever you are complaining to? Who is that direct path to the resolution you seek?

I was speaking in Denver a while back and I went to the hotel and one of the things I love about traveling around and speaking, and I just love this, every city has a different feel. Have you noticed that? That you walk around a city and you literally feel different in Memphis than Dallas, or whatever, or Seattle. So I always like to walk around and just feel the energy of the city. So that night I came back to my room and I had an early morning speech like this and I went to bed early, as I always do. But I'd been in and out of my room all day and I (indiscernible). Just as I'm about to go to sleep, I hear this noise on the other side of the bedroom wall. And the noise is going, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: It's not what you're thinking.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Shame on you. Goodness.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: No, I was staying on the fifth floor of the hotel and the building next door was also five stories high. And it had a big exhaust fan on top that had a rusty spot. So it would spin around, whoomp squeak, whoomp squeak.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: So what does the no complaining guy do in a situation like this? I went downstairs and I said, you're probably not aware of this, which is a great way to start a difficult conversation. You're probably not aware of this, and then I explained the situation and they moved me to a much nicer room. Now the thing is in the past I would have handled this a lot differently. I would have called my mother.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: You're laughing because you'd do the same thing.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Can you believe this? Best hotel in Denver? Bibl. I'll show them. I'll stay in the room.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And that's what we do. We stay in bad situations. Bad relationships, bad organizations, things that don't feed our soul and we feel like we're somehow showing the other person what they've done to us. And the only person we're hurting is whom?

ALL: Ourselves.

MR. BOWEN: Ourselves. Ourselves. Have you noticed that complaining is a competitive sport?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Imagine. So imagine you're at work, right? And you notice one of your colleagues coming into the break room, maybe, and you notice that this person is, they are walking but they've got a little bit of a limp. As my mom used to say, they've got a hitch in their get along. Right? So you say, what happened? And they say, well, it's kind of embarrassing. I got up at 3:00 in the morning to go to the bathroom last night, stubbed my toe. I think it's broken. Somebody hears that story and says, you know, I got up to go to the bathroom about six months ago in the middle of the night and I stubbed my toe but I fell down, wrenched my ankle, and I was on crutches for a month. Somebody hears that story and says, you know, I've got an uncle who got up in the middle of the night to go to the restroom, stubbed his toe, fell over backwards, hit his head, and died.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: What does everybody say? You win. Complaining always goes in degrees of higher severity. It always goes low to high, never the other way around. It always gets worse. That is why it is so important to create a complaint free environment for you, one that practices healthy communication skills. People say to me often, well, you just want us to be a doormat. Like, no, you already are a doormat. Because what you are doing is talking to people who can do absolutely nothing to open the door to the future that you would like. So complaining is a competitive sport.

The other problem with complaining is it keeps your focus where? On the problem. It keeps you focused on the problem. One of my favorite stories that exemplifies this, two construction workers sit down for lunch one day and the first one looks in his lunch box and goes, oh gross. His buddy says, what's wrong? He said, I've got a meatloaf sandwich for lunch. His buddy goes, what's wrong with that? And the guy says, I hate meatloaf. The buddy shrugs his shoulders. The next day the same two guys sit down for lunch. The first one opens his lunch box, reaches inside, and goes, two days in a row? Meatloaf sandwich after meatloaf sandwich? Again, his buddy just shrugs his shoulders. The third day, the same two guys sit down. The first one opens his lunch box. This time, he grabs his sandwich and crushes it and he said, I've had it. I've had it. Day in and day out it's the same thing. Meatloaf sandwich, meatloaf sandwich, meatloaf sandwich. I want something else. His buddy goes, dude, why don't you ask your wife to make you something else? And the guy says, I make my own lunch.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: If you get nothing else I say today, please let it be an understanding that you make your own lunch by the thoughts that you think but evidenced by the words that you speak. Complaining is a competitive sport. Complaining keeps our focus on the problem. Complaining damages your health. One of the things as a person who truly studies complaining that has really amazed me is that in the last three to five years a lot of very, very serious organizations are taking on this idea of complaining to look at it and to find out what the negative aspects are. Let me share with you just a little bit of what happens when you are a chronic complainer.

Number one, it shrinks the hippocampus in your brain, mimicking the effects of Alzheimer's disease. People who complain frequently tend to become more easily angry, they tend to have challenges in social situations, and they have trouble thinking creatively. The other challenge with complaining is that it kicks out the stress hormone cortisol in your body. People who chronically complain have enormously high levels of cortisol and cortisol tends to make you fat, it gives you high blood pressure, and cause heart attack or even a stroke. Complaining takes its toll on your body.

We are psychosomatic beings. I remember being a little boy. My grandmother would call, my dad's mom, and I would say to my mom, you know, after talking to her on the phone, I'd say, hey mom, you want to talk to Grandma? And my mother always said the same thing.
(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Hang up the phone. And I'd get off and I'd say, mom, why don't you want to talk to Grandma? And she'd say, she's psychosomatic.
(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Well I was born in 1960. We didn't have Google when I was a kid. But we had a World Book. So I went and I looked it up. Psychosomatic. Psychosomatic. It took me forever to figure out it started with a P. Psychosomatic. Psycho -- I thought it was going to say a neurotic, sick person. Do you know what it said? Psyche, soma, psyche, soma, mind, body, we are all total beings. We can't go around living a life of negativity, complaining, and unhappiness without it taking a toll on our bodies. So complaining is damaging to your health.

It also destroys relationships. Complaining to someone identifies that person, excuse me, drags the energy of the relationship down. Complaining to somebody makes the whole relationship feel negative. And complaining about somebody that you're in a relationship with causes you to look for more negative things about that person.

Let me give you an example. I've noticed that everybody wants to feel like they have accomplished something in their lives. We all want to feel like we're making a difference. Why am I telling you this? You know this better than anyone. You are here volunteering, giving your time through the Auxiliary, because you are making a difference in the world and a difference to our American heroes. Give yourselves a round of applause for that, would you please?
(Applause.)

MR. BOWEN: So whether you're in a volunteer capacity, or you work for a corporation, I've found that everybody wants to feel like they are making a difference and yet we all face struggles and challenges and so people want to come home, pour themselves a glass of wine or a beer or something, and tell their spouse about all the things that they struggled with that day. You see, we want that person to just accept us and to tell us everything is okay and they appreciate us. The problem is that we all want to be married to Winnie the Pooh while we're Eeyore and it doesn't work that way.
(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Somebody asked me in an Australian magazine recently, I was doing an interview, they said, how do you create a happy couple? I said, oh, that's easy. You take two happy people and you put them together. It's the only way that it works. Complaining destroys relationships because you are defining a person as you complain. How many of you are parents? Raise your hand. Good. How many of you have noticed that when you say something like this to your kids, you always leave your socks on the floor, the kid hears that as a Jedi mind trick? I always leave my socks on the floor. And they do.

There's a group of women in Kansas City that I'm friends with several of them and they get together every Thursday night for what they call group therapy. They go to a Mexican restaurant, drink lots of margaritas, and they complain about the men in their lives. I once worked up the nerve to ask them, what's wrong with men? Why are you always complaining about men? And one of them looked at me and said, because you're all dogs. (Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Dogs. You know, I thought if you have just come home from two and a half hours of complaining to your friends that all men are dogs, don't be surprised if you see Old Yeller sitting in the La-A-Boy when you get home. Because that's what you're looking for.

Complaining limits career success. Complaining kills organizations. From what I understand, this group attracts a lot of new women every year and yet approximately every three years 45 percent of those people leave. Do you know what's interesting? I'm not trying to, because I have no correlation here, but I want to share with you the truth. And that is that in the business world one out of every 11 people who quit their jobs quit because they don't want to be around the negativity and the complaining of other people. Complaining -- yes, please. (Applause.)

MR. BOWEN: Complaining limits an organization's success. So if complaining is a competitive sport, keeps our focus on the problem, damages health, destroys relationships, limits career success, why do we do it? You're probably wondering. People complain for only five reasons. This is what I want to share with you this morning. This is what corporations hire me to come and to teach their people. Because we tend to think that if we address the issues that a person is bringing to us, that they will no longer complain.

When I took over at the church, there was a woman who had been there for 40 years and she brought me a list of 19 problems in the church my first day. And I said, well, here's my to-do list. And I worked on that for two weeks. I called her up and I said, I've got some great news. Would you please come in? I want to go over that list and I went through it and I said, I've handled this, I've handled that, I did everything. You know what she did? Gave me another list. (Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: That's exactly right. So I want you to understand the real reasons people complain. From this moment going forward, I'm going to ask you to read things out loud. I'm going to ask you to say things. Because we only have a limited time together this morning but when your kids, the people in your state organization, your friends begin to complain to you, I

want you to know the real reason so you don't waste your time on what appears to be the reason. Raise your hand. Does that make sense? Is that good? Cool. All right.

So people complain for five reasons, as remembered by the acronym G-R-I -- anybody want to guess what the last letter is?

ALL: P-E.

MR. BOWEN: Very good. GRIPE. The G in GRIPE, please say it loud. I want everybody on all sides to hear you. What does the G in GRIPE stand for? ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: Get attention. Get attention is a basic human need. It is not a want. And what happens is as children some people discover if I go and complain to mom or complain to dad or complain to my friends, then all of a sudden I'm going to what?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: Get attention. This is a need. And those of you who are parents, you know that if your kids can't get your attention by doing something good, they will do something --

ALL: Bad.

MR. BOWEN: Exactly. And adults are just big kids. So we're all the same way. People complain to get attention. I was speaking in Canada a while back and at the end we had books of mine to sell. And it was a huge event, probably four or five times the size of this. And today I've brought books and after your business meeting I'll be back in the back if you'd like to get a book, meet me, get an autograph, that's cool. That particular day they brought in a chain store in Canada called Chapters to sell my books. So right before I went on, I was talking to the manager of the store, a young guy, 21 years old. And I said, so how's your store doing? I'm just making conversation. And he said, I have the number one store in Canada. And I said, really? He said out of the hundreds of Chapters stores, mine is the most profitable. We do three times as much per square foot as all the other stores. I said, how do you do it? He said, whenever someone comes into my store, if they come within ten feet of an associate the store associate must look that person in the eye and say, hi. I did the same thing, you all. I'm sitting here waiting. I'm going, okay, and? And? And he goes, that's it. That's it. He said, it's not unusual for someone to be in my store for 20 minutes and get greeted 16 times. And I said, 16 times? Doesn't that make people feel like you're trying to sell them something? And he said, we are trying to sell them something. We're a bookstore. We just acknowledge the most human need, which is the G in GRIPE, which stands for --

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: -- get attention. So what do you do if you've got somebody who is coming to complain to you about, just to get attention? Take whatever they are talking about. If they are talking about their kids, their work, the Auxiliary, whatever it is, you begin to ask them what's going well? What's going well with your kids? What's going well with the Auxiliary? What's going well with your health? What's going well with your family?

Just so you'll know, I'm not so naive that I think that this person is all of a sudden going to just flip and become a positive person. No. One of

two things is going to happen. First of all, they are going to think the cheese has slid off your cracker because you're not paying attention. They spent 20 minutes telling you everything that's wrong, and you keep saying, what? What's going well? But ultimately if you keep asking this question one of two things is going to happen. And that is that they will either begin to tell you what's going well or they will stop talking to you. And either way, you win. Okay?

(Applause.)

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: So tell me, what does the G in GRIPE stand for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: Awesome. Thank you very much. The R in GRIPE stands for? One more time. The R in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Remove responsibility.

MR. BOWEN: Excellent. You give someone a task and they don't want to do that task, they are going to complain about the circumstances surrounding that task trying to get you to let them off the hook. They are going to tell, they are going to rationalize as to why they should not be held responsible for this action. They are going to rationalize. They are going to tell you rational lies until you leave them alone. When you give someone a task and they don't want to do it, they will complain about the circumstances surrounding it so that you will let them off the hook. So what do you do if you've got somebody who is trying to get let off the hook by complaining?

Very simple. Please read this out loud. If it were possible, how might you do it? See, the challenge is when somebody starts coming back with us about, well, this is a problem, and I can't do this, and I have to handle this, and this isn't going to work, and I know this isn't going to go well, we get caught up in trying to address each of those things they bring up instead of getting to the core of it, which is they just want to be removed from responsibility. They don't want you to hold them accountable. So here's what you say when you have someone who is complaining. It's if it were possible, how would -- let me go back here. If it were possible, how might you do it? You just keep asking, if it were possible, how might you do it?

So before I advance the slides, the G in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: Oh, I'm not hearing the people over there. Don't make me come back there. The G in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: Awesome. The R stands for?

ALL: Remove responsibility.

MR. BOWEN: Great. And the I stands for?

ALL: Inspire envy.

MR. BOWEN: This is also known as a humble brag. We don't complain about people who are like us. We complain about people who are not like us. And if you want to test that, check it when you're driving.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: My wife, Marti, owns a yoga studio in Kansas City and if she's not teaching, she always drives me to the airport and always picks me up. She said that she has seen couples where one or the other travels and

if they stop picking them up at the airport and taking them, it kind of lessens the romance. Isn't that sweet? Everybody, awww.

ALL: Awww.

MR. BOWEN: There's a problem with it. We have two very different driving styles.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: I drive just slow enough not to get a speeding ticket.
(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Marti drives just fast enough not to get a parking ticket.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: She was driving me to the airport yesterday and I thought, would you please speed up? Gum wrappers are passing us.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: But see, I drive home from the airport and it's payback time. Claw marks in the dashboard. Because we are so different. We complain as a way of saying, I don't have that character flaw. It's really a way of trying to make ourselves look better. That is why it's a humble brag. So what do you do if you've got somebody who is complaining to inspire envy. Please read this outside. Compliment the opposite. Now, that's a pithy way of saying that when someone is complaining to you, take whatever they are complaining to you about and turn it around. Example, you've got a meeting. Your group is having a meeting. Somebody looks around and says, well, I see Shirley is late as always. Sorry to any Shirleys here. (Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: There we go. Now is that person really trying to make Shirley look bad? No. They are trying to make themselves look what?

ALL: Good.

MR. BOWEN: They want you to know that they are not late. You get it? Yeah. So what you want to do it, compliment the opposite. You know, yeah, Shirley is late, but what I love about you, Sally, is that you're always on time. Compliment them for the opposite of what they are complaining about. All right?

So the G in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: The R -- we've only got five more minutes, y'all, lets end big. The R stands for?

ALL: Remove responsibility.

MR. BOWEN: The I stands for?

ALL: Inspire envy.

MR. BOWEN: And the P stands for?

ALL: Power.

MR. BOWEN: Power. We see complaining used for power in the United States about every four years.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And I'm not talking about the Olympics, y'all. Negative campaign ads work but not in the reason you would think. A negative campaign ad is not there, if you're a dyed in the wool member of one party they are not there to get you to see the light and change parties. That has nothing to do with it. A negative campaign ad is designed to disgust you

so much with your own party that you don't vote and they move one step closer to the White House. Whenever you have got families, whenever you've got a volunteer organization, whenever you have got a corporation, people complain for power because it works. Nothing is going to get someone on your side quicker than a perceived injustice done by another person. And they will bind with you. People complain for power all the time in this country.

So what do you do if you've got somebody who is coming to you to complain for power, and they are complaining about somebody else? This is the healthiest thing you can do, whether you're a parent or the leader of an organization. Please read this out loud.

ALL: (Indiscernible).

MR. BOWEN: Bingo. Yeah but she's -- it sounds to me like the two of you have a lot to talk about. But she said -- it sounds to me like the two of you have a lot to talk about and I'll be happy to orchestrate a meeting. The key is whether you are a leader of volunteer organization or a corporation or a family, we tend to take on this idea that it is our job to solve the disconnect and the discord between the people who are with us. That is not true. Our job is to put it back on them, to make sure that they learn to deal together, and then they are no longer purchasing our power for the price of a complaint. Does that make sense? Raise your hand, please? Cool. Good.

So the G in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: The R in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Remove responsibility.

MR. BOWEN: The I stands for?

ALL: Inspire envy.

MR. BOWEN: The P stands for?

ALL: Power.

MR. BOWEN: And the E stands for excuse poor performance. Let's say it together, excuse poor performance. Now take a look at the R in GRIPE, remove responsibility. Excuse poor performance is the past tense of the R in GRIPE. You give somebody a task, they don't want to do it, they complain about the circumstances to get off the hook. In excuse poor performance you've given someone a task and they have blown it but they don't want to take blame for it. So they are going to come up with more rational lies trying to get them off the hook. So what do you say when someone is complaining to excuse their poor performance? Please read this out loud.

ALL: How do you plan to improve next time?

MR. BOWEN: When? How do you plan to improve when? How do you plan to improve when?

ALL: Next time.

MR. BOWEN: That is so important. Because what we want to do is go back and rehash what they have already not done, which simply makes people defend their position. But if you talk about it hypothetically, how do you plan to improve next time, you will see them shift.

So one more time. The G in GRIPE stands for?

ALL: Get attention.

MR. BOWEN: The R stands for?

ALL: Remove responsibility.

MR. BOWEN: The I stands for?

ALL: Inspire envy.

MR. BOWEN: And the P stands for?

ALL: Power.

MR. BOWEN: The E stands for?

ALL: Excuse poor performance.

MR. BOWEN: Awesome. Awesome.

I was walking my dog a while back and I noticed something really interesting. It was a beautiful fall day and there was a flock of birds, and by a flock I mean the sky was dark with birds. There was thousands of birds flying overhead this day when I was out walking my dog. And what I noticed was that the flock would sometimes just move and all go straight up and then they would just dash to one corner of the sky, and then they would land in a field, and then they would take off. And this made me wonder, who is the leader of the birds? Who is deciding that the flock goes up, the flock goes down, the flock lands. And I did a lot of research into this. And the answer is everybody. Everybody. Every bird is the leader. Because literally the movement of one bird moves the bird next to them, which moves another bird, which moves another bird.

My question to you, friends, is what kind of bird are you going to be in the Auxiliary? Are you going to be the bird that takes this organization higher for another 98 years and serves millions of people? Or are you going to be someone who takes it down? It's totally up to you. And that's true in your family, it's true in corporations. We decide how the organization goes. There is no organization without us.

So how many of you got the complaint free bracelets when you came in today. Everybody should have gotten one. Raise your hand, let me see them. Okay. Now we got some bracelets recently and there was a problem with them so I want to make sure these work. Would you please take it off one wrist and put it on the other wrist?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Yeah, okay. These work. These work. The idea is you simply put a bracelet on your wrist and every time you catch yourself complaining you switch it to the other wrist. Now so many times I'll speak and people will go, you know, I had to switch my bracelet two times yesterday. And I always think, you weren't paying attention to what was coming out of your mouth. Because the average person complains 15 to 30 times a day and has no awareness they are doing it. Complaining is like bad breath, you notice it when it comes out of somebody else's mouth but not so much when it comes out of your own. And the complaint free bracelet is designed to make you aware of when you complain. And when you complain less, people around you begin to complain less.

I want to close, if I may, with the three questions people ask me the most in order. Number one, or number three rather, how do we get you to come and speak? Very simple. Go to acomplaintfreeworld.org on your bracelet and click on speaking. You'll find information on how to contact my staff and we'll see if we can make that happen.

The second most common question people ask is how do I get more bracelets? I want to do this. I want to do it with my family, with my team, with my state organization, whatever. Again, go to acomplaintfreeworld.org and we offer them in various quantities with deep discounts.

And of all of the things people ask me, you want to know what the number one thing people still ask me all the time? They ask me what's Oprah like?

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: The answer is she's the same on camera as she is off camera. She's smart, she's fun, and she's funny. And my time with her was just absolutely delicious. I totally enjoyed hanging out with her a little bit.

The funny thing was right after we shot this, she reached over at the commercial break -- and by the way, this was taken nine years ago when I was much older.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: Oprah reached over and she touched my arm and she said, Pastor Will, you know, I have nothing to complain about. And I thought, of course not! You're Oprah Winfrey, for God's sake.

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: What are you going to complain about? You're one of the richest, most powerful people on the planet! And I guess my poker face wasn't working real well because when she said this I literally went --

(Laughter.)

MR. BOWEN: And she said, no, no, no, no, no. It's not that I have everything that I have and that's why I don't complain. Oprah said I don't complain and that's why I have everything that I have.

(Applause.)

MR. BOWEN: You see, Oprah gets that she makes her own lunch, as do you. And the men and the women who have served our country are counting on you. They don't even know the wonderful things that this organization does for them many times until you are actually doing it. Our country, our world are counting on you to remember that you make your own lunch. Make it a magnificent buffet and share it with our world.

Thank you so much, and God bless you, and God bless America.
Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. BOWEN: Thank you. Thank you so much.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will, thank you so much for being with us here today and for challenging all of us to break the habit of complaining. Everything you said speaks directly to our strategic plan, specifically goal two, which of course is to create a culture of good will. I encourage all of you to accept the 21-day challenge and live complaint free. I can't wait to see how everyone does on their purple bracelets. Thank you so much.

MR. BOWEN: My pleasure. Thank you.
(Applause.)

MR. BOWEN: Thank you all.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So good morning. Good start to the day?

ALL: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All right. It was great being backstage and listening to you interact with Will up here and give all the responses. So I know that you had a lot going on up here and I'm sure that you all took either lots of notes or after saying it over and over you're just ready to go for all these concepts that he gave you.

I hope that yesterday you enjoyed seeing and hearing from our outstanding youth.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I think it was nice of the American Legion to share them with us. There have been some years where we haven't been able to see the youth champions and it is so great to see those. It was also great to hear from the American Legion Commander Denise Rohan, and American Legion Judge Advocate Kevin Bartlett. Great people. And then wasn't Senator Dole a bundle of energy?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Somewhere in close proximity she actually had a seminar going on all day so she stopped in here to see us and then she went out to do her job with a lot of other people. She is phenomenal.

Then we had Liz Mackey, our Honored Woman of the Year, and amazing woman dedicated to the rehabilitation of veterans through the creative arts. Did you learn a lot in the afternoon workshops?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All right. And you know, the next question that I want you to think about, and this goes with the afternoon workshops and what Senator Dole said and the message from Commander Denise and from Judge Advocate Kevin, when you go back home who do you need to share that information with? And as you go along, you might want to just jot in some little notes that say, oh, I have to make sure that I tell this person this information. Because it doesn't do us any good to get all the information and then do nothing with it.

So over the next couple days there are more guests to come so hold onto your hats here.

I'm sure that you noticed that one of the faces at the front tables has changed. Sara Riegel has been with National Headquarters eight years and she is a well-qualified woman. She has served on school commissions, neighborhood development organizations, and she's owned her own business. Sara joined the American Legion Auxiliary in 2011 as a compliance accountant and for a number of years Sara has done compliance matters at the mission trainings. So some of you have seen here there. Please welcome Sara Riegel as our new National Treasurer.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I'm hearing little woo-woos back behind me here.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Updated documents allow questions about the American Legion Auxiliary, its governance, programs, and eligibility to be easily answered. So National Constitution & Bylaws Chairman Denise Delaney-Wrolen had the privilege of working alongside departments and units determined to update their governing documents. Please welcome to the state Denise Delaney-Wrolen, National Constitution & Bylaws Chairman.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: Yes, Dubbie, my stride is a little slow but next Wednesday I'm going to be a new person. Madam National President, as we celebrate National President Diane's theme of ALA Proud, our units, districts, and departments should be very proud of their accomplishments this year. Our goal this year was to inform and educate members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed, and updated documents, policies, and procedures at all levels.

As we celebrate the 98th Anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary, our members look to these governing documents to answer questions and for guidance when problems occur when they need to find a solution. When our governing documents are well written, they help to create an internal culture of goodwill, achieving goal number two of the Centennial Strategic Plan, and at the same time accomplishing goal number one, enhancing membership strength.

The Department of New Jersey reported our governing documents are the backbone of our organization. Not only do these documents explain who we are, and the purpose of our organization, but they serve as the guideline for resolving possible conflicts and answering questions that could be left up to interpretation. It is vital that every unit, district, and county, as well as our departments, review their governing documents on a timely basis to make sure all changes from National are incorporated and that the documents are relevant to the organization. Job well done, Department of New Jersey.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: This year the Department of Puerto Rico focused on three aspects of the Constitution & Bylaws. One, the importance of their Constitution and Bylaws. Two, the promotion of standing rules at the unit level. And three, the study of the Preamble. As the committee provided guidance to the units, questions and answers were communicated about the documents, as well as the process on how to update them properly. Various topics were discussed to inform the organization on who we are and what we do. The Preamble was slowly recited, sentence by sentence, explaining its meaning to its members. To quote the chairman, "The Department of Puerto Rico is very proud of our members, the way they kept going after all we went through."

(Applause.)

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: On behalf of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, we are so very proud of the members of the Department of Puerto Rico for taking on the responsibility of updating their governing documents through all the damage to their cities and their country during the hurricane as they continued to rebuild and carry on in their daily lives. God bless you all.

The Department of Virginia's theme this year for Constitution and Bylaws was Your Constitution and Bylaws: No Mysteries, Just Clues. The department holds fall conference, spring conference, and a department convention, as well as zone meetings. During these meetings the department Constitution & Bylaws chairman discusses the importance of a unit's Constitution & Bylaws. She also communicates to the members through the department bulletins with articles focusing on membership eligibility, transfer of membership, dues increase, and the code of conduct. Units are reminded to update their governing documents in order to comply with those of the department and the national. You should be very proud of yourselves. Let's give them a round of applause.

(Applause.)

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: The Department of Ohio provided step by step instructions and detailed how to sheets via email, mail, and website to help them review and update their documents. They explained the importance of having properly written, reviewed, and updated documents, policies, and procedures to help strengthen our organization, goal number four, and how that helps to create an environment that allows goodwill to develop and to grow, goal number two.

Many departments reported creating constitution and bylaws and standing rule templates and guidelines for units in writing and updating their documents which were distributed or provided via their website. They held department schools of instruction and encouraged units to review their standing rules on an annual basis and make any changes that were necessary. Units gave each member an updated copy of their constitution and bylaws so that each member can be more proactive during their meetings. The objective at all meetings was to treat every member with courtesy and kindness and give them the right to voice their opinions. To quote the chairman from the Department of Iowa, governing documents can be very complex and diverse. Simplicity is clarity and I hope I can help members understand the reason and purpose of the importance of these documents.

Since the inception of the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan in 2014, departments from across every division in the American Legion Auxiliary have begun to see the importance of allowing their NEC members to serve longer than a single one-year term. With the knowledge and understanding NEC gain through this process, it allows them to become more informed in making decisions that optimize the ALA mission delivery. In just four short years since embarking on the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan, we have seen an increase from just seven departments in 2014 to a total of 30 departments in 2018.

(Applause.)

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: That is 58 percent of all departments. Congratulations to the 30 departments whose governing documents have been

amended to reflect a needed change in our organization that will lead us into the next 100 years.

This year the Constitution & Bylaws chairmen have fulfilled the mission of this committee to inform and educate members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, revised, and updated documents, policies, and procedures at all levels. Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Denise.

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: You are quite welcome.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: This next group always excites me to see them come. Please welcome from the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China, Minister Retired General Chiu and Retired Colonel Felix Wang and Specialist Julio Ke.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

GENERAL CHIU: I'm scared because it's the first time I've met so many ladies in your audience. And I respect ladies, except my wife.

(Laughter.)

GENERAL CHIU: President Duscheck, and the audience of American Legion Auxiliary, thank you for the warm welcome. I am Minister of Veterans Affairs Council and as senior veteran from the Republic of China, it is my great honor to be involved in the annual National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary.

I want to pay tribute to everyone on behalf of our overseas veterans as well as my respect to each member of the American Legion Auxiliary (indiscernible) from the bottom of my heart. So you are playing an irreplaceable role in supporting the veterans, no matter if he or she is your parent, husband, or even children.

Thank you for your selfless dedication and commitment. It not only comforts the hearts of the soldiers but also makes them feel the value of the contribution to peace, freedom, and the democracy, thus promoting world security and stability.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the support of the American Legion Auxiliary and welcome to Taiwan for vacations, a region foremost in beauty of nature and humanity.

We wish you complete success and the distinguished guests all the best. Thank you very much. Thank you.

(Applause.)

GENERAL CHIU: Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We actually met up for dinner in Alaska and had a meal together with them, and they are just so delightful to sit and visit with. I have always loved seeing that group from Taiwan come here. So thank you for being very gracious to them.

This morning we have the privilege of having the Sons of the American Legion National Commander with us. Danny Smith was elected National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion during the 46th

National Convention of the Sons. He is the first ever SAL National Commander from the Detachment of Nebraska.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Now when he comes out, you're going to be extra loud, right? Okay. He's a 44 continuous member of the Sons. He's been married to his lovely wife Donna for 42 years. All their children and grandchildren are members of the American Legion Family. Please welcome our Sons of the American Legion National Commander Danny Smith.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

COMMANDER SMITH: Well, thank you for that warm welcome and those kind words, Madam President. But I'm going to be honest with you. You know, I should really stand here and applaud you for your dedication to your service and to this organization with those ideals and principles on which the American Legion was founded.

National President Diane, National Executive Secretary Dubbie, other national officers and staff, department representatives, distinguished individuals, guests, and delegates to this Convention, my sisters in this our great American Legion Family, good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

COMMANDER SMITH: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. Enthusiasm. You know, these last few months we've been talking about enthusiasm and I'm a firm believer that if we radiate and get people enthused and energized about our organizations and what we do as members, you know what? They are going to start coming to us and asking us what we're all about. And they are going to want to be involved, and they are going to want to be members. And isn't that going to make our job a lot easier? We won't have to work so hard to get that membership.

(Applause.)

COMMANDER SMITH: So please, remember that. Stay enthused and energized about the American Legion Family.

What an amazing year this has been working together with your National President Diane, and you the members of the American Legion Auxiliary. You know, we Sons of the American Legion have joined in with both the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary putting family first and planting seeds for the future. And we have done that by as our theme states, Following in Their Footsteps, making history. And that's kind of a twofold thing there. Not only hopefully we followed in the footsteps of our parents and grandparents that served this country, but hopefully following in the footsteps of the American Legion. And I want to thank you for electing such an outstanding individual to serve as your National President this last year. You know, and you probably hear it every year, I have the best person that I could have possibly served with. You know, and I'm not being disrespectful to anyone, but they are all wrong. I think I have --

(Laughter.)

COMMANDER SMITH: -- I think I have had the opportunity to serve with a fantastic individual.

(Applause.)

COMMANDER SMITH: You know, I myself could not have selected a better individual to serve with and I definitely was honored to serve along her side representing our organizations. And we had the opportunity at times to have some downtime, to get away from the hustle and bustle of the meetings and the presentations. And I want you to know that your National President is exactly the person behind the scenes that you see on the stage. She is kind, compassionate, caring, understanding, patient, and willing to go that extra mile to serve the ideals and principles of the American Legion Auxiliary and its meetings and its members.

(Applause.)

COMMANDER SMITH: And I want to thank you for that. You know, this past year I've had the opportunity to talk to several American Legion Auxiliary groups during my visitations and I'm sure there's many of you that haven't heard some of those words that I spoke at those meetings. I really want you all to know my personal feelings about the American Legion Auxiliary and the service you provide so therefore I'd like to just share a few of those comments with you this morning.

I grew up in a family that was highly involved in the American Legion, and that was good. That gave me the background that I needed. And I was able to witness firsthand exactly what the American Legion Auxiliary does and how important they were in providing the American Legion with the services that they need.

You took on many of the tasks that the American Legion would not or could not take on, and if that wasn't enough you created your own programs and projects and excelled at what you did. And I think we're far enough away from their meeting room. I'm going to tell you, this is our secret, all right? We know who does all the work, right?

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

COMMANDER SMITH: Absolutely.

(Cheering.)

COMMANDER SMITH: That's our secret. Don't let it out.

No, but seriously, I witnessed it. I know who does the dirty work, unfortunately. I know who takes on all those jobs and tasks that aren't the glory jobs. It's you folks right here, sitting here today. And I appreciate that. I do sincerely.

I want to extend to you my sincere appreciation for everything that you do and your dedicated service to those words contained in your Preamble to your Constitution, and hopefully I get this right. To participate in and contribute to accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion. I'm going to tell you, no one does it better than the American Legion Auxiliary. The work that you do and the services you provide are truly amazing. And the American Legion Auxiliary has been doing just that for nearly 99 years, lending a hand and undertaking many of the projects, again, that the American will not or cannot take on.

You understand that exemplify mutual helpfulness. Mutual helpfulness, isn't that what we're supposed to be all about? All of our preambles contain those words, mutual helpfulness.

I want to thank you each for your contributions to the American Legion Auxiliary and to the programs of the American Legion. Your generosity has created millions, and quite possible billions, of smiles. And to me, that is the truest measure of success, the smiles that we put on the faces of those that we serve. And if you've gone to a veterans home and served, or a VA facility, or worked with children and youth, and you get that smile, and that thank you, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

I want to leave you with this thought. Alone we're but one voice; together, however, we create the thunder of the world's largest veterans service organization, the American Legion Family. God bless all of you for what you do, God bless these United States of America, and God bless the American Legion Auxiliary. Remember, together we can and together we will make a difference. Thank you.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Donna, are you hiding?

COMMANDER SMITH: Donna, wave at us.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, Donna is way back there waving. I thought we were going to bring her in from the back but she has escaped and she's back there. Okay.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Danny, I want to thank you so much for coming in to say good morning to us today. We appreciate it.

COMMANDER SMITH: Oh, my pleasure.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It was so wonderful to be able to travel with you this year. You and Donna were both delightful. I found that the Commander's words were always inspiring. A number of places we were together and Danny would address the entire delegation that was there and he always had a wonderful message to bring to them. He is so dedicated to veterans. And he and Donna have spent a lot of time going around to veterans homes but at one time he sort of got with me and he said, you know, I think Donna takes me to all these veterans homes, she's trying to find a place to leave me.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Have any of you caught Commander Danny's campfire chats?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: If you haven't caught those, I usually find it by accident, is it YouTube or Facebook?

COMMANDER SMITH: Facebook.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Go to Facebook. Look up Commander Danny and find some of those chats. They are amazing. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER SMITH: It's Danny Donna Smith on Facebook.

Yep.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks so much for being here.

COMMANDER SMITH: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please welcome our USAA representative, a military spouse and ALA member, Katie Edge.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. EDGE: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. EDGE: I have to tell you, this is my first National Convention and what an incredible experience it's been. It feels like you have welcomed me into your family and I get hugs and waves and those of you that have seen me before, so thank you for making me feel very welcome.

So on behalf of USAA I'd like to thank you so much for the invitation to speak with you ladies today. On behalf of USAA we're very proud of our relationship with the American Legion Auxiliary and a special thanks to your leadership team and your Executive Director Dubbie.

So we always have an annual summit at USAA every year and Dubbie always attends. We have 58 different veterans service organizations that participate, including the Auxiliary, and I know that her feedback is greatly appreciated. So we appreciate that.

So for those of you that don't know me, my name is Katie Edge. I am new to the affinity team at USAA so recently I started managing the relationship with the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Sons of the American Legion. It has been my pleasure to work at USAA for the last 14 years and what an honor it is now to be serving the American Legion Auxiliary.

As a military spouse to an active duty soldier, and the mom of two little girls --

(Applause.)

MS. EDGE: Oh, thank you. I kind of like them, too. I'm especially proud to be a new member of the Auxiliary.

(Cheering.)

MS. EDGE: And I see my Texas friends sitting right over there.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. EDGE: So in a military family, whether we're active, separated, or retired, we all absolutely serve. It's an honor to work with an organization that helps military families, much like my own, and works with programs that support military families and our next generation.

I know that many of you can attest to the challenges that military families face, perhaps through your volunteer efforts with the Auxiliary, or perhaps within your own family as many of you I know have children and grandchildren that are currently serving. And so it's such an important mission to serve the military community, so I thank you for that.

USAA, much like the Auxiliary, we support the military community as well and so we seek to be the provider of choice for the military community so that we too can be there for each one of you and your family when you need us most. So thank you for your great partnership with USAA.

I do want to let you know that if you aren't currently a member with USAA some of our eligibility guidelines have changed. If it's been over a year since you've called us, please call. Come and visit us at our booth. We'll be right next door until 2:00 p.m. today. And I love it, too, when members come up and they share with me their USAA stories and they tell me what it means to them. So if you do have a story, I would love to hear it myself and we have some superstar reps that are next door that we would be happy to help you out today.

So our most tenured members are absolutely those that help reinforce our brand pillars of shared military values, financial strength and wisdom, and passionate member advocacy. So it's a privilege to partner with the American Legion Auxiliary and it's a privilege to be a member. And thank you for having me today.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Katie. Chaplains provide spiritual and emotional guidance often in times when many of us feel lost. They are compassionate listeners who always bring dignity and love to every situation. Please welcome our National Chaplain Evelyn Espinola.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. ESPINOLA: I love the music. How blessed we are to serve our Heavenly Father. Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ has forgiven you."

Chaplains are the branches of God's hands, love, and representatives. Chaplain -- oh, wait a minute. Here we go. We provide the spiritual support to those who are ill, who are hurting and mourning, and who need spiritual inspiration and guidance for other circumstances. We as chaplains are to act as a faith leader and offer support to all individuals. We are the prayer warriors for our veterans, military, and in some cases their families. A chaplain offers insight, assurance, and compassion during challenging moments in someone's life.

As I began my year, I thought how fitting it is to continue my theme from my office as department president, Many Hands Working Together. We serve as a family and togetherness in the many events we hold throughout the year, Veterans Day, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and many other programs. Many cards were sent out for our elderly that are not able to leave their homes, for those who were ill, and for our departed family members and friends. There are many visits to the veterans centers. Social media was a place for many of us to meet and engage in prayer for each other. We had many conference calls where we cried, laughed, shared stories, and enjoyed each other's company.

Some of the highlights of the year was asking for help on social media to make sure that 78 soldiers had Christmas. These soldiers had no family, no one to write to, and they would have no Christmas. Units across the nation answered the call and all 78 soldiers received packages.

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: Pennsylvania Unit #360, members made lap robes while waiting for donors at a blood drive.

South Dakota, having lunch with some of America's finest.
Nebraska Unit #351 made this star banner for the GI's Veteran

Home.

Colorado Juniors attending the ribbon cutting of the Rocky Mountain VA Medical Center.

Psalm 50:15, "Call on my in times of trouble and I will rescue you and you will honor me." I call this a microwave prayer. Because it is quick and to the point, help, SOS, Mayday.

The last highlight is a Navy veteran, Sharon Robinson Story. On April 4th, Sharon passed away. She's the best friend of my sister-in-law Renee Kernan. It was about a week later that Renee had reached out to me, seeking help to arrange for Sharon's funeral and burial. Her son had no money to pay for her services. Once again, I used social media and reached out to the Department of Idaho, Post and Unit #143 in Post Falls. I was connected with Service Officer Tim Fuller and his wife Casey. The bottom line? We needed \$2,300 to pay for her funeral service. Dee Sassey (phonetic), Tim and Casey Fuller, and myself put out the call for help. My father reached out to the Eagles and they contributed \$800. Other donations came in but we were still short \$1,400. And her son needed help with travel expenses in order to attend the funeral. Prayers were answered. The funeral home told us the balance had been paid by an anonymous donor. He donated the whole \$1,400.

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: On May 21st, now remember she passed away April 4th and it's now May 21st, Sharon was laid to rest at the National Cemetery with a procession of 40 to 50 Eagle and Legion Riders.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: Navy Operational Support Center presented the flag and the Honor Guard from Post #143 and Post #154 were there to pay tribute. This was definitely the works of many hands coming together to honor a veteran.

Thank you for the many hands coming together in prayer and thank you for the new found friendship and the outpouring of my love during my year as your National Chaplain.

I'm so deeply blessed to have all of you in my life. Madam President, as my last highlight, as your Chaplain, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve with you and this great organization. This concludes my platform remarks with a request.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yes, ma'am?

MS. ESPINOLA: I ask to suggest that future National Chaplains continue facilitating chaplain conference calls. Also, on behalf of the department chaplains, the divisional vice presidents, national officers, and myself, and all of your members out there, this is your prayer book. Yeah, very heavy.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I'm going to be busy for a while.

MS. ESPINOLA: But we have comfort for you, okay?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay.

MS. ESPINOLA: So please accept this gift and a handcrafted and assembled, let's put this up here, and an assembled by many appreciative and ALA proud members. May it keep --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh my God.

MS. ESPINOLA: -- you warm in love and in blessings.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you so much. Thank you. That is amazing. Oh, there's a back side.

ALL: Oh.

MS. ESPINOLA: -- back side.

(Laughter.)

MS. ESPINOLA: It is so big.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Can you see all the bears on there? Thank you so much. That's amazing.

MS. ESPINOLA: You are so welcome. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. I told them this year I would need lots of prayers because I was doing lots of traveling. And everyone knows that I'm always cold so this is great. I'll be able to read my prayer book, sit in my rocking chair, and wrap in my quilt. So thank you.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I want to know who quilts.

MS. ESPINOLA: Well Peggy Miller. She helps put it, fit together, and it just went from hand to hand.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So Peggy Miller is our quilter up here. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: If I don't answer my phone for a while, it's because I'm snuggled down somewhere really warm.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Evelyn.

MS. ESPINOLA: You're welcome.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: A celebration of life ceremony is a chance for us to remember our loved ones and honor all the things that made them so special to us. It is truly a tribute offered to loved ones to celebrate their lives and honor their memories. Today we'll be celebrating the lives the Past National Presidents Evelyn Starr, Alice Galka, Syble Deshotel, and Phyllis Sickmond. Please welcome Past National President Linda Boone with her celebration of life ceremony of Past National President Evelyn Starr.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Evelyn joined the American Legion Auxiliary Howard McCarty Unit #290, Department of Minnesota, in 1949 through the eligibility of her husband, Jim. After serving the unit and department at national levels in a variety of positions, she was installed as the 66th National President in Cincinnati, along with National President James Dean of Mississippi. She chose the theme And Justice for All to honor the 200th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution in 1987.

Besides the typical travel of most National Presidents, Evelyn celebrated a special tour of Canada for 150 years of historic relationship between the U.S. and Canada by a peace and friendship tour accompanied by National Secretary Miriam Junge and 36 others who paid their own way to be part of this historic celebration of the two countries who share a friendly border. With multiple stops at Canadian Legion Posts, special flags made by unit members were distributed throughout the tour and also used at the National Convention to demonstrate the friendship tour.

Child abuse prevention and protection of children was the primary focus of President Evelyn in her administrative year. The Auxiliary received a grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation at her request to publish a comic book, *The Secret of Animal Island*. This comic book was distributed to over 1.5 million children, which depicted how to be responsible and independent and how to use good judgment when faced with decisions about personal safety.

Additionally, a coloring book, *Safety Kids*, was distributed by Auxiliary members to one million children, provided by the Northern Paper Company. Auxiliary members also promoted using seatbelts, child restraints, and bike safety to support the National President's focus on children.

Membership that year reached 949,000. Poppies totaled 13 million, and provided \$52 million in proceeds. Veterans Affairs had members donating 3.3 million hours and over \$3 million.

I had the privilege of serving as National Junior Chairman that year and the Honorary National Junior President was a young woman that would surface in the future leadership of the senior leadership, Nicole Paustian Clapp.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: During this year, Layton Hearst, who had been with the American Legion Auxiliary for 37 years as the Director of the Washington office, retired and Evelyn participated in hiring this replacement. Notable guests that year included Jean Kirkpatrick, former Ambassador to the United Nations, who received the Public Spirit Award during the Awareness Assembly; Barbara Bush, then wife of the Vice President, spoke at the Awareness Assembly and our National Convention; Woman of the Year was presented to Elizabeth Dole during the Convention luncheon; Dr. Joseph Kiser of the Children's Heart Fund received a Humanitarian Award.

What I personally remember about Evelyn Starr, she was very kind and encouraging, especially to this national, new national chairman. During the regional conference held in the Department of Oregon that year, we took the visiting American Legion Auxiliary leadership to my post home where Evelyn introduced me to her sister, a member of my unit.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: She had a great sense of fun and told the story of how she had to evacuate a hotel down many flights of stairs during her year in her PJs at a regional conference, standing around in the parking lot waiting with Legionnaires and Auxiliary members waiting to be let back in.

Evelyn Starr should be remembered for her dedication to the children and veterans of our nation through her service in the American Legion

Auxiliary. Her contributions within our 100-year history are notable. To her family, the Department of Minnesota, we thank you for sharing her with us. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Linda. Please welcome Past National President Kristine West with her celebration of life ceremony for Past National President Alice Galka.

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: What a special day September 8, 1988 was. Many of us were in Louisville, Kentucky and the 68th National President of the American Legion Auxiliary was elected and installed, Indiana's own all-American lady Alice Margaret Galka. She and newly elected --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: -- National Commander H.F. "Sparky" Gierke from North Dakota; David Foss from Wisconsin, the Sons Commander; were all set to go as national leaders of our organization. Alice's theme, Pride, and Commander Sparky Gierke's theme, Proud to be an American, the all-American team was ready to go to begin a banner year.

Alice joined Kosciuszko Unit #207, Department of Indiana, in 1950 through the eligibility of her husband Tad, a World War II veteran. There is where it all started. The next 68 years of a very active Auxiliary member, Alice was on her way to be one of the most dedicated and devoted members of our organization. Volunteerism could be her middle name, as she volunteered for the veteran, the youth, the community, on the local level, district, department level, and reaching the national scene in 1970, serving as National Executive Committee Woman. Clear the way, as here comes Alice Galka as a future national leader.

Alice had the voice of an angel and shared that wonderful gift by singing in the Gary Chopin Choir for numerous events, Memorial Day services, Veterans Day service, conventions, etcetera. She shared her talent very generously.

She was renowned for her rendition of the World War I song, "My Buddy," and during her installation the theme song "All American Lady" was introduced which was composed by Tom Haines of Indiana.

Alice had another special talent and that was making centerpieces, corsages, flower arrangements, which she shared. Back when we held regional conferences in the years now 2000, the National President asked Alice to make yellow rose corsages to recognize the top departments in membership at the regionals. Department presidents and membership chairmen wore those corsages throughout the weekend, being selected as stop departments in membership. Proud recipients, indeed. And yes, she had many talents, and that being the flower lady was one of many.

Alice was a strong leader, had great vision, set lofty goals during her year as National President. She was direct, honest, sincere, and you know where you stood with her. As National President, our programs blossomed with pride and great accomplishments. The Children and Youth program focused on preventing teenage suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and awareness of missing children. Community service was breast cancer awareness. Foreign relations was England, Radio Free Europe, and POW/MIA issues.

Membership theme, Pride in Being One in a Million. What fun we had racing around the country with all of us striving to reach that black and white checkered flag and that magic number of one million members.

Her special project was the USO and she set a goal of \$100,000 to be raised. Units across the nation made that happen with \$108,400 raised for the USO.

While at the Washington Conference, better known then as the Awareness Assembly, another Indiana resident was amongst the special guests. Marilyn Quayle, wife of Vice President Dan Quayle, hosted an English tea in the diplomatic dining room at the Department of State building. If you could only witness the pride Alice showed during that event, just beaming with pride and rightfully so. Awareness Assembly concluded with a USA road show.

Her travels took her around the world, the Far East; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Europe, visiting military bases, USO offices, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty; meeting with our troops coming home or being deployed overseas; wreath laying at National Cemeteries; participated in diplomatic briefings; and meeting with Legion and Auxiliary members in foreign departments.

While in Italy she had a lifelong dream come true and that was meeting the national leader of the Catholic Church Pope John II. Both Alice and Tad were of Polish descent and Tad took great pride in speaking the native Polish language with the Pope and Alice, just beaming with pride, on that very special occasion in Vatican City, Rome, Italy. You have to be someone pretty, pretty special to meet with the Pope but our All American Lady was just that special someone to be able to achieve her dream.

While in Rome she also met with Chuck Hegel, President of the USO World Organization, and a good friend of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Alice had the privilege of meeting with four Presidents of the United States on different occasions: President Nixon, Carter, Reagan, and Bush 41. I'm sure they all agreed she was an awesome volunteer for our organization.

Our National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland in 1989 had a very special opening under the leadership of Alice, the Parade of Nations. National Americanism Chairman asking departments to have a representative dress in costume of a foreign country. What a spectacular and grand opening it was.

Also during the Convention, the Heart of America Awards were introduced by the National Public Relations Chairman. Margaret Adams, Senior Editor of Good Housekeeping Magazine, was selected as Woman of the Year. What great publicity our organization received.

Alice's civic duties and volunteering was not limited to the Auxiliary. She was on the Board of Directors of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Northwest Indiana; President of the Woman's Club, where she was selected as Woman of the Year in 1967; volunteer for the March of Dimes; Heart Association; and of course volunteered at the Indiana State Veterans Home.

She was a mover and a shaker back in her day. Alice took me under her wing, and I had the privilege of being a proud eagle that year serving as New Hampshire's Department President. She always gave me good advice, suggestions, and a wealth of knowledge over the 30 years of friendship. Our

organization has lost a special person with a huge legacy to follow. Her 68 years of being an active Auxiliary member will never be matched. Her memory will live on forever in our hearts and will be remembered as a true patriot, All American Lady, waving the flag of the red, white, and blue. Godspeed, dear Alice.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Kris. Please welcome Past National President Rita Navarreté with her Celebration of Life Ceremony for Past National President Syble Deshotel.
(Applause.)

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Making a difference with your life, Syble, 88 years, of Lake Charles, Louisiana, passed away unexpectedly. The wife, the mother of one daughter, and grandmother of three, continue to share her loss and knowing she is at peace.

Her work with veterans dated back to her early childhood. Syble grew up during World War II, and her first memory of war was singing in the church choir for a funeral of war veterans. It was in 1962 when Syble became a member and immediately engaged its mission. She joined under the eligibility of her husband I.J. and her brother James Duplechian, both U.S. Navy veterans.

With her warm personality, management skills, she was able to provide leadership throughout all levels of the organization. She served as Louisiana's Department President 1981-1982. Making a difference in the lives of others is what Syble was all about. The choices she made as she grew in the organization led to her being elected National President in 1995. Her positive attitude, warm smile, soft-spoken but firm when she wanted to be, and her wearing those unbelievable high heels that she wore very comfortable and are remembered.

For instance, she initiated the first national membership workshop in 1983 and served as the facilitator for the national special force workshops during 1991 and 1992. In honoring her Louisiana roots, membership theme *Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler*, let the good times roll, generated fun and interesting activities. While National Vice President, she chaired the 75th anniversary committee.

During her installation address, Syble said she wanted to get back to basic principles of the Auxiliary with focus on home and community, the red, white, and blue. She went on to say you and I, whatever level we will serve, have the knowledge, the ability, to make a difference. Work with other organizations, your city, state governments, your schools, and other facilities and never forget to publicize what you do so well. One million members can make a difference.

National Commander Daniel Ludwig from Minnesota and the Sons of the American Legion Commander John Dietz from Texas, served during the administrative year, representing the Legion Family. Her theme for the year was inspired by Benjamin Franklin: *Where Liberty Dwells, There Is My Country*. Syble defined that dwelling place as the place where we live, where we met that veteran, where she waited for him while he went to War, where our children were born, where we earn a living, and where we may retire. She inspired us to continue volunteering because it's a 365 days a year issue and

that the Legion, the Auxiliary, and the Sons must be recognized in our communities as having a haven during disasters, a center for information, and a pledge for refuge.

Highlights recorded include the organization began exploring technology to put the ALA on the internet. The featured program was the Citizens Flag Alliance working toward a constitutional amendment to ban the desecration of the American flag. Zachary and Elizabeth Fischer, founders of the Fischer House Foundation, received the prestigious American Legion Auxiliary's Public Spirit Award at the Washington Conference. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the ALA Girls Nation. Congresswoman Lindy Boggs was honored for her selection as the Woman of the Year. Total volunteer hours by ALA members for the year were 7.5 million, with \$17.6 million in contributions.

In closing the 1996 Convention, Syble said to the incoming officers, I wish you the very best. You will do better than we did this year because that is the way it should be. Always moving forward, always onward for our organization and its service for God and country.

(Applause.)

MS. NAVARRETÉ: She goes on to state, as for me, today is I.J.'s birthday. We are going home to our country to relax and just be happy.

Syble, you made a difference in the world of the American Legion Auxiliary, in the lives that you touched from the beginning to the end.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Rita. Please welcome Past National President Linda Newsome with her Celebration of Life for Past National President Phyllis Sickmond.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Good morning. We are here to honor Phyllis' more than 50 years of service to our organization and for those of you who did not personally know Phyllis, let me briefly introduce you.

Phyllis became a member in 1967 through the eligibility of her husband, Bob Bachman, a World War II veteran. Although a lifetime New Yorker, she and Bob finally decided to move to warmer climes and they chose North Carolina.

Phyllis was an educator by profession and it showed through her commitment to the Auxiliary. She was a consummate professional and thorough in all she did. I met Phyllis shortly she served the State of New York as its President in 1986 and I was very impressed with her speaking and writing abilities. Over the years Phyllis and I became close friends even though we were totally different. And this really showed up --

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: -- when we became roommates. She was always meticulous while I'm, hm, not totally sloppy but certainly more so than she. It was my good fortune to name Phyllis from a host of great applicants to fill the position of National Children and Youth Chairman, leading to her election as National President at the 1996 National Convention.

Phyllis was an innovated National President. One of her concerns was teaching our younger members the meaning of patriotism and service to our country. At her installation, Phyllis announced that the Auxiliary would

adopt Make a Difference Day promoting community volunteering. She encouraged our members to target youth by offering increased opportunities and by encouraging responsible citizenship and development of the volunteer ethic. To this day, the Auxiliary carries on with her wise decisions.

To that end, her National President's theme was Promoting America, and that we did. We promoted the Flag Protection Amendment, but unfortunately while the bill passed in the House it fell short by a few votes in the Senate. A new and innovative Awareness Assembly had Phyllis modeling in the First Ladies on Parade and then she presented the 1997 Public Service Award to the then current First Lady.

The Women in Military Service Memorial Fund was started a couple of years earlier and over time we raised nearly \$1 million for that memorial. (Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Thank you. One of the truest descriptions of Phyllis was she was a lady. She was determined, thorough, thoughtful, and innovative. She was the consummate hostess. She always but always looked and acted the part of the lady. She was articulate and expressed herself with charm and wit. Her attire was always meticulous and everyone was her friend.

Phyllis and I traveled to National Convention and then drove from Milwaukee to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. (Cheering.)

MS. NEWSOME: I'm a Yooper. We were invited to stay in my cousin's place on one of the small lakes. Upon arrival, we learned that the electricity was out, meaning no lights, no coffee, and worst of all a toilet that you could not flush. Well we managed to make it through the night. The next morning Phyllis was actually hauling water from the lake. Not exactly what most of us would expect of her. For the record, Phyllis would think this slightly doctored photo was hysterical. (Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: One of the many fun times we had was when we roomed together and she shared a secret with me. She was bubbling over with excitement trust me, she did not bubble often. (Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: She asked had I ever gone online to a dating site to meet someone following my own husband's death. Nope, I replied. Then she spilled the beans. She had met Mr. Wonderful and for the longest time I didn't know that guy was Mr. Wonderful and the one with whom she would share a beautiful though brief marriage.

The American Legion Auxiliary's Family and her many friends share our sorrow. But we have the memories of a wonderful person who always believed in our mission and gave of herself to promote America. Till we meet again, my friend. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Linda. As the American Legion Auxiliary nears its centennial, we are happy to report our members are more excited than ever about our history. Here to tell us all the ways our units and departments are celebrating, please welcome National History Committee Chairman Cathi Taylor.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. TAYLOR: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, August 1918 --

VOICE: You are there.

(Laughter.)

MS. TAYLOR: Russia's civil war continues. A second wave of the Spanish Flu strikes Boston. The Great War lingers on. And American women persevere for voting rights.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Lila Fleming of Augusta, Georgia knows that her son will soon deploy. A member of several women's organizations, including the DAR, Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Soldiers Relief Association, Lila is held to be one of the most polished parliamentarians in Georgia.

After helping her husband in 1916 provide dental services in France, Swiss immigrant Marie Speakman of Wilmington, Delaware lectures on the scene behind the trenches. She seeks donations of food and clothing.

For Minnie Burdick of Houston, Texas the Great War is a family affair. Son Elmer serves with the U.S. Army Signal Corps, while Minnie, her husband, and daughter serve through the Salvation Army. In one 12-hour period, Minnie made 324 pies from scratch, all while under fire. She later reported, "It didn't take the boys 12 hours to eat them."

Edna Barcus of Indianapolis will live every mother's nightmare. Soon she will learn that her son Earl, who had been wounded, died when a German bomb struck the hospital in which he was recovering.

When California native Dorothy Harper isn't serving as a Yeoman in the U.S. Naval Reserves, you will find her working as a Red Cross nurse. She's based in Pearl Harbor.

A retired stage actress, Claire Oliphant of Trenton, New Jersey finds a new way to use her talents. As her husband serves in France, Claire promotes the National Security League and speaks against women's suffrage across the country.

And while her husband cares for the Doughboys, Dr. Helen Hughes Hielscher of Mankato, Minnesota tends to patients at the maternity hospital she and her sister founded in 1900. Helen is one of the first female surgeons in the state.

These women and others alike from different socio and economic backgrounds, with diverse opinions and life experiences, created our units, developed our departments, and in 1921 breathed life into our national organization. They are our Founding Mothers.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. Thousands of stories lie within the Auxiliary's history. But why should we learn them? What's this got to do with me? Our history is full of successes and failures telling how we've evolved over time, the reasons behind the actions. It also helps us build a sense of pride.

Writer Robert Penn Warren wrote, "History can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves and of our common humanity so that we can better

face the future.” Through the years our members and national staff librarians have worked to collect and preserve our history in artifacts, documents, and photos. Each item has a story to tell. How sad it would be if members walked past Mrs. Hobart’s dress in our Cavalcade not knowing who she was or her contributions to the Auxiliary. This is our history. And one in which to be proud. It deserves to be preserved and shared. If we don’t, the stories will die and no one will remember who we are or why we’re here.

I could go on for hours talking about the Auxiliary’s history and its importance, if you’d let me. Instead, I leave you with the words of world champion figure skater Scott Hamilton. “We have to celebrate and honor our past. Our past is the foundation for everything that comes after it. Without our past, our present has no meaning and our future is hopeless.”

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Did you love those pictures of all the ladies from the Auxiliary?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: As Cathi walked past me coming up here she real quietly said, “You know, Diane, that quilt would be a really nice addition to the Cavalcade.”

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Preserving, displaying, and sharing our history, traditions, and milestones is the purpose behind our history program. This past year has been a special time for members to look back and connect with our organization’s rich past. To tell us more is National Historian Susan Campbell.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: Madam National President, throughout our entire organization, the American Legion Auxiliary has continually made history this year. From the inception of the five-year Continual National Programs Action Plan 2017 - 2022, started by none other than our National President Diane Duscheck, to the online ALA Training Academy curriculum, which presently includes ALA 101, ALA Communications Methods, ALA Leadership: Living our Motto of Service Not Self, Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill, and ALA Branding and Why It Matters to Me. Our national staff has been working very hard tirelessly on these tools and with a lot more to come in the near future. We hope everyone is utilizing this great opportunity to learn more about our organization.

We have also been working very hard on our Five-Year Centennial Strategic Plan. From the national level, to the department level, all the way down to the unit level, progress is being made on all five goals. Keep up the good work.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: We have also created the 100th Anniversary Committee to start planning our 100th Anniversary. They have already asked departments and units to gather historic information about each department and unit, such as when a department was formed, when a unit got their charter, who were charter members, and the list goes on.

On all levels we have been utilizing emails, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, newspapers, newsletters, radio, television, and the list goes on and on. We are getting the word out to let people know who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

Another history making event was the crowning of Cara Mund from North Dakota as the 2018 Miss America on September 10, 2018. Cara has been an American Legion Auxiliary member since 1994, when she was eight months old.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: She also attended American Legion Auxiliary North Dakota Girls State.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: She also was American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation as a Senator.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: You may recall that Miss America 2009 was American Legion Auxiliary member Katie Stam from Indiana.

(Cheering.)

MS. CAMPBELL: So within two decades two Auxiliary members have been crowned Miss America.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: Again this year in October 2017 the American Legion Auxiliary was co-sponsor along with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival held in Buffalo, New York. Hospital Chairman was Ann Baglio.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: And she included the entire New York Legion Family, plus the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, to make it a success and this was the first time New York hosted it.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: They hosted 120 veterans for the seven-day event. Several national officers also attended to help with the veterans' needs, including our National President Diane, and National VA&R Chairman Nicole Clapp, and Elizabeth Mackey, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Director. As you know by now, Liz announced she was retiring after 33 years with the Veterans Affairs. She will be sorely missed.

Our American Legion Auxiliary mission, training, and National Junior Meetings this year have made history by having a record number of attendees both at the mission trainings and the National Junior Meetings. We must be doing something right, ladies. With these mission trainings and National Junior Meetings, we are giving more grassroots senior and junior members a chance to attend, to learn more about our American Legion Auxiliary.

The American Legion Auxiliary has also introduced the ALA Service Not Self Toolkit. It gives units ideas of what they can do for Service

Not Self. Check it out on the National American Legion Auxiliary website, www.alaforveterans.org.

The online membership application and membership renewal options have really been a success this year. Members and prospective members are utilizing this option in record numbers. This is a great way to increase our membership.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Susan. I don't believe there is an ALA program more visible to the public than our Poppy Program. It's a perfect combination of a tribute to those who served, a fundraiser that benefits our veterans, active duty military community and their families, and a PR campaign that raises awareness of the American Legion Family and our brand. The Poppy Program took a giant leap forward with official congressional proclamation of National Poppy Day. Let's take a look.

(Video.)

(Music.)

THE ANNOUNCER: In Flanders Fields the poppies blow, between the crosses row on row. This poem written in 1915 by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was the inspiration behind promoting the poppy as a remembrance symbol for soldiers who fought and died during World War I. A metaphor for bloodshed during battle, the red poppy has become a vibrant reminder of sacrifice and patriotism.

Moina Michael, known as the Poppy Lady, was an American teacher who was deeply touched by McCrae's poem. She wrote in her book *The Miracle Flower*, "I pledge to keep the faith and always to wear a red poppy of Flanders Fields as a sign of remembrance and the emblem of keeping the faith with all who died."

Veterans organizations around the world were inspired by the Poppy Lady, including the American Legion. In the early 1920s they declared the poppy their official flower to memorialize those who fought and died in the Great War. Since its inception the American Legion Auxiliary has been the driving force in promoting the poppy. Throughout the year Legion Family members distribute poppies with a simple request of a donation of any size to support veterans, active duty military personnel, and their families. Millions of handmade poppies, mostly assembled by veterans, have been distributed since 1924.

Last year nearly six million poppies and poppy items yielded \$3.9 million in charitable donations. Kids are involved, too. Poppy poster contests are held each year in schools across the country for students in grades two to 12. And Junior Auxiliary members ages six through 12 participate in Little Miss Poppy contests, helping promote the poppy as a symbol of remembrance and support.

Recognizing the sacrifices of veterans of all wars took a huge leap on May 3, 2017 through the introduction of House Resolution 309 that officially proclaimed the Friday before each Memorial Day to be recognized as National Poppy Day. It took long hours, determination, and working together to make it happen.

VOICE: As a member of both the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, I am proud of how we worked together to make National Poppy Day a reality. We truly are a Family. What a perfect way to honor those who gave their lives for America and to provide support to all veterans as well, something we're dedicated to not just for one day but all year long.

THE ANNOUNCER: Since the proclamation, the American Legion Family has been hard at work promoting, supporting, and implementing National Poppy Day activities. A dedicated National Poppy Day website includes information from the American Legion Family on how you can participate. A poppy shop offers a variety of poppy merchandise, poppy kits, and collection resources from American Legion flag and emblem sales. A page dedicated to financial donations to the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. And the Poppy Story, outlining the history of the memorial poppy.

Local and national media exposure has surpassed expectations, spreading the word not only about National Poppy Day but the American Legion Family as well. ALA member Ann Fournier was profiled as the Poppy Lady, highlighting her poppy making efforts during her hour-long commute to work. Ann assembles 100,000 poppies per year, totaling over three million in the 30 years since she began making them.

Memorable events took place all over the country coinciding with National Poppy Day, including this poppy garden dedication in Ohio in honor of the fallen in World War I. Local media captured the event and poppies were front and center at the annual 500 Festival Memorial Services in Indianapolis, sponsored by businesses, media, and the American Legion.

You can help in so many ways. You can help distribute poppies during the month of May, National Poppy Day, and throughout the year. Facilitate making poppies as a post, unit, or ALA Junior member activity, or supervise poppy making at a veterans home or VA facility, or make them yourself. And don't forget, National Poppy Day is a registered trademark of the American Legion. That's important to know and to protect as our branded property.

The fragile poppy is a fitting representation of veterans who need our help, while recognizing the ultimate sacrifice in service of our country. For more information about National Poppy Day, go to poppydayusa.org, or alaforveterans.org/poppy.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you for all that you do to support the poppy, to promote it as a symbol of sacrifice for those who served and died for our country in all wars. National Poppy Day gained serious momentum nationwide this last year. Here to tell us more about how the nation embraced this day of awareness is Carol T. Robinson, National Poppy Committee Chairman.

(Music.)

MS. ROBINSON: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. ROBINSON: Madam National President, what an exciting year it has been for the Poppy Program. This year has flown by and I have thoroughly enjoyed being the Chairman of this program. The committee, we have done our best to make sure our members were kept informed.

The Poppy Program exemplifies who we are and why we do what we do. The Poppy Program is to honor those who have served, those who are currently serving, and most importantly those who have lost their lives in the line of service for our nation.

Wearing the poppy and distribution of the poppies in the community in hopes of a donation is a way of bringing awareness of the appreciation of our veterans and their needs. Funds derived from the distribution of poppies assist not only the veterans, but also active duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

A special thank you to all 50 departments, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, who reported their outstanding work. Come on, hello!

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: Who reported their outstanding work on the promotion of the memorial poppy and amazing fundraising ideas. Let me call your attention to a few reports.

Department of Oregon --

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: Hello?

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: Unit #41, Diane Hawk (phonetic), discovered in March that Oregon did not have a poppy production program. So she gathered the local posts together, they purchased the kits, and Diane posted flyers around town looking for veterans willing to make the poppies. Five veterans signed up immediately. Thank you.

Department of South Dakota --

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: -- has worked very hard getting the word out to potential poppy makers at the Hot Springs, South Dakota VA, where veterans reported how therapeutic it is to make poppies.

Department of Georgia, hello?

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: The poppy anchor is a timeless tradition in Georgia. The poppy anchor, which is made of an estimated 12,000 poppies and the anchor, which is 52 by 52, is launched every year on Memorial Day.

Department of New Mexico --

(Cheering.)

MS. ROBINSON: -- nearly 600 poppy posters, 600 poppy posters, from elementary school children of Sierra County.

Last but not least, even our members deeply affected by tragedy found time to spread the word. The Department of Puerto Rico suffered devastating losses this year, back to back hurricanes. And yet, the unit members still found time to distribute poppies.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Also the Poppy Chairman created a power point presentation in both English and Spanish to aid them in promoting the Poppy Program. Congratulations, Puerto Rico.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Proclamations were made by mayors across the nation to recognize National Poppy Day. The city, county, and state legislative bodies were presented poppies to wear. Units were creative in educating their communities about the poppies, such as at the schools and the community centers, nursing homes, fashion shows, participating in parades, poppy corsages, and floral arrangement contests, poppy posters, Miss Poppy and Master Poppy contests, and remembrance ceremonies.

I could go on forever but my time is limited. So please check out the poppy Facebook page where you will see some excellent creative ideas about poppy promotion. Our yearly poppy posters highlights the creativity and talent of the school children nationwide. It is incredibly difficult to choose the winners when you see how much time, effort, and heart have been poured into every submission. The lesson these children learn and the art it inspires will remain with these children for the rest of their lives. The Poppy Committee and I thank you, Madam President, for this appointment and the opportunity to share what the ALA does and why it matters. Madam President, this concludes my report. But before I go, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the National Little Miss Poppy winner.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. ROBINSON: President Diane, please meet Abigail Jones, but she likes to be called Abby, from Chief Pontiac Unit #377 from the Department of Michigan.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Now you can step right up here and just wait just a second. This young lady at the age of seven sent an impressive scrapbook that illustrated how she promoted the Poppy Program. She learned about the war dogs, veterans with PTSD, homeless veterans, and she along with her unit adopted a female veteran in a nursing home. Everywhere she went she passed out a poppy and a poppy bookmark. She also received several certification and letters from Senators and state representatives congratulating her on being named Miss Poppy and her volunteer work with veterans and the community.

Abigail, or Abby, would you like to say a few words?

MS. JONES: Yes.

MS. ROBINSON: Okay, go right ahead.

(Laughter.)

MS. ROBINSON: Talk right in there.

MS. JONES: Hello. I would like to thank my Daddy and my Aunt --

MS. ROBINSON: And you're, I want to thank my aunt --

MS. JONES: I meant to say my Nana.

MS. ROBINSON: That's okay. Go ahead. And the Department of Michigan --

MS. JONES: And the Department of Michigan and my district and my unit and all the veterans. God blessing all of you and God blessing America.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICES: Way to go, Abby!

MS. JONES: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Everybody bye, wave bye.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: She appreciated your way to go and she said thank you, just in case you didn't hear that.

Thank you, Carol. We must always remember that poppies are a memorial tribute to all those who shed their blood for freedom and it's so nice to see that someone as young as Abby has the true meaning of what's going on here.

No task was too big or too small for our members to support our armed forces and their families. Here to tell us more about how Auxiliary members are volunteering to help military families is National Security Committee Chairman Brenda Collins.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. COLLINS: Madam National President Diane, the National Security Program promotes a strong national defense by supporting service members and their families. Our units have taken on this task this year and truly succeeded in a job well done.

In Nebraska National Security Chairman has been pushing red on Fridays. Their Girls State leaders wanted to show their support for the deployed so in coordinating with the Girls State each girl wore red on Friday for the Girls State Program. When orientation was held in April, the girls were asked to bring something red to wear on Friday to remember everyone deployed. Every ALA Corn Husker Girls State citizen and staff member was wearing red on Friday, June 8 to let everyone know they were extremely proud of our military.

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary Landt-Thiel Unit #470 in Saukville, Wisconsin sustained the National Security Program with supporting of the servicemembers and military families and emergency preparedness. Auxiliary members provided food and refreshments and volunteered for blood drives. Members of the Legion Family donated blood and gave the gift of life to their neighbors. Wisconsin members are very proud of what they do.

The Department of Puerto Rico, still recovering from Hurricane Irma, the units were going above and beyond, donating gas, batteries, food, water, all to the military to be distributed to families without power and water. There were thousands of Puerto Rican residents who were still without power in their country. This is truly a gesture of service, not self. Puerto Rico, you make us proud.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: At the fall workshop in October, the Department of Alaska introduced their special guest Makala Truesdale, the wife of deployed soldier Brandon Truesdale. She announced that she and Brandon were expecting their first child in April. The department wanted to honor the new family so they planned a surprise baby shower to be held at the department convention in April. The baby shower was a success. Brandon arrived home and Baby Dallas arrived four days later. You make us proud, Alaska.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. COLLINS: Auxiliary members from the Department of Connecticut attended deployment ceremonies where 380 servicemembers were deployed. The department wanted to honor the children of those being deployed so they distributed 52 Josh dogs, plus numerous other stuffed animals that were donated by units across the state. Their goal was to help the children of the military families not to feel left out and alone while their parents were deployed. The department's wish was that no child would leave without a gift.

Madeira Unit #132 in Oro Valley, Arizona adopted nine National Guard families with a total of 29 children ranging from newborn to 16 years of age. The unit distributed baby bags to families with newborns. In March this year the unit held Family Day for WAATS, the Western Army National Guard Aviation Training Site. 620 soldiers and their families attended the affair held at Bedrock Bowling Center. Unit #132 does not have a post home, yet they do so much for the community and for the National Guard. We thank you and we're very proud of you for what you do.

Units from one end of this great country to the other have taken advantage of the National Security Resources on the national website at www.alaforveterans.org. Thank you, Madam National President. This concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Brenda. By promoting who we are, what we do, and why we matter, Public Relations strengthens our identity and attracts potential members. To share the accomplishments of this past year, please welcome National Public Relations Committee Chairman Melanie Taylor.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Madam President. John D. Rockefeller once said, "Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you're doing the right thing." The American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations Program does just that.

Auxiliary members across the country wore their ALA branded attire to all events, catching the public eye by promoting who we are, what we do, and why we matter. They are making a difference in the lives of our veterans, active duty military, and their families. They are truly showing their ALA pride.

We are in a social network media age. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube are being used as a means to spread the word about

our activities, our programs, and the American Legion Auxiliary organization, enhancing efforts to recruit new members and keeping the interests of our current members. Auxiliary units utilize their local newspapers and television stations to share their stories.

Osseo/Maple Grove Unit #172 from the Department of Minnesota did just that. Alexis Oldenberg, a Junior Member of Unit #172, noticed while visiting Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis that all not veteran graves had flags placed by their headstones. Alexis made it her mission to make sure they were all recognized with an American Flag and honored this past Memorial Day. Her uncle, a Desert Storm veteran, and her grandfather are buried there.

As part of her high school National Honor Society project, she raised money for the nonprofit organization Flags for Fort Snelling to help purchase American Flags to be placed at every grave site for Memorial Day. Alexis' goal was to raise \$5,000 or more. She went door to door making her presentation and asking for donations. She presented a check for \$2,500 at the beginning of this year and presented her final check of just under \$4,500 just in time for Memorial Day, nearly \$7,000 total.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. TAYLOR: the local television station KARE, Channel 11, interviewed Alexis and her parents at her high school, reporting just how much she raised and that she and her family would be participating in placing 160,000 for Memorial Day. This is grassroots public relations at its finest. Congratulations, Alexis, well done.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Building relationships with the media in your community guarantees a favorable advantage when it comes time to promote your Friday fish fry, your Poppy Days, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State/Girls Nation Program, packing boxes of comfort items for troops serving overseas, or even an official visit to your department from the National President.

The Department of Wisconsin was able to secure a segment on the Milwaukee Fox 4 Morning Blend TV show that aired on May 25th, National Poppy Day. The Department President and a local veteran discussed the meaning of the Poppy Program and the history of the American Legion Auxiliary.

In a small rural town in Tennessee, one unit published articles and radio ads almost daily indicating over 600 radio announcements had been aired during the year.

For many units, a letter to the editor served well, educating the public about their upcoming activities and thanking the community for their support.

Public relations encompasses all programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, one being National Security. For one small unit in Southern California, let's hear it, California --

(Cheering.)

MS. TAYLOR: -- Bradley-Keefer Unit #138, President Kim Vincent, was aware of a military unit in the Middle East that was serving in an isolated area without running water, a toilet, and only MREs to eat. She made

it her mission to rally her unit and Legion members, as well as her community members, and first responders. They gathered personal hygiene items and snacks to box up and ship to those troops. Channel 11, KYMA in Southern California, heard about Kim's project and interviewed her and other Auxiliary members as they were packing their boxes at the post. An active duty serviceman was also present to help pack and while being interviewed by the news reporter he said, "When receiving those care packages, it does so much for the morale, especially for those facing tough times." Kim is proud of her military and our country and proud of her service in the United States Navy.

Thank you to all 52 departments for your end of year reports. I am so proud of you, each and every one of you, for accomplishing the 100 percent reporting.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. In closing, I would like to quote Benjamin Franklin. "Either write something worth reading, or do something worth writing about." Madam President, that concludes my platform remarks. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks, Melanie. Our units and departments fully embraced our mission for education this year. To share with us the great feats accomplished, please welcome to the state National Education Committee Chairman Vickie Koutz.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. KOUTZ: Madam President, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn." Benjamin Franklin.

Calling a scholarship a scholarship. The executive board for the Department of New Hampshire realized that most young people applying for scholarships find terminology can interfere with financial aid and Pell Grants, not giving the student the full expected value to assist them therefore defeating the purpose. By changing the wording to awards, this allows more young people to apply and have a better financial responsibility.

Units and departments shared from their hearts, and dug into their pockets and their fundraising efforts to raise money in order to present lots of scholarships to their local students. We received thank you cards from students thanking us for their scholarship awards. The first one was, my name is Asia Warner and I wanted to thank you so much for awarding me with a \$5,000 Children of Warriors National President's Scholarship. This will make college a lot less stressful for me and my family, while helping me live and work towards my lifelong dream of becoming a nurse. Again, thank you so much. Sincerely, Asia.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Dear American Legion Auxiliary, I am honored to have received the Children of Warriors National President's Scholarship. The money will go towards my education at Butler University.

(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: I greatly appreciate it. Thank you, McKenzie Scheetz. Raymie Shimokala from Hawaii was also a recipient of this same scholarship.

Students in Iowa sent care packages to VA hospitals and wrote letters to deployed servicemen and women, while units in Minnesota provided monetary donations to their local bands, prom parties, and graduations. California units filled backpacks with school supplies and then delivered to homeless and disadvantaged children. And the Department of Maine donated backpacks to the state for the foster care program filled with not only school supplies but also clothing and toiletries.

Units in Arizona utilized unique ways in raising funds for their Education Program that included raffles, bake sales, candle sales, and the list just goes on and on.

An Alabama unit donated laundry detergent to schools that provide facilities for needy students to wash their own clothes at school.

Red ribbons were given out in some Georgia schools to education students on a drug free environment.

A unit in Mississippi collected grocery receipts from local supermarkets which were redeemed by the schools to purchase playground equipment.

And Unit #180 in the Department of Kentucky --
(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: -- collected twist off caps for an elementary school to have recycled into a bench for their playground.

The Massachusetts Education Chairman shared that students worked hard while volunteering and participating in sports, while achieving good grades and high SAT scores.

Several units in New Mexico adopted schools with low SES status and provided additional support by providing food for children during their weekends.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Dennis Follmer, a Vietnam Veteran and a member of Post #335 in Davenport, Nebraska participating in a community school program gave a talk to second and third graders about his time in the service. He explained how Vietnam was not a very comfortable place to be and sometimes the only way he could sleep was to lean against another person so his head was not in the water on the ground. After a Flag etiquette program given by Deb Albers --

(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: -- the two gave a demonstration on how to correctly fold the Flag.

Montana units showed their appreciation to educators and staff by presenting them with gift certificates to buy milkshakes from local restaurants.

Kris West from New London, Unit #40 in the Department of New Hampshire, designed a card her unit sends out, and the card says, let us think of education as developing our youth, which will translate into a benefit and will strengthen our nation. Thank you for doing your part as a teacher, coach, nurse, bus driver, custodian, etcetera, so our young people can grow and advance in life to the fullest. You are their hero.

She stated, this is a way the American Legion Auxiliary can get our brand out to the public, plus honor the people in the education field.

“Our job is obvious. We need to get out of the way, shine a light, and empower a new generation to teach itself and to go further and faster than any generation ever has.” Seth Godin. Our members have once again shown their true love for our organization by supporting all the different focuses in the Education Program. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Vickie. This year American Legion Auxiliary members made it a priority to protect, care for, and support our Children and Youth, particularly those of veterans and military families. Here to share all the wonderful ways our departments and units use their own creativity and generosity to engage our Children and Youth is National Committee Chairwoman Kathy Daudistel.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam National President, in a world filled with horrific acts of violence and bullying among our children, do you sometimes wonder if there is any good left? Well I'm here to tell you that yes, there is. We only need to search for it and when we find it we need to recognize it.

ALA members used the ALA Good Deed and Youth Hero Awards to recognize children 18 and under for their acts of valor and goodwill. Let me tell you about five of these children.

First, let's talk about the ALA Good Deed Award. Logan Moore from Alaska used his seventh birthday to collect \$1,500 to purchase socks and jam for a local homeless shelter. With help from his mom, he delivered the items to the Downtown Hope Center in Anchorage, Alaska. During the Department of Alaska's Convention, Logan was presented his Good Deed certificate by Madam President Diane.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Let's hear what Logan had to say, on Channel 11 TV, by the way, about his good deed.

(Video.)

MR. MOORE: I want to do this next year and I hope your guys' birthdays you guys do this, too.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Isn't he adorable? What a kindhearted little boy. Way to go, Logan! Let's give him a round of applause.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Another kindhearted young man, six-year-old Corbin Oderkirk, an ALA Good Deed Award recipient from Florida, saved his allowance and collected money from relatives and neighbors to buy toiletries and food which he personally delivered to the homeless and low income veterans at the Veterans Outreach Center in Vero Beach, Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Good job. Yet another ALA Good Deed Award recipient was 17-year-old Rachel Hagan, an ALA Junior Member from Unit #68 in Oregon.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Rachel organized Rachel's Project to honor and recognize our fallen military personnel on Memorial Day. She collected shoes and boots and tagged each with the name of a veteran, servicemember, or a person who lost their life in service. She also spray painted several boots with gold paint and tagged them with the name of a local veteran who died in action. All of the boots and shoes were lined up on the street during Memorial Day. Great job, Rachel. What a really cool project.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: I don't know about you, but I look forward to seeing what Rachel can accomplish as she moves from a Junior to a Senior member leading our organization into the future.

Next let's talk about the ALA Youth Hero Award. Our youngest recipient was four-year-old Arabella Wetrick (phonetic) from Ohio.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: She called 911 when her grandma experienced a medical emergency. Arabella talked to the 911 dispatcher for more than seven minutes until help arrived. She calmly and clearly answered questions about her grandma's medical history and she even secured the family's two dogs in her bedroom so that the response team could enter the house quickly. What a smart little girl!

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Another recipient of the ALA Youth Hero Award was 17-year-old Angela McDevitt of New York.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: She was Facebook messaging with a friend from Vermont when the talk turned to school shootings. Her friend mentioned that he was planning to do that at his school. Angela grew concerned and cut the conversation short, saying that they should talk about it later. The next day, the shooting at Parkland, Florida happened. Angela talked with her friend again and grew even more concerned. She decided to talk to her guidance counselor and let him read the messages. He in turn alerted the local authorities, who immediately contacted the authorities in Vermont. The young man was arrested that day and although waiting on trial he is getting the mental help that he needed. Thanks to Rachel, a vigilant young lady who did the right thing. Who knows how many lives she saved that day?

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: These are only a few of the many certificates and awards presented this year. As of June 1st, 159 Good Deed Awards and 40 Youth Hero Awards have been presented to outstanding children this year alone.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: I think each one of them deserve a huge round of applause.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Remember to watch for acts of kindness and valor in your area. And when you find them, please recognize them. Let's

see a show of hands of how many people know someone that could possibly be recognized for one of these awards. The application can be found at www.alaforveterans.org I ask that you complete this form for each eligible child that you know. Together, we can ensure that the best stories of our country's children are highlighted. Madam National President, that concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Kathy, for that report. Our youngsters are so amazing. Remember yesterday we said that we were being livestreamed? You're being livestreamed again today.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So people have been listening to your responses all morning. I heard you from backstage also, that when Will Bowen was out here you were doing a good job of giving him responses. So how about on three we can give out a Happy Tuesday for everybody who is watching us, okay? So one, two, three --

ALL: Happy Tuesday!

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good job. Our next report comes from someone who works tirelessly for the good of the American Legion Auxiliary. As I contemplated foreign travel this year, I determined that the trips needed to be evaluated in order to assess their purpose and their report on investment. There wasn't time in the National President's schedule for a vacation so I asked Executive Director Dubbie Buckler to accompany me to the Far East and Europe to see if there were any mission outreach opportunities overseas that the ALA had been missing. Because honestly, in my opinion, foreign travel is only a wise investment if it furthers our mission outreach and increases membership. On both trips we had some military outreach projects to address and Dubbie was instrument in the orchestration of those projects. So thank you very much, Dubbie, and I'm excited to hear your report.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. BUCKLER: Thank you, National President Diane, for allowing me a couple of hours to talk with you this morning.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: How did you like Will Bowen?

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Well I want to start out by thanking National President Diane for inviting me to travel with her. I actually am invited by the Legion every year but I've never accepted because of the expense. Diane thought it was important for me to go and understand what goes on behind and during this trip. So she asked me to report on a couple of things.

In 2013 then National President Peggy Thomas came back from her trip to the Far East and remarked about how isolated and dangerous the demilitarized zone separating South Korea from North Korea was. The National President and National Commander, they visit that area. And for a very brief time, we go up into North Korea. Very brief. In fact, I'll tell you a funny story because when we were there this time you walk out, and those who have been know this, a big area, you walk out and you're looking at North Korea. And I'm convinced they looked back over at us and saw three

women walk out, actually four women walk out, because four hours later they shot the missile that went over to Japan.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: Not that shooting the missile was funny. I just thought the timing was interesting.

So in 2013 Peggy came back and said, gosh, and they have nothing to do in their off time. So she embarked on a fundraising project and tasked then National Security Chairman Mary Davis with the hopes of raising \$8,000. Well, they raised more than \$30,000. And as you know, money can only be used for the purpose for which it was raised.

So the next year Nancy Brown-Park went to the Far East and she was remarking, gosh, you know, the computer, so we bought computer equipment for them so that when they were off duty they could literally go online, take courses, use computer equipment. So the next year when Nancy Brown-Park went she came back and she said, you know, they could really use some larger monitors that could serve as TVs. So we did work through some magic through that and they got TVs over there.

Well so now five years later, we were over there and they have moved some things around a little bit. There is not a lot of space in the demilitarized zone. I mean, they can't run outside and get exercise. I mean, they are literally right there looking into North Korea. So while the National Commander and the National President are doing their official stuff, I pulled a couple of the captains aside and said, you know, since you're making these changes in here, what can you use? Well they put together a wish list and I hope you read the magazine because there was a nice story in there about it.

So we provided gaming equipment and this ginormous electronic dart board to give them some time, you know, something to do in their free time. So they were just thrilled. It still left a little bit of money.

The next place that we went was Osan Air Base in South Korea. So talking with them about it, that was a really heartbreaking visit because the Commander came out and Commander Denise is wonderful because she just, you know, talks about here's what we do, this is what the American Legion Family is all about. And then she looked him right in the eye and she said, what can we do and how are you doing?

And he opened up about how kids, and for those of you, you know whether they are 20 or 30 if they are ours they are kids, right? So he was talking about how they come over there on a two-year deployment and after, and today's kids, this is how they socialize. And he said after about a month they get tired of socializing that way and then they find things to do that are harmful to themselves and harmful to others.

So they are creating a big space for on base recreational purposes and we did the same thing for, we were able to do the same thing for them after we got back and followed up. So I'm really pleased about that. And we just have a little bit of money left in that account now. So that was really cool and thank you to everybody, going back to Peggy Thomas, coming forward, who had a part in that.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: She then invited me to go with her to Germany and France and many of you know the Landstuhl Hospital is there. And when

Nancy Brown-Park was President, we purchased some gift cards, small denomination, \$15 or \$25 gift cards, just to give them something, you know, while they are hospitalized. And we continue to have a bunch of them left over. Well, the reason is because when you get over there, again the National Commander, the National President, they are being officially whisked along, you know, shown official things. And I was able to, I don't know what I just did. I hope I didn't mess that up. I was able to get the, while they were doing that, I was able to get the Chaplain aside, explained in short, we've got all these gift cards. Well the National President is not able to go in, as you can imagine, into the rooms of most of these patients. So we counted out how many cards we had, how many patients were in the hospital that were American soldiers with serious illnesses. Divinely we had exactly enough gift cards for their patient count that day. So -- (Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: -- we, so I kept kind of dashing off to the side. And then we were able, the Chaplain was able to go in and give the cards out and we could just wave from the hallways because we weren't allowed in some of those hospital rooms. So all of those gift cards have now been distributed for their intended purpose as well. So anyway, I thought that was a beneficial part and thank you, National President, for asking me to report on that.

So about National Headquarters, everything we do there remains geared toward achieving the five goals of the American Legion Auxiliary Five-Year Centennial Strategic Plan, those five goals adopted by the NEC. Staff members at National Headquarters, I want to remind you all, we volunteer right alongside everyone else on our goal teams and as shared before between frugality and just some normal delays and things, this year there is not a resolution coming before you for support because there is enough money carried over that's been allocated that there are not additional funds that need to be allocated for the initiatives being enacted this year. So that's why you don't have a resolution. It's not because it's not important. It's just because there's still enough money to do this. We don't need to ask for more money for it. So hooray for that.

One of the things that came out of the Centennial Strategic Plan early on was the ALA Organizational Effectiveness Survey and that's still on the website. And if you haven't read it, you're going to be encouraged several times to do that. And it points out dues are not a factor in membership decline. Members want to spend more time on mission projects and less time in meetings. And we must improve how we treat each other to make membership meaningful.

So we've tried to make it easier for members to do things. The online dues renewal payment option continues to grow in popularity. And now so far for eight months, and now remember if we have eight months in a year how many more months do we have left? This is the part where you wake up. Four. Okay. So in 2017, almost 15,700 paid their dues online. This year so far, eight months, it's almost 19,000. So we already have a 20 percent increase in members paying their dues online. So that's pretty cool.

We also initiated the option last year where members could call and pay their dues by phone and if they pay their dues by phone they can pay

multiple members' dues. So we initiated that. Last year we had about 2,200 that did this. This year so far we are nearing 5,000 for a 111 percent increase that are doing that. They love the convenience of being able to have one transaction on the phone.

Joining online, we had 425 last year, 464 just into eight months this year. So we have almost a ten percent increase there. So it's easy and we're going to take a quick look. So don't take notes. You have this information. But let's just blitz through how you do this.

So paying dues by phone. The member's dues payment is processed immediately. The member gets immediate payment acknowledgment plus a printable membership card. And you'll remember last year, you've passed a resolution that made it part of your standing rules that that is a valid membership card. No doubts about her payment or membership status. She has instant proof of membership. Multiple payment dues can now be paid in one phone call. So it's here. Great.

Members can pay total dues for the current or next year's membership. Your amounts can be paid by MasterCard and Visa. Pretty soon we're going to be allowing Discover Card. Member's dues showed paid right away. Member is happy. Department and unit portions are electronically fund transferred, or EFT'd as we like to say, to departments. And they are included in the twice per month disbursement that we make to departments for dues paid online. So their dues aren't sitting out there in limbo on somebody's desk or checks, you know, a check in somebody's desk or the backseat of their car. Reports are provided to the department to show who has paid and the details.

And I've mentioned before, and I'm not going to go into it again, but we get literally hundreds of thousands of phone calls at National Headquarters this year and one of the areas that we, I think the time has just come to discuss, is how we bill for dues. Because we have tens of thousands of members who have paid their dues and we have no record of it. They pay their dues to a unit member or a unit member conveys it snail mail to a department, and the snail never got there. We don't know what happened. But there are just, there are way, way, way too many instances reported about members paying their dues who we never, it never got registered. So I'm not changing my purple bracelet because that's not a complaint, that is raising an issue with all of you that I think we need to address.

Now joining online, again, we're going to blitz through these screens just so that you get an idea of what it looks like. You're going to be asked for your eligibility. You're going to be asked to pick a state, and all the dues amounts there are listed. The member is going to be asked to list, to enter her contact information. She enters her eligibility. She certifies she is eligible. She then hits submit. She instantly receives acknowledgment with a message that says, you'll be receiving an email in minutes with a link to make your payment. She gets the email. She makes her payment. And within minutes, she can pay her dues online. She receives an automatic email then with her receipt and her membership card. So the process is just like paying renewal dues online. It covers all three levels. The new member is in the ALA MIS system. She is a new member. And the department then receives the same information on her payment just like they do on the renewals.

So that's our blitz. It's much easier and convenient to belong to the ALA. You can join online. You can pay your renewal dues online and you can pay multiple renewal dues by phone. So we think that's pretty cool and apparently you all do because of the numbers about how much that has been increasing.
(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And remember, if you're talking to somebody in the grocery line you can join them right online. Remember, you can put the ALA website on your tablet or smart phone. It's an interactive website. And all you have to do is just tap it. We can text replacement membership cards to people now from National Headquarters. And now over a third of our website access comes from smart phones and mobile devices. The number of online users has increased 70 percent and that's why we have had to, as was discussed in the NEC meeting, we had to move to a more robust website hosting platform just to handle the increased volume from our members. So that's all a good thing.

We are a big corporation and you can again be proud that National Headquarters has a stellar record of audits. Our external audits have earned us the highest marks on our national finances, our national financial processes, our Foundation finances, our benefits, and the magazine. Again, A plus findings in every which way in which we are audited and, again, no 60 Minutes TV crews showing up on our doorsteps. No criticism from regulatory or watchdog groups.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)

MS. BUCKLER: And I'm going to mention this again. We've had such a great record of external audits, and I think we take it for granted. I will tell you there are other well-known national organizations who wish they could make such a statement. We have checks and balances in place so that our processes are open. They are secure. And it's not easy for anybody to abscond with money. We just can't let that happen. I don't carry cash. I don't accept cash. I can't sign a check by myself. I don't want to sign a check by myself. So thank you. I heard an amen out there.
(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: You don't want one person doing that. And with Tim Bresnahan's impending departure, rest assured that he, Marta Hedding, and your new ALA National Treasurer Sara Riegel, along with long time accountant Sue Stewart, have prepared well in the past five months for this transition. You have a terrific ALA National Headquarters staff and that includes your highly trained and competent Finance Division.
(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Again, thank you to Tim, Marta, and Sara. And I hope you're all as proud of your National Headquarters staff as I am.
(Cheering.)
(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: We're mighty might. If you compare the number of headquarters staff we have to other national headquarters for other organizations, we do what we do with far fewer staff than they do. Other organizations have between two to five times higher the staff number per

member than we do. So we're committed. We put in long hours. And we're paid less than our public and private sector counterparts. Most ALA National Headquarters members are also Legion Family members and we are devoted to our mission. We volunteer for service projects just like everybody else. So I do hope that makes you proud.

So here's some other things that I hope make you proud. For the magazine, it's audited. We do things according to professional journalism standards. And every three years in keeping with professional publishing industry standards we have an external firm do a readership survey of randomly and blindly selected members. This year the survey was offered electronically and participation increased by over 400 percent and the results are going to be published and it's just wrapping up. They'll be published in a future issue of Auxiliary Member Magazine. And as we continue to talk about the magazine, we continue to be recognized for the caliber of our magazine.

This year I'm really proud to say the Auxiliary Magazine is a finalist for five Folio Ozzie and Eddie Awards, and that's the academy awards in the publishing industry.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So just being nominated, just making it as a finalist, that's already like getting honorable mentions and bronze medals, depending on how many are in the categories.

So this is our fourth year now for doing this. And as opposed to, so we have the five categories as opposed to two or three as in previous years. Our entries this year are for, "Ensuring Our Mission of Service Endures: the ALA Foundation Turns Ten," our ALA diversity blogs. How many have read any of the diversity blogs? You're either very asleep or I can only see four hands. How many have read our, because we get good -- okay, I can now see your hands. Thank you. If you haven't checked them out, they are really cool. I ask you to do that. Another category we're a finalist in, "Mission Matters: Veterans in Community Schools," "Showcasing Heart Through Art," our National Veterans Creative Arts article, and "ALA Girls Nation: Paying It Forward." And this past year, hooray, we won a first place Ozzie for the 2017 ALA Annual Report and Convention Guide.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So the magazine looks better, it has a glossy cover, expanded content, with 33 percent more pages and all at a cost per issue less than it was ten years ago.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So the magazine is online to a wider audience outside the ALA. Our online readership is up. It's now included in the digital military newspaper library, a repository of military news and culture from around the country. We provide complimentary copies of Auxiliary Member Magazine to every member of Congress, every Legion post. We send give copies to every VA facility and to 140 USO locations and Fischer Houses also receive complimentary copies of Auxiliary Member Magazine.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So PR is critical, as you just heard from Melanie, it's critical to raising awareness about the American Legion Auxiliary. One of

the things that came about from the Centennial Strategic Plan was investing in doing a better job of getting our message out. So we engaged public experts MLS Group, a national news release service that specializes in strategic communications and engagement. This is our second year with a tremendous return on investment. Over a 12-year period of time they have written five news stories featuring the impact of the ALA on such subject matters as the significance of the poppy and National Poppy Day, ALA Girls Nation, art therapy for veterans and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and our advocacy efforts. Distribution includes small to medium markets, news outlets from large to small, San Francisco, L.A., Chicago, Baltimore, San Antonio, many more, areas where we are but on our own where we would very unlikely get any kind of coverage. And did you see the great TV news story we got about National Poppy Day and Ann Fournier? That was a great television story. And did you see the great ALA Girls Nation PR we had this year? There was a great USA article at ALA Girls Nation, plus they did additional material on their USA blog online, video, TV interviews, plus some 20-plus other media articles. And you know what's really great this year? The majority of them actually properly identified the program as ALA Girls Nation.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And I don't know how many of you follow Twitter. I think this is a first for the organization. The Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, tweeted a picture of him with ALA Girls Nation President and our ALA Girls Nation Vice President with a comment about how great it was to be with the future leaders of the United States.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And the reason I emphasize the branding is that the program, our ALA Girls State programs have been around for over 75 years. We have some 900,000 alums across the country. And still most of them do not know it was the American Legion Auxiliary that put that program on. And that's why we are relentless about it. Please -- we've got to change our habits -- how many times do we have to do this before it becomes habit? Yes. ALA Girls Nation. ALA Girls Nation. ALA Girls Nation. ALA Girls Nation. I'm not going to do it 21 times. But if we continue to just call it Girls State, Girls Nation, we aren't creating a habit that helps brand that program. So let's get in the habit.

So back to using this professional service, the cost -- so by using MSL and the placement and brand point, which is the placement counterpart of that, we have received the equivalent of \$1.6 billion, with a B, in advertising and awareness for the American Legion Auxiliary. Our cost for this, applause in a minute, hang on, your cost for this was \$125,000.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BUCKLER: The return on investment is over 1,100 to one. So this is how your Centennial Strategic Plan and investing in it like this really benefits the American Legion Auxiliary. Woo-hoo!

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: The annual impact of the American Legion Auxiliary is \$1 billion. It's important for the public to hear who we are, what we do, and why we matter. That's why impact numbers are so important, to show just how much we matter. A billion dollars. If we were all paid for our volunteer service, for all the scholarships we raise, award, all the money we raised through our Poppy Programs, all the money we raised and distribute to help our veterans and our military and our communities, our impact, our footprint in improving the quality of life for veterans and military families is over \$1 billion every year, thank all of you. (Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Now for that huge impact to continue, we must foster an internal culture of goodwill. Enhancing membership strength, which is goal one, can only happen if we succeed with the other four goals. Remember what Will Bowen said about nearly half of our members drop out within three years of joining? It's a brutal fact that we have deal with. We need to ask why. Why is it that we can get so many members to join, but within three years between 45 and 50 percent of them drop out?

Many answers can be found in the organizational effectiveness assessment. We need to take Will Bowen's message to heart. We've got to reverse that membership loss. Members will renew only if they enjoy the experience of belonging to the American Legion Auxiliary, and they will renew only if they are proud of seeing what the Auxiliary is doing that they want to financially support it.

So in the spirit of goodwill, that leads to the need for some serious plain speak about some problems permeating many departments: discord, not doing things properly, and dishonesty. I'm not going to repeat all of the things that the National Judge Advocate mentioned. But I am going to help support some of that and reinforce some of that.

ALA departments exist because the ALA National Organization has granted each department a charter, which allows each department to use the American Legion Auxiliary name and our nationally owned trademarks. Departments are also tax exempt because departments are included under the ALA national IRS group exemption. Without National, departments and units wouldn't and couldn't exist. It's so important to remember everyone here in this room, all of our 600,000-plus members are part of National.

In the past decade, this organization has experienced an appalling 23 percent of departments that had to deal with significant fraud or embezzlement. Twenty-three percent of departments, and that's because of the newest one added to the list just recently where a past national officer, according to the police report, has admitted to embezzling over \$100,000 from her unit.

So when people wonder why do you keep talking about this fiduciary stewardship, and why do you keep talking about roles and responsibilities and governance and management? Because we at the national level can't step in and run departments. We want you to be empowered, equipped, educated, and have the right people in place to do it well and do it yourselves. We can't micromanage. Each department is a corporation that must abide by its state's corporate laws. Departments often ask for guidance, and then they want National to step in and take action. We cannot do that. We can't preside over

a department meeting, nor can we fund consultants or legal counsel for a department. We can mandate and take actions on matters pertaining to the ALA national trademarks but we cannot control how you execute your daily corporate duties. We can only offer guidance. And we have done so in great detail via the Department Operations Guide, the ALA Girls State Program Operations Guide, thousands of other online resources and hundreds of thousands of phone calls and email communications.

I am going to repeat some things because between yesterday and today people still have some confusion and based on questions and emails to me. I just want to make sure we're all clear on this. A department does not have the authority to discipline a member unless that member is a department officer, a member of the department governing board, which we commonly refer to as the DEC, or serves in a position confirmed by the department governing board. And then discipline can only include actions up to removal from office, from position, not from the organization. That's membership revocation. That's not removal. And removing a board confirmed position, a board member, or a department officer must be done in abidance with federal and state law, your Constitution and Bylaws, and with proper legal advanced notice and under proper due process.

Sadly, some members' concept of National providing help amounts to National doing what I want it to do and then complaining to others that National won't help when in essence the asker may not have liked the advice that was given.

Guidance that I have provided is reviewed and concurred by the National Judge Advocate. The advice is about proper authority and lawful procedures. And we consistently render the same advice regarding proper authority and proper procedures regardless of who is asking. What happened, who said what, who offended whom, that's not the National President's concern, the National Vice President's concern, it's not my concern, it's not the concern of any leader that has National in her title. It's not our place to hear what happened. My communications are about process and legal authority and requirements. And on that same vein once an attorney has been retained, it is indeed a confidential matter. You are now in the realm of attorney/client privileges. And any comments made by anyone, written, verbal, anyone who is identified as a National leader about the matter, becomes a material statement and that makes that National leader personally liable and it makes the ALA National Organization personally liable for any comments she might make because she now becomes a material witness to the actions going on in the department. I hope that is really clear.

I have to emphasize just how serious that is. My primary duty is to protect the organization and I take that very seriously and I do so with utmost ethical regard. This holds true about many questions received about your ALA Girls State Programs, especially your incorporated programs. I've talked about this many times. It's published in many places. Your ALA incorporated Girls State Programs are subsidiary corporations and they have to adhere to the five rules of the subsidiary corporation. And they are printed in the Constitution and Bylaws, the Department Operations Guide, they are printed in the ALA Girls State Guide, they are printed many places.

Well news flash, some members don't like that. And some members want to shoot the messenger. So I am not in a position to ever state that any ALA Girls State Program is in compliance. I don't do field audits, so how would I know that? I do state to look at and ask the department if they are complying with the five rules. If, key word, if they are, then yes, they would, key word, would be in compliance. But I cannot emphatically state that an ALA Girls State Program is compliant.

The nature of people in general, and it seems ALA members in particular, is to go straight to what happened. It's easy to believe that the passionate person complaining to you about how she has been wronged is telling the whole story. Unless we were present and personally witnessed the incident, we don't know anything. We only know that someone is upset and someone is blaming someone else. She may be right. She may be wrong. She may be confused. But for sure, unless we were there, we don't know anything except that she is upset.

As Counsel General explained yesterday, if discipline is meted out without authority, without due process, and without equal protection under the law, or contrary to federal or state laws, or contrary to your governing documents, then any discipline that was meted out is ruled invalid and any actions subsequent to that are also invalid.

And unfortunately all the wonderful good things that ALA members do get overshadowed by the bad. People don't gossip about the wonderful acts of mission that we've heard about this morning. They gossip about tearing others down and they do so without knowing the facts. Ladies, in the spirit of goal two, can we listen, take to heart Will Bowen's remarks, and can we start to change that?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Many of you heard me say this. Some of the things I have to deal with breaks my heart. And it is a joy to sit here and listen to the reports that preceded me. That is what the American Legion Auxiliary is all about.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So onto a brighter note and final topics. Building. We bought one.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And I'm sure you can all see that. Where are you? Oh. Vanna, please. One of the things I'm proud of is in the current space where we are, I'm proud that when I came on board we were paying for a lot of stuff to be stored off site and I was able to negotiate with our current landlord for them to donate space to us. And over the past eight years, they have donated space valued at \$215,000. So that's a savings to the American Legion Auxiliary of that amount of money and I'm proud of that.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So as we prepare to move to the new building, we've had to vacate our storage space because our landlord is also preparing to lease the space that we've been occupying. So here's where we are and I'm going to do just a brief blitz.

The building was 25 years old, in great shape. We discovered that the fire code has changed from when the building was built 25 years ago and when we're going to be occupying it. So we had to have an assessment done to make, to see what needed to be done to the building to make it meet current fire safety codes. We're in the process of doing that now.

Just like when you are selling your home you take things off the wall, you move furniture, and you go, ooh, yuck. Well, we may need to paint that, or we may need to replace that. When the analysis was sent to everybody about the new building, purchasing the new building, that factored in the things that I've just talked about. So the ten-year cost analysis, renting for another ten years, buying the building, and remember at ten years we now start really making money for the American Legion Auxiliary because we break even from the price to purchase the building versus the price to rent for ten years. Well that price to purchase a building included things that we knew we would need to do, not specifically what, but knew we needed to do to renovate the building. So we're on spot with that and I'm, and we hope -- I was knocking on wood. And we hope to move in in November.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Now that leads us to another little piece of paper. How many of you saw something like this on your chairs? Okay. In front of the building are two strips, which you can't see in the picture that was shown holding up, that would be about, oh, maybe two-thirds, about three rows deep and two-thirds in. So if you kind of picture a space that way. The previous owners had had flowers and things that changed every season and all of you know that when you are planting, pulling, planting, pulling, if you're not doing it yourself you're paying somebody to do that. So the Zetas, who we bought the building from, you know, they were paying about \$4,000 a year to have those two areas landscaped every year. And they are not very big areas. They are big enough to hold 700 bricks. So how is this for a project? A Centennial Brick Project, where you can leave a legacy by buying a brick to the entrance to the new building. Price point, I can tell you, this is much, now information is going to be pushed out after Convention. So please don't be coming up asking details. I know how you are. You want to know all the facts right now. So that information will be pushed out. But the details that we can share are the bricks will be \$200. You're seeing an example of how they could look. And that's akin to \$100 for our first 100 years, and \$100 for our second centennial.

When we share with you what the deadline is for purchasing a brick, it will be a firm deadline. That means if the deadline is today, we won't be able to receive a phone call on Friday saying, oh, I meant to get this in. Can you still? Because we're backing out how much time it's going to take to get the bricks manufactured, laid, all in time for National Convention being in Indianapolis next year. So all that information will be forthcoming. But our goal is to have those two areas paved, 700 bricks. We have over 600,000 members, over 8,000 ALA entities. I'm expecting a sell out so be thinking about it.

I want to wrap up on this. I heard that.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: And in the spirit of goodwill, I love you.
(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: We're in Minnesota, which is the home state of ALA Past National President Kris Nelson, who went to be with the angels a couple of years ago. And I miss her every day. And I would just like to say, Kris, we miss you. And her family is watching, so could we all just do a quick wave to her family? She embodied our Centennial Strategic Plan and our goal two in the spirit of goodwill.

I also want to mention something else in closing. Google, heard of that? Kind of big corporation, right? They have spent the last few years studying what makes a corporation successful. What makes a corporation successful? Teams. They then spent considerable time and money, what makes a team succeed? Within the ALA, we have been talking about how governance and management are teams. We have to work together. The number one factor for the success of a team to contribute to the success of a corporation is trust. Google just spent big, big money to study this over multiple years. Trust.

Part of the American Legion Auxiliary mission statement is to promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security. We have a proud heritage of promoting peace around the world. Let's make it our faithful pledge to promote peace within the American Legion Auxiliary. May our comments be respectful, our goodwill toward others become our hallmark, and I'll leave you with this. Let's have a lot more sparkle and far fewer sparks in the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Cheering.)
(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And I'm done.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Dubbie. An organization that's been part of our lives for so many years needs dedicated, sound financial support and future planning to ensure its longevity. Steadfast stewardship are words that we can use to describe this next chairman. Please welcome our National Finance Committee Chairman, Past National President, Peggy Thomas, to the stage.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. THOMAS: Yes, money talks.

(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee continued to meet the challenges of good fiscal planning to meet today's needs as well as future fiduciary requirements. This committee is comprised of five appointed members, each serving a five-year term. Currently the committee is made up of three Past National Presidents, and includes a retired corporate vice president and a retired certified public accountant who is also a dual member. The committee reviews the draft budget, makes any adjustments needed to reflect new or changing goals, and recommends the budget to the National Executive Committee for its adoption.

Also in carrying out its roles as fiduciary stewards, the ALA National Finance Committee is responsible for investment planning, reviewing financial statements, monitoring member benefits and fundraising campaigns,

reviewing and overseeing the financial policies of the organization, reviewing the annual audit of the Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation, and making fiscal policy, recommendations for NEC action to ensure that the ALA National Organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and governmental requirements in keeping with best practices.

The National Finance Committee designates one committee member as liaison to the ALA Foundation Board and another as liaison member to the ALA National Audit Committee.

The fiscal performance of the National Organization for the 2017-2018 fiscal year has been positive. Due to responsible oversight, we were able to continue to fund visits to departments by our five Divisional Vice Presidents and continue the Department Secretary training at National Headquarters.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Your Finance Committee believes strongly in the value to members of ALA mission training to our members and National Junior Meetings. In the fiscal year 2018, nearly 500 members attended the six mission training sessions put on by ALA National. Attendance at the six National Junior Meetings put on ALA National grew in fiscal year 2018 with more than 150 attending, three times the number attending when one meeting was held each year.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The successful fundraising efforts by our direct mail vendor continued this year with three appeals for the ALA and done for the ALA Foundation. Fiscal year net direct mail donations as of June 30th totaled \$330,000 for the ALA and ALA Foundation. Every year about one-half of the direct mail donations come from non-members. We thank our generous donors, both inside and outside the ALA, for their continued support of our great mission.

Our members continue to use their Auxiliary USAA credit cards. Since inception through December 2017, \$45 million has been charged by cardholders.

(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Resulting in a minimum of \$25,000 in revenue each year to the ALA as a reward for our members' card use. Now --

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Keep spending, ladies.

(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Now 90 percent of the annual proceeds are shared with departments each year as a result of a change enacted by the National Finance Committee. Previously 50 percent was shared with departments. Starting with fiscal 2017 that amount was raised to 90 percent to provide more help to departments.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee also spent considerable time reviewing the fiscal analysis of purchasing a building for your National Headquarters versus continuing to rent and lease office space. The committee toured the property and determined it was much more cost effective to buy the property. Based on the recommendation by the National

Finance Committee, the NEC approved the purchase. The closing took place last October.

Now the National Finance Committee sincerely thanks our membership and the NEC for passing the national dues increase, which will take effect with the 2019 membership year. Deciding to increase national dues will help us fulfill our duty of fiduciary stewardship and allow us to continue to serve our mission and help our veterans. So thank you.

As always, we urge each Auxiliary member to recognize her duty of fiduciary stewardship so that ALA will be able to be here for another generation to serve our mission and to help our veterans for years to come. Thank you. Thank you all.

Madam President, this concludes my report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Ms. Peggy, I thought you were going to be up here for an hour and a half. You cut that short.

MS. THOMAS: I asked for the same amount of time that Dubbie Buckler got but I was turned down by our National President.

(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. Sure, there I am, a speed bump again. This year the focus of the Past Presidents Parley was mentorship and camaraderie, showing the next generation what positive leadership can do. Here to share her report, please welcome Past National Presidents Parley Committee Chairman, Past National President Mary Davis.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: President Diane and members, so ladies, what do you think of when you think Past Presidents? And when you think of Past Presidents Parley? Are they different? Every leader who has had the honor to be elected President, whether at the unit, district, county, department, or national level, has the duty to give back to the organization. However, when the year in which each President serves is completed, so goes the authority of that office. So how do we continue to serve? How do you give back?

One option is mentoring. When you mentor, you contribute and assist others. What you think and how you feel things should be done may not be automatically embraced by all. But you have continued to contribute by giving your best advice, you mentored.

Of the 21 chairman reports I received this year, mentoring was mentioned by all. With respect to the 30 reports I didn't receive, each of those departments, the Past Presidents, to mentor them as well.

Department of Arizona Past Presidents Parley stayed busy encouraging units to create Past President Parleys. Each month they highlighted a Past President and acknowledged what that person had contributed to the organization during their year as President. What a great way for members to get to know their Past Presidents better. They also raised funds and distributed nurses scholarships. Additionally they recognized servicewomen and dual members in their monthly bulletins.

Speaking of nursing scholarships, the members of Department of Illinois --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- awarded an unbelievable 25 scholarships. Wow, way to go Illinois!

Iowa concentrated on offering helpful advice to units without criticizing, which is the definition of mentoring. They held a mid-year conference program there to let members know what the Past Presidents Parley is, who they are, who are its members, and what they do. Their chair decorated a table and displayed information about Past Presidents Parley. Then she addressed the attendees further, explaining the handouts which were available at the program there. All members were encouraged to participate in the mentor program in their unit, county, and district, to select a unit member of the year, and to submit nominations to the Salute to Servicewomen Award.

Oregon has worked hard this year --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- to make sure they stay in touch with their membership. At each DEC luncheon their discussion revolved around strategies to strengthen and build their department. Remember, how we want to retain our Junior members even after they age out? Well through the Oregon Past Presidents Parley they honor both unit member of the year and Junior Unit Member of the year. They encourage formation of Past Unit Presidents Parleys. Some of the Unit Past Presidents Parleys hold mother-daughter luncheons to honor members to serve in the military. Now, they not only honor them, they have a question and answer period to learn more about these members. They are also effectively working membership in conjunction with their district leadership. As a result, they successfully met their goal to have every unit submit membership on time. In the past there were examples where a unit might hold membership instead of sending it to a department in a timely manner. Great partnering and a great example of mentoring.

Identifying and honoring a unit member of the year is important work for each department's Past Presidents Parley. Through the tandem effort of the National Committee Member Carlene Ashworth, and Vice Chairman Miriam Junge, I am proud to report 47 of these important members were nationally honored this year at our Woman of the Year Luncheon yesterday. Before I finish --

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Feel free. They are wonderful women and I hope you are all in here. Before I finish, let me tell you a little about this year's team. Miriam Junge of Department of Ohio --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- and Carlene Ashworth of Department of Texas --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- all national committees are comprised of members who are dedicated to mentoring. They demonstrate this dedication by offering suggestions and sharing experiences. The Past Presidents Parley National Committee is no different. Granted, there were times when we felt that even good mentors needed mentoring themselves. So we worked in tandem with them to offer inspiration and advice on mentoring.

As a final note, please bear in mind that we as mentors must be careful to avoid crossing the line and entering into the realm of bullying. We

must constantly assess our actions to gain the self-realization that we as mentor, that we are a mentor, that we might not even recognize that we are actually bullying. Stay aware and ensure our criticisms and advice are constructive, not harmful.

In closing, I encourage each of you to read the e-bulletins from this past year. There's only three and they are absolutely fantastic, if you haven't read them, and they are still online. They contain three very comprehensive articles from the members of the National Past Presidents Parley that will help you get a better understanding of the meaning of mentoring. Now let's turn our attention to the honor of saluting great active duty women.
(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Every branch of service is being honored today. Thank you to each department who submitted some great nominations. I was so pleased at the amount of nominations that we had this year. Every servicemember accomplished so much in her career, as well as given back to her community. Each of our honorees will receive an award inscribed with their name, rank, branch of service, and the following: for honorable military service in the War on Terrorism and on behalf of a grateful nation, presented August 2018. Now, here we go.

Representing the Air Force it is my pleasure to introduce Master Sergeant Kendra Sorice. Master Sergeant Sorice joined the Air Force in 2003 and has won numerous awards. She is currently serving on the Inspector General team. She says being an airman doesn't stop once the uniform comes off. The efforts she gives to her local community are amazing.

For example, Paul's Place, a shelter for low income and homeless families in the Baltimore area. She has been recognized as top volunteer. Her time given has contributed to feeding and clothing well over 15,000 families. She tutors math and English there and in local schools. She also contributed to the relief effort in Florida and Puerto Rico. Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Master Sergeant Kendra Sorice.
(Applause.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: Oh wow. Thank you so much. Thank you. Good afternoon. What an honor it is to be here today. I remember as a young child I would go to the American Legion with my mom and my grandmother, Post #209 in Dania Beach, Florida.
(Cheering.)
(Applause.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: Huh, Florida. And my dad served 27 years in the Army.
(Cheering.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: And I knew that I wanted to follow in his footsteps, I wanted to be in the military. So on my mother's birthday 15 years ago I gave her what I felt like was the greatest present a child could give a parent, I moved out of the house.
(Laughter.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: Correct? And I was getting a job. I was actually going in and starting my own career and my own legacy. So I joined the Air Force and came from South Florida and I got my first assignment and it said Elmendorf, AK.

(Cheering.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: And I said, what the heck? Is that Arkansas? Right? And my friend came up to me and she said, no baby, you're going to Alaska.

(Laughter.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: And it was in Alaska is where I learned what the true meaning of being a wingman was. Oh my goodness. They took this young lady from South Florida, where we get two seasons, summer and hurricane.

(Laughter.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: And they put me in Alaska where I saw my first moose.

(Laughter.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: And the winter lasted for eight months. But I also got a chance, like I said, to find out what it was to be a true wingman. And that, and there's where I learned that it was no longer about me. I had to make my life about others. So I did.

I started volunteering at local shelters, tutoring at local elementary schools, giving my time to help out in the community. And it has been a blessing. And lately --

(Applause.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: -- thank you. I joined an organization called Chesapeake Hospice where we given an honor salute to veterans who are preparing for their next journey into the afterlife. And that is something that I do not take lightly at all. It is truly my honor to present them with their final salute. Because they gave what so many people don't give. They committed to wearing this uniform that we wear.

(Applause.)

MASTER SERGEANT SORICE: So today I am super grateful and completely honored. And I just hope that once I take off this uniform that one person says, you know what? That's Sergeant Sorice, she really helped me out. And that one thing that I did for them impacts their life in a way where they impact somebody else. Thank you so much for this honor. I appreciate it.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Master Sergeant Sorice, the American Legion Auxiliary would like to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Air Force and your community. Please remain on stage as we honor the four other branches of service.

MS. DAVIS: Representing the Army, it is my pleasure to introduce Sergeant First Class Lillie Chambers. Sergeant First Class Chambers serves as an active Guard Reservist working for the Nebraska Army National Guard

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(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- with duty station in Lincoln, Nebraska. She has served just shy of 17 years. Her background as supply logistician has won her the National Supply Excellence Award three times. Currently she serves as a battalion level non-commissioned staff officer. In her spare time, she is a master level fitness trainer and is the co-owner of Mom's Food Pantry, where

she delivers food to those in need, and Santa's Overflow. Santa's Overflow is much like our Christmas gift shops. She collects and gives families in need a chance to get presents for their children. Most importantly for us, Sergeant First Class Chambers is an American Legion member.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Sergeant First Class Lillie Chambers.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHAMBERS: Wow. Thank you for this gracious honor. I was very humbled when my dear friend and longtime supporter from the Nebraska --

(Cheering.)

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHAMBERS: -- American Legion Auxiliary Doris King nominated me. I never thought I would be standing here today so thank you very much.

My granddad always told me that if I treat the Army good, it will treat me good. For the last 17 years, that is exactly what I have tried to do. As a daughter, sister, wife, mother, aunt, and a soldier, the golden rule is what I have leaned on no matter what hat I am wearing. If it's my tender loving hat as a mother, or my drill sergeant hat as a mother --

(Laughter.)

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHAMBERS: -- it just depends on the day, right? Or if I put on my patrol cap and head into work, I try to treat my day good. Each and every day that is one thing that we all can do is take that one step forward and treat ourselves, treat others, and treat our task at hand good. Every day is a blessing. Everyday little eyes are upon us watching every move that we make. Every day we have a choice to put on our hat and treat the day good. And if we do that, I truly believe it in turn will treat us good.

Once again, thank you for this humbling honor and everything you do as American Legion Auxiliary, and for the many hats that each of you have worn throughout your life and for the ones that you continue to wear. Because of your actions, you have helped pave the way for many women and for many generations to come. So thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Army and your community. We'd like you to have this.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHAMBERS: Thank you very much. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You're welcome.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS CHAMBERS: I appreciate it. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Let's come over here and we'll get a picture taken.

MS. DAVIS: Please remain on stage while we honor members of the remaining branches of service.

Representing the Coast Guard --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- it is my pleasure to introduce Lieutenant Jeanie Crump. She is an alumni of the United States Coast Guard Academy and is married to a fellow Coast Guardsman. Currently she is the executive officer of a 60-person deployable specialized forces team. She oversaw the deployment of crew members to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and supports those in need after devastating natural disasters. In her community she supports and inspires the development of elementary school girls. She trains them for running and helps develop their life skills. Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Lieutenant Jeanie Crump.

(Applause.)

LIEUTENANT CRUMP: Wow, there are a lot more people here than I expected.

(Laughter.)

LIEUTENANT CRUMP: Hello, my name is Lieutenant Jeanie Crump and I'm stationed at the Maritime Safety and Security Team in Seattle, Washington --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

LIEUTENANT CRUMP: -- and here we go, as part of the Coast Guard's deployable specialized forces team.

First of all, I would like to thank the American Legion Auxiliary for bestowing this unique honor on me. I am truly humbled. It is because of the sacrifices of many women and men in this audience that we are able to stand here today and have the honor to serve our country in uniform. I am proud to be an American and proud to give back to our amazing country.

I learned about the Coast Guard while on a trip to New England to visit my grandfather's duty station during World War II in Groton, Connecticut. The Coast Guard Academy recruiter showed me a film of people jumping out of helicopters and driving boats in dangerous surf and as an eight-year-old I was hooked. I knew that the Coast Guard was a unique way for me to give back to the country and grow as a leader in our community. As I have been transferred throughout the country, living in Connecticut, Virginia, California, Massachusetts, and now Washington State, I've come to appreciate both the qualities that unite us as a country and ones where we vary. Our differences are opportunities for us to learn from each other and strive to create better understanding among diverse groups.

Our Commandant has three guiding principles: ready, relevant, and responsive. As we push into the future, it is vitally important that as a service we have the resources, especially heavy ice breakers, to respond to our changing environment. Your support in our capital is helpful in attaining these national security goals for the Coast Guard.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve and thank you for continuing to care for veterans, active duty, and our families. We truly appreciate your support.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So Lieutenant Crump, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Coast Guard and your community. Please accept this The American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Army and your community. We'd like you to have this trophy from us. Let me turn it the right way.

LIEUTENANT CRUMP: Oh, that's even better.

(Laughter.)

LIEUTENANT CRUMP: Wonderful. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We're going to walk over here and get a picture.

MS. DAVIS: Please remain on stage while we honor members of the remaining branches of service. Representing the United States Marine Corps

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(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: -- Sergeant Victoria Passo. Sergeant Passo is fairly new to the Corps but is making great strides in both her work and community involvement. She is the first female Marine to be assigned to MCAS, which is Miramar Special Reaction Team, also known as Military Police SWAT Member.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: She takes pride in her work ethic and believes it is important to hold herself to the same standard as the men with whom she serves. Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Sergeant Victoria Passo.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

SERGEANT PASSO: Wow, good afternoon, ladies. I just want to start off by saying this is truly an honor to be here and I'm so grateful for this opportunity. My heart is so full. You ladies never fail at making us servicemembers feel like family.

Before I start, there's a few people I want to thank. First of all, I would like to thank God. He was able to turn my past into a purpose, a young girl who grew up without a mother, without the example of female leadership, and transformed me into a passionate, loving woman with a burning desire to be an example to other ladies in the Marine Corps that I didn't have myself. I would not be here today if it weren't for God's grace and love.

Secondly, I would like to thank my Marine Corps brothers and sisters, the Miramar Special Reaction Team, and my chain of command at MCAS Miramar Provost Marshal's Office for recognizing me and nominating me for this award. Also my friends and family for their constant love and support, and lastly the American Legion Auxiliary for selecting me and welcoming me with open arms. And a special shout out to Mrs. Kim Vincent and all of the ladies from Unit #138.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

SERGEANT PASSO: Whew! Who have been rooting for me since the beginning.

A little bit about myself. My name is Sergeant Victoria Passo. I've been serving in the Marine Corps for almost five years now. Originally I was stationed in Okinawa, Japan where I served as a field side military police officer and I was able to conduct joint operations in South Korea and I was attached to the 31st MEU.

Two years ago I was relocated to San Diego, where I serve as a garrison police officer and I was selected to become a team member of the special reaction team, also known as a SWAT team, where I am honored to serve as the only female team member.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

SERGEANT PASSO: With that being said, I'm also extremely honored to be here because in 1918 Opha May Johnson was the first woman to join the United States Marine Corps. So this year we're celebrating 100 years of female Marines. So to be --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

SERGEANT PASSO: -- so to be selected for this prestigious award on this year makes it even more meaningful. I love every one of my brothers that I serve alongside and they have set quite the standard for us women to uphold. But there is something empowering about women recognizing and encouraging other women, especially coming from a generation where it's popular to tear each other down. So I appreciate the American Legion Auxiliary for creating the Salute to Active Duty Servicewoman Award.

Women have fought for years for the ability to have a voice and make a name for themselves and I'm sure the ALA can attest to that. But especially in the military. So I'm thankful for the accomplishments of women pioneers, like Cathay Williams, who was the first African American soldier; Lieutenant Commander Martha McSally, first American woman to fly in combat; and Commander Darlene Iskra, who was the first female to command a U.S. naval ship. Because of ladies like them, now it's common for women to break barriers. We have women attending ranger school, woman graduating infantry officer school, and serving in combat jobs all over the world. Women have gradually been stepping up the ladder of success and paving the way for ladies like myself who currently serve. These ladies set the highest of standards and greatest examples of the potential of females in the armed forces. I'm honored to carry on their legacy and share their accomplishments with you all and I'm incredibly inspired to one day have the same impact on the future as they have had on my career. And it would be a lot harder to do that without the love and support from friends and family and organizations like the American Legion Auxiliary you have all provided for us active duty women.

So thank you all for having me here. God bless, and Semper Fidelis.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So Sergeant Passo, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Marine Corps and to your community. Please accept this from us.

SERGEANT PASSO: Thank you so much.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We're going to go over here and have our picture taken.

MS. DAVIS: Please remain on stage while we honor our final servicewoman. Representing the United States Navy --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: -- it is my pleasure to introduce Logistics Specialist Second Class Jessica Young. She currently serves as a Logistics Specialist Second Class. She has received both Blue Jacket Sailor of the Quarter and Sailor of the Year Awards. She welcomes back World War II and Vietnam Veterans as they return home from Washington, D.C. She is the coordinator of Students to Sailors where she helps children create packages and send monthly cards for deployed soldiers. She also hosts a benefit for K9s for Warriors, an organization that trains veterans' service dogs. Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Logistics Specialist Second Class Jessica Young.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: Good afternoon. First, let me say I wanted to go last, but following that set the precedent way high. So I'm actually going to can the speech which I promised everyone back home I wouldn't can my speech, I wouldn't free style, but I'm going to do it anyway, because that's me.

(Laughter.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: So as she said, I'm Logistics Specialist Second Class Jessica Young, a member proudly serving in the United States Navy and I'm honored to be here receiving this outstanding award. But I wouldn't be able to do it without the support of my family, hi to my parents who are watching, my friends who are watching, and my amazing Legion Family, especially the Auxiliary Jacksonville 5th District.

(Cheering.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: So a funny story. When I got the email that I actually had been selected I scrolled past it. I thought it was spam mail so I just kept going. It wasn't until I went back a little later and I realized what it was. And I did that whole girl scream, ah, you know.

Everybody was like, what's going on here? I was like, I just got selected!

I'm blown away. I called our Auxiliary President and I was like, I think that there's a mistake.

(Laughter.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: There was no mistake because here we are. Then it came to the part where you have to give a speech. Oh no. I'm not filtered for that. Ah. I'm a Sailor.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: So lucky for me, I joined the Navy when I was a little bit older, a little more patient, ready for what life

may have thrown, or what the Navy was going to throw at me. But it was a chance to follow my dreams and serve my country to be a part of something greater, that what I was previously doing in my prior career I wasn't going to be able to do.

I currently work in Command Financials. I order parts and supplies and I tell people all day we're broke and that part is on back order until like 2019.

(Laughter.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: Good luck. I've done that for a little over three years now. I'm actually new to the Navy. I'm only been in a little over three years, and I have picked up rank each time. So I'm proud of myself for that. I'm actually --

(Applause.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: -- yeah, currently studying for my E6 exam which I take in March so wish me luck because it is tough.

(Applause.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: Well when I joined the Auxiliary, I just went in, you know, I thought it was a cool place to hang out. You know? My budget allowed me to hang out there.

(Laughter.)

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: And I really wasn't into history. But it was a good way to get a history lesson and my Auxiliary like took me in and the next thing you know we're doing this and doing that. And each year I host a charity event, as they said, for K9s for Warriors and they just all jumped all board. So I appreciate them for thinking of me to nominate me for this and I appreciate being recognized for this award. It truly is an honor and I am grateful. I appreciate it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So Logistics Specialist Second Class Young, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Navy and your community. Please accept this from us.

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST YOUNG: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. And we're going to, before you run away we're going to move over here and get our picture taken.

MS. DAVIS: Please join on stage your sisters in arms.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: Madam President Diane, this concludes my report and presentation.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good job, Mary. They were fantastic. What an amazing group of ladies we have in the military. So thank you very much. We appreciate their service. They are our true heroes. Thank you, Mary, for a wonderful report and for allowing us to honor our Servicewoman of the Year.

Now in just a second I have to run over to the Legion and give greetings over there so I'll be asking National Vice President Kathy to step up here and take over. You know, every year all of our people in governance, all

of our committee members, we have days and days of reports. And this year because I had asked Executive Director Dubbie to go with me overseas, I really wanted you to hear about what we did overseas because I thought it was important that we actually carry out our mission when we're with our active duty servicemembers. And she was so instrumental in that I wanted her to really report on that. And that's why here report took a little bit longer to do. So thank you for bearing with us on that. But I really thought it was important for you to hear. So thanks a lot, Dubbie, and thanks to all of you. (Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: We will continue. The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation positively impacts the lives of our veterans, active duty military, and their families by funding American Legion Auxiliary programs today and for future generations. Applying for and receiving a Veterans Project Fund Grant is remarkably easy and a fantastic way units and departments of any size can make an impact within their communities. This is a story about one of those grants that is positively changing the lives of some of our most vulnerable veterans and National President Diane was lucky enough to witness it firsthand during her term as National President. She said it absolutely makes her ALA proud. Let's take a look.

(Video.)

(Music.)

THE ANNOUNCER: For the land of the free and the home of the brave. Home of the brave is a transitional facility that temporarily houses and assists male and female veterans and their children in Milford, Delaware. And when veterans are in need, you'll often find American Legion Auxiliary Delaware Unit #28 looking for ways to help.

VOICE: We've applied for and received several American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Grants for the Home of the Brave. In the past we've received two grants, one for \$6,500 for exterior vinyl for the Home of the Brave and the other for computers and associated furniture so the veterans could do online studies.

THE ANNOUNCER: And this past year the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation gifted \$4,800 for a music program that helps veterans defeat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression with every strum of a guitar.

VOICE: This generous grant from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has enabled Home of the Brave to have six guitars, six Android tablets, six tuners, and an instructor come to teach our residents how to play guitar.

VOICE: We originally planned to partner with another organization that would facilitate the entire program. However, due to circumstances we felt that we needed to take the bull by the horn. So we just went to a local music store and asked for their help.

VOICE: Tina stopped into our store and told us about a program she was working on. It was a musical therapy program for the veterans at Home of the Brave. So in sitting down and talking to her, we figured out some instruments and different equipment that they could use.

THE ANNOUNCER: Jim also helped Unit #28 find a music teacher who would give group lessons at the Home of the Brave.

VOICE: When I found out about the program, I jumped at the chance to give guitar lessons to the veterans.

THE ANNOUNCER: Not only do the residents enjoy the program, it provides real therapy to counter depression and PTSD.

(Music.)

VOICE: (Indiscernible). Perfect. The fourth string, second drag. And you have an A minor second.

VOICE: I've come a long way while here at the Home of the Brave and the music program has been a big part of it.

VOICE: Since the inception of this program, our residents have had better moods, sunnier dispositions with life. And I think the overall quality of the atmosphere at Home of the Brave has changed.

VOICE: Home of the Brave is a very special place and Unit #28 has been very active in helping any way we can. And one of the most effective ways is by applying and receiving grants from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

VOICE: The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has been an incredible source of support for Home of the Brave. I want to thank not only the Foundation, but the donors who make that Foundation possible.

VOICE: Thanks to everyone at the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation for making this happen.

THE ANNOUNCER: Obtaining a Veterans Project Fund Grant couldn't be easier. For more information on how your ALA unit or department can apply for a Veterans Project Fund Grant, visit alafoundation.org. Find a need. Come up with an idea. Apply for a grant. And witness something great.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: From Delaware Unit #28 please welcome Tina Washington, okay, Tina Washington, Karen Marvel, Carole Baldwin, Carol Feeley, and Beth McGinn. Thank you, ladies, for your awesome work.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: The National President had the opportunity to play a little guitar with the residents during her visit to Home of the Brave and as we learned from Matt Williams on Monday, the power of music can help put lives back together.

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is to positively impact the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary today and for future generations. Here to tell us more about how our generous donors and supporters were able to make a positive impact on veterans and their families is American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board President, Past National President Linda Boone. Linda?

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. BOONE: Wasn't that a great video?

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: How exciting to stand before you today to report and to say thank you from the Board of Directors for another growth year of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. The primary responsibility for the Foundation board is to raise funds that will be used to support and expand American Legion Auxiliary programs.

This year one of our board members, National President Diane, really stepped up to the challenge by making the Foundation Mission Endowment fund her fundraising focus. Even the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation pin was a reminder to recipients that a donation to the Foundation would be welcomed. The results have been terrific, as donations within individual departments spiked after each one of our National President's visits. Because of you and your support, the Mission Endowment Foundation Fund surpassed \$1 million this year.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: This ultimately means more money is available to go towards Auxiliary programs like ALA Girls Nation, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. While hitting our \$1 million mark is a huge milestone, we can't stop there. The annual Giving Tuesday campaign is starting our fourth year and you can participate by stopping by our booth outside the meeting hall. This campaign is the most significant fundraising event for the Foundation and we count on you to make it a success. Remember too that there is an option to donate at your own frequency by becoming a reoccurring donor. This way you can break up into smaller amounts. It's an easy way to give but not all at one time.

One of the reasons the Foundation continues to grow is because we educate our members about the Foundation's purpose and invite them to become supporters. We are able to share our stories in the Auxiliary magazine, in the e-newsletters, brochures, videos, social media, and at meetings. We encourage you to read the moving stories of the lives that you have changed.

Besides having generous donors and supporters of the Foundation, we have a team working together, the Board of Directors and National Headquarters staff. This year we say goodbye and thank you to Board members Ann Hathaway, Gina Callicotte, Marta Hedding, and Diane Duscheck. We welcome Dr. Coral Grout, Laura Santino, Sara Riegel, and Nicole Clapp.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: As we say goodbye to Board members and welcome new ones, we provide continual training for the team on current fundraising practices by sending representatives to the Association of Fundraising Professionals International Conference each year. We also facilitate an annual in person board meeting as an additional training and information sharing opportunity.

As we continue to educate ourselves, we created a survey for all our Foundation grant recipients to determine areas where we are doing well and those where we could improve. Our goal is to ensure our granting process is easily accessible and uncomplicated.

We know that without our donors, everything we would do would not be possible. Making sure our donors know how much we appreciate them is a priority of the Board of Directors. We try to contact every donor the week after we receive their donation by a phone call or a thank you note. They can also be acknowledged through social media, shout outs, receive Valentine cards, and are invited to our donor reception during an annual meeting.

In 2014 the Foundation began providing grants to American Legion Auxiliary units, districts, counties, and departments to assist members in carrying out the mission. We have given 70 grants to a variety of Auxiliary projects throughout the nation. Each one of those grants is reaching hundreds of veterans each year. Because of your generous support, this year we awarded eight Veteran Project Fund Grants totaling over \$37,000 -- (Applause.)

MS. BOONE: -- five Local Veteran Creative Arts Festival Grants totaling \$11,300 -- (Applause.)

MS. BOONE: -- one Mission in Action Grant for more than \$600 -- (Applause.)

MS. BOONE: -- and over \$31,000 in subgrants. Your dollars contributed to the much needed projects and activities. The Veterans Projects Grants for this year was the Department of Connecticut received \$4,000 to purchase a long arm sewing machine to make larger quantities of quilts and lap robes for veterans and returning military.

The Department of New Hampshire received \$5,000 to purchase a computer based touch screen program that assists 250 residents at the New Hampshire Veterans Home. Relax, reduce anxiety, and engage in the present.

The Department of Nebraska received \$1,800 to purchase a sit and stand frame used by 40 veterans at the North Fork Veterans Home to improve circulation, reduce swelling, and improve range of motion, and strength to the trunk and lower extremities.

The Department of Texas received \$8,000 for it's Never Too Late hardware and software for the 120 veteran residents at the Michael DeBakey VAMC. This technology promises to increase quality of life, reduce psychotropic drug use, and improve social connection and engagement.

Arizona Unit #62 received \$4,500 to create an art forum to engage female veterans and their children in art therapy, giving them a creative process to explore emotions, reduce stress, and increase self-esteem.

Oregon Unit #43 received almost \$3,500 to construct an outdoor kitchen, giving the 50 Post 9/11 combat wounded veterans that attend Camp Divide a tranquil and safe place to enjoy their meals.

The Department of Utah, \$600 to purchase a refrigerator/freezer for their food pantry located at the George Wahlen VAMC that serves over 100 outpatients a month from the VA clinics as well as veterans in the surrounding area.

Colorado Unit received \$10,000 to purchase a wheelchair accessible minivan for the Colorado State Veterans Community Living Center at Fitzsimons to transport over 30 wheelchair bound veterans for weekly doctor appointments and other needs.

Veteran Creative Art Festival Grants given, Illinois Unit #281, \$2,500 to purchase art supplies, including ceramics supplies, paint, brushes, craft kits, and other supportive supplies.

New York Unit #1524 received \$1,500 for veteran awards and recognition.

At the Arizona Unit #62 received a second grant out of a different category to purchase paint, canvases, promotional materials, branded items, and transportation for veterans.

The Department of Wisconsin received \$2,500 to purchase artwork display dividers, drying racks, canvas, easels, sketchbooks, and craft kits.

Texas Unit #320 received \$2,300 for even promotion, veteran recognition, craft supplies, veteran transportation, and venue rental.

Mission in Action Grant, which is a new category, Illinois Unit #2 received \$610 to purchase ALA branded items used at their community naturalization ceremonies held five to six times a year for hundreds of new citizens.

Subgrants were given to Missouri Unit #624 for \$500 to support their fall fashion show where proceeds support local scholarships.

Maryland Unit #296, \$500 for ALA Maryland Girls State.

Ohio Unit #202, \$275 for ALA Buckeye Girls State.

And the Department of Oregon, \$25,000 for ALA Oregon Girls State.

And the Department of Maine, \$5,000 for their ALA Maine Girls State.

The National Veteran Creative Arts Festival received over \$54,000 and investment earnings from the Mission Endowment Fund for over \$23,000 went to support ALA Girls Nation.

I hope you agree that the 11th year of the Foundation has been successful. We hope you realize the value of the decision to establish the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. The growth of the Foundation depends on your support and if you have not had the opportunity to be a supporter, now is your chance. It's not too late. No matter what size your donation, together it makes a big difference. So stop by the Giving Tuesday booth outside in the hall and take the plunge. You can make a difference in the life of a veteran today.

Madam President Diane, even though she's not here, you took the plunge and made a significant difference this year. Thank you and that concludes our report.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, Linda. National President Diane says it was an easy decision to name the Mission Endowment Fund as this year's National President's Project. American Legion Auxiliary leaders have a fiduciary responsibility to this organization and if we are not fulfilling this responsibility we are failing as leaders. So let's take a minute to praise some folks who are doing an amazing job fulfilling their responsibilities and supporting the Mission Endowment Fund. Every donor that is about to be announced donated over \$2,000 to the Mission Endowment Fund and that is awesome. We even had 12 donors at the \$3,000-plus level, can you believe it?

Please welcome our National President's Project top donors:
Department of Nebraska --
(Music.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: -- \$2,023.
(Applause.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of New Mexico --
(Cheering.)
(Applause.)
MS. DUNGAN: -- \$2,170.50.
(Applause.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Connecticut, \$2,227.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Iowa --
(Cheering.)
(Applause.)
MS. DUNGAN: -- \$2.349.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Maryland, \$2,969.
(Cheering.)
(Applause.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Arizona, \$3,123.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Georgia, \$3,215.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Minnesota, \$3,391.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Michigan, \$3,463.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Ohio, \$4,405.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Indiana, \$4,454.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Pennsylvania, \$4,935.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of California, \$5,081.
(Applause.)
(Cheering.)
MS. DUNGAN: Department of Florida, \$5,740.
(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Department of New York, \$6,379.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: And the Department of Illinois, \$8,200.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DUNGAN: And finally our very top donor, coming in at over \$17,000, a huge thank you to the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you all for investing in this organization's financial future. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Now would the National Secretary please come and give us the Convention updates? Dubbie?

MS. BUCKLER: Just one other quick thing. If Diane had been doing that, she was also going to say that throughout the course of the day while you're here, you get between four and six hours of governance reports. And she said that giving management a small fraction of that would be appropriate this year with all the things that she and I had gone over that she wanted to be covered. So yes, I know it went a little longer. And it won't next year. But there was a lot to talk about. So anyway, if she were here that's what she would be saying.

Okay. Mail Room Committee, please pick up your mail. Baskets are overflowing. Committees for 2018-19, Membership, please meet with Ann King by the Florida sign as soon as we adjourn. Poppy, please meet at the Nebraska sign with Virginia Nelson as soon as we adjourn. Constitution and Bylaws, please meet with Melanie Taylor by the California sign when we adjourn.

We still have States Dinner tickets for sale in the office, so for your departments if you have tickets we're not going to be announcing that because we still have them for sale in the office. Remember lost and found is on the mezzanine level at the Convention Command Center, Convention Center Command Center. The National Commander's Head Table Reception is at 5:15 in the Convention Center Room 103, if you were invited to that. If you're going to the Commander's Banquet that is at 6:00 p.m. in Hall E.

Thursday a.m. there will be a joint session with the Legion. That is still on, scheduled to begin approximately 11:30. You all know the drill. That means you're going to have to go through metal detectors at least an hour or so before. So as we have more information about that, that will get pushed out through your Cvent information. That's it, Madam Chair.

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, Dubbie. And one announcement, those that are participating in the installation ceremony practice, please also remain in the room.

This meeting is recessed until tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 12:59 p.m. on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2018**

AUTOMATED RECORDING: Welcome to day 3 of ALA Proud, the 98th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here, to begin our session is our national president, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So the 98th National Convention of the American League Auxiliary will come to order. Welcome to today's session. Please remember to silence all electronic devices.

And our national chaplain, Evelyn Espinola, will give the invocation.

MS. ESPINOLA: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as we gather today at this meeting, we ask that You will be in our midst, help us to make decisions that will be pleasing to You. Help us to be able to discuss matters at hand in a reasonable way and to be willing to give up having our own way.

God, let us -- this meeting be productive and, as should be the case in all areas of our lives and our organization, help us to keep You at the forefront of our minds as we do the work set before us. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please be seated.

Good morning. I hope everyone's wearing their purple bracelets today. I think I heard one "no" up in the front row. A rubber band will also work. I'm not going to ask if your bracelets have moved wrists or not. That one's up to you.

We had such a nice group of visitors yesterday. Okay. Every year I look forward to seeing the delegation from the Republic of China. I just love seeing those gentlemen.

You also heard from SAL Commander Danny Smith. And again, if you haven't caught any of his fireside chats on YouTube or Facebook, tune it to those.

And finally, what a remarkable group of active duty military women we honored on the stage yesterday. Weren't they amazing?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And to Evelyn and to all of the chaplains.

The later I stayed up last night the colder I got. So I'm in my room. My fleece is zipped up to my chin. And finally, I looked over at that big quilt --

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- and I decided it was time to use the quilt. So I made my bed last night, put the quilt on it folded the bottom up, you know, double layer over the feet and I slid in underneath it. It is great. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Now you've had your coffee but those people at home, they're still in their fuzzy slippers. So on account of three, how about if we say "Good morning, ALA"?

One, two, three.

VOICES: Good morning, ALA.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good job. I think we're ready here today.

So Soldiers' Wish is an organization that's dedicated to meeting the needs for military personnel, veterans and their families. Please welcome the executive director of Soldiers' Wish, Mark Ochsenbein, and New York's national executive committeewoman, Jan Mahoney.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Yeah. Well, thank you so much for allowing me to come here. But we're going to kick this off with a little bit of video. So if we could run that, that would be great.

(Video played.)

NARRATOR: While serving in Vietnam in 1971, Sabino Carona was hit with the chemical weapon Agent Orange.

"MR. CARONA: I had no hope, really. I have been living with pain since January of 1971. And it makes it very hard when you have to rely on other people to do for you when you can do for yourself."

"MR. OCHSENBEIN: This veteran is suffering from the effects of Agent Orange. He has to rely on his daughter as a caregiver to help him get back and forth to his medical appointments, to get his food."

NARRATOR: When Sabino was at his darkest hour, unsure of where to look for help, the American Legion family stepped in.

"MR. OCHSENBEIN: Today we are here to give a wish to a Vietnam veteran who served in the Marine Corp. And his wish today is a band that he will receive to help him with his independence to be able to go out and drive and go to his medical appointments."

"MS. MAHONEY: We're not only here to thank him for his service to our country, but we're here to help him with a wish that will help him and to better his life."

"MR. OCHSENBEIN: He had no idea that he was going to receive a wish today. It was a total surprise. And this veteran really needed transportation and we were able to do that for him. We got him a brand new vehicle."

"MR. CARONA: Got the keys here.

"Oh, this'll get me going to the VA and places where I don't have to worry about breaking down. It takes a lot of pressure off me. I don't have to worry (indiscernible). I never thought that this was possible.

"I believe that life is about helping one another. Life is too short.

"I want to thank the American Legion, the Soldier's Wish, the Auxiliary and everybody that made this possible for me today and other veterans in the future."

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Thank you very much.

Well, that kind of tells you a little bit about what Soldier's Wish is. But I tell you what. I want to give a shout out here. You know, there's a lady that comes to our exhibit down there in the exhibit hall every year and her name is Donna Blattenberger out of Massachusetts. Let me tell you. She comes down there and throws corn hole and just has a lot of fun, brings

everybody down. And I just want to say I appreciate that you do that. She does it every year. And so I thought I'd do that.

We've got a crowd with us today. Soldier's Wish gives out wishes to our active duty, our veterans. And there's a group that so many times gets left behind and that's our families. Our families. You know, when our men and women are off fighting a fight and they're down range, the families are back in the rear holding down the fort. And it seems like every time they go off, something always major happens in the rear where things got to be repaired or fixed or somebody gets sick or something like that. So we don't ever want to miss out on the families ever again.

So I've got a few people here. We're going to give a wish today. But before we do, I'd like to call up Jan Mahoney who's the past president of the New York Auxiliary out there. She's done a huge fundraiser for us. And she continues to do that. And she's helped out today. This wish is coming from the funds that she has raised and the ladies out of her Auxiliary and throughout New York.

So, Diane -- or Jan, please.

MS. MAHONEY: Yeah, I'm Jan.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Yeah. Jan's her co-partner out of New York, Diane Gerber. And she can't come. She's working.

MS. MAHONEY: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. MAHONEY: I'm Jan Mahoney, past department president from the great Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. MAHONEY: I joined Soldier's Wish as I pursued my president's project helping our Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Now three years later, I am an ambassador for Soldier's Wish raising funds for helping deliver wishes like the one we're going to do today as we honor our heroes who have given so much for us.

Soldier's Wish grants are helping and giving wishes to veterans, active service men and women and their families from all branches of our military. Our proudest moments are like today giving this wish helping a female veteran and her family get reestablished.

40,000 veterans find themselves homeless every day. And about nine percent of those are female veterans who have children to care for. Please join us with Soldier's Wish and help our American heroes with their wishes to a better life. Thank you so much for all that you do and as we make our heroes' lives better.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Thanks, Jan.

I want to introduce now a great American. He's a major general here in the Minnesota guard. But he's also the president of the Military Assistance Counsel for Veterans, also known as MACV which is an acronym used out of Vietnam at that time frame.

I'm going to let him tell you a little bit about what his organization is about 'cause we partnered up with him to be able to give this wish. And they found this wish recipient.

So, sir, please.

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having us. We appreciate that.

In Minnesota, we served 5,000 veterans last year alone which can be a staggering number if you think about it. 1600 of those were veterans that we helped get to a better situation either from homelessness or about to be homeless. And so what we do at the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans is we provide services in the areas of housing, employment and legal services to help our veterans get back on their feet.

And we're so very fortunate and thankful to Mark and Jan. But mostly to all of you in the audience today, the Auxiliary, for allowing us the opportunity to help Sonia with her wish to get her family reestablished.

We only get to do this one veteran at a time. It's the way it's going to work. And in Minnesota, we like to say that no American veteran should be homeless because no American should be homeless. And if we can't solve veteran homelessness first, we won't solve homeless.

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much to the Auxiliary and everybody here today. Thank you.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: So our wish today is to help solve a small portion of that homelessness.

We have an army veteran with us today. Her name is Sonya Saghid (phonetic). I hope I pronounced that right. Sonya was a medic in the United States Army. And when she was in the army, she gave. She gave to help those that were in need, those that were wounded. She's out of the army now and she finds herself in a struggle. And we're going to help her today with the assistance of MACV.

Through the funds that were raised, let me tell you, don't let anybody tell you different. You are the best fundraisers out there. There is no doubt about it. You should give yourself an applause for all you do for our veterans.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Absolutely.

I don't like to -- you know, homelessness gives a certain connotation. So Sonya is without a home right now. She has two children. And veterans -- I don't know why, they don't ask for help.

So MACV found out about her and reached out to her. And she is now in a home.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Isn't that great? But when you've been without a home and you move into a home, guess what? You don't have anything. You have nothing. And so through the fundraising efforts of Jan, we're going to help her with her rent 'cause it's not free. We're going to help her to furnish that home so that they can have a bed, something to sit on and a dinner table to sit down to. And then we're going to help her with incidentals

so that she can continue to live and strive. We're not giving her a handout. We're giving her a hand up. Absolutely.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: So please come forward. Come on up.

I know she was very reluctant to come here today and I'm so proud she did. I'm telling you, she is one of our great Americans. She's got a tough time.

I love to kiss little babies' heads. They're so sweet.

MS. SAGHID: I'd just like to say thank you to the American Legion and thank you to MACV for helping me get back on track and, you know, relocate. And there's been a lot of changes that have come and been made this last month in the positive direction that I needed to go.

So, again, I just wanted to say thank you and keep up the good work, guys.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: So, sir, come forward. So giving that -- this is going to help get her on her way. It's -- I usually don't typically say how much it is but it's a little over \$5,000.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: And, sir, thank you so much.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is for Sonya. This is --

MR. OCHSENBEIN: This --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm just going to hold it but this is for her.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: This is for her. This is all for her. It's all established, all set out.

But just, thank you all so much for what you do. Thank you for allowing us to come up here and speak to you. I appreciate each and every one of you on what you do out there. We absolutely could not do it without you. Thank you so much. I salute you.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: And Kim here, Kim back here, she's the case manager. She's the one that found her.

(Standing ovation.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I am so proud of you guys.

(Music played in background.)

RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT: The American Legion Auxiliary proudly presents the National President's Award for Excellence. This exclusive honor is awarded to the best of our best. The award epitomizes service not self by recognizing efforts in planning and implementation about programs.

Here to present is your national president, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I almost started the comments that we just heard. That won't work.

So the National President's Award for Excellence gives us the opportunity to highlight five units and one department that are doing amazing things to carry out the mission of the organization.

There are many shining examples of what it means to be ALA proud. These winners understand that ALA Proud is not only about being proud of our individual membership but also about making others feel proud to be associated with our great organization. ALA Proud includes not only our great work of service members and veterans but also the efforts we make to be inclusive, welcoming and kind.

We're proud of the work done by this organization but what totally sets us apart is when we're proud of our actions, our behavior and the way we treat our fellow members and those looking to join our mission.

Before we get to today's winners, I'd like to recognize all the units and departments working the Auxiliary's mission and programs every day. Your hard work as well helps us achieve the five goals of our centennial strategic plan which ultimately will keep our organization alive and able to carry out its mission.

So I applaud you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I've asked our national divisional vice presidents to help me out with the award presentation so let's begin.

I call Northwestern Division National Vice President Peggy Miller to the stage.

(Music played in background.)

MS. MILLER: Thank you President Diane.

It's my pleasure to announce the first winner of the National President's Award for Excellence. Let's give a big round of applause to Allied Unit 369 in East Chicago, Indiana.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. MILLER: The members of Unit 369 worked tirelessly on providing education and community, outreach for the youth in their area. Just listen to some of the amazing work they accomplished this year.

Unit 69 (sic) was able to pass the Give 10 for Education and donated nearly 1,000 items to the annual Sunnyside back-to-school rally in East Chicago, Indiana.

Unit 369 members collected and donated nearly \$2,000 worth of children's clothing and toys to the Haven House, a domestic abuse shelter in their area.

And they still had time to partner with a local high school to make over 150 Veterans Day cards. They were told that some of the cards made the veterans cry and the service members.

Unit 369 members are working the mission, engaging our youth and getting active in the community. Congratulations, Allied Unit 369. We are proud of you.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. MILLER: Please welcome our Southern Division National Vice President Diane Spencer to announce the second unit winner.

(Music played in background.)

MS. SPENCER: Thank you. What an honor it is to be a part of the National President's Award for Excellence.

Our second unit to receive this award is Otis Sampson Unit 59 in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. SPENCER: This year, the members of Unit 59 took a small but mighty approach to serving military and veterans but purposely chose projects that were not flashy or showy opting instead to focus on true grassroots. Efforts that came from the heart. Some might call them small but the impact Unit 59 has made on our heroes has been nothing less than mighty.

They voted to support the Air National Guard, Black Helicopter Troup from Madison, Wisconsin, and send care packages valued at nearly \$1,000. Not to mention, their post asked for their expertise when they wanted to send care packages for Christmas.

Unit 59 was also on a mission to make quilts for our veterans in facilities and hats for our homeless veterans. They've quilted over 100 blankets and knitted or crocheted so many hats that they had to donate the surplus to the local hospice care facility to be given for future veterans. Together, as a unit, with the mission to take care of our heroes, these members reported over 1500 hours of community service. What an amazing group of ladies.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. SPENCER: Congratulations, Otis Sampson Unit 59. We are so proud of the impact you are making in your community. Thank you for showing your town who we are, what we do and why we matter. Congratulations for a successful year.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. SPENCER: To present our next unit's winner, please welcome Eastern Division National Vice President Karyn Porempski.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. POREMPSKI: Thank you, President Diane, for inviting your national divisional vice president to be a part of this important awards presentation.

Our third unit winner of the National President's Award for Excellence is Palmer Roberts Unit 214 in Willoughby, Ohio.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. POREMPSKI: In an effort to educate the community on who we are and what we do and why we matter, Unit 214 held a community open house. They answered questions about membership, had games for the kids and collected funds via a raffle for gift cards. All monies collected were donated to the Veterans resource center in Cleveland.

It's clear that members of Unit 214 take care of our military and our veterans. But they also take care of each other. When two of their members were diagnosed with cancer, Unit 14 (sic) organized two fundraisers to help with medical expenses. They also organized a domiciliary for veterans to

have clothes when they were presented for jobs. It's these kinds of kindnesses that make us proud to be ALA members.

Unit 214, you have done an excellent job of spreading good will and letting your community know why they, too, should be ALA proud.

Congratulations to an extremely successful year.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. POREMPSKI: Please welcome to the stage your Western Division Vice President Nancy Michalski to present the next award.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. MICHALSKI: What an honor it is to be able to celebrate these amazing unit members.

The fourth unit to receive the National President's Award of Excellence is

Barrett-Davis-Watson Unit 233 in Loganville, Georgia. Let's hear it.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. MICHALSKI: With several thousand volunteer hours under their belt, Unit 233 has been very busy this year. They have excelled in community service and giving back to our active duty military as well as veterans.

This year, Unit 233 sent nearly 450 care packages to our service members. These 450 care packages totaled over 400 volunteer hours. Amazing, right?

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: But that's not even the best part. Unit 233 opened up this project to their entire community. Not just to unit members. And that's how they were able to ship over \$32,000 worth of items to our troops overseas. That's just fantastic.

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: And the care packages didn't stop there. After seeing a posting from the national chaplain asking for help in providing warm clothes to a group of soldiers in Korea, Unit 233 gathered up thermal gear, heat packs and scarves and sent them on to our service members.

Then they took the project one step further and added these soldiers to the unit's ongoing care package project so that they continue to receive items on a scheduled basis.

This unit understands that working as a team within your unit and with the community is the key to being ALA Proud. Ladies of Unit 233, you truly embody the spirit of good will. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: Please welcome Central Division National Vice President Trish Ward to present our fifth and final unit winner.

(Applause.)

(Music playing in background.)

MS. WARD: I am excited to announce our fifth and final winner of the National President's Award for Excellence. Let's hear a big round applause for Beaumont Unit 33 in Lumberton, Texas.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. WARD: After the devastating destruction of Hurricane Harvey in August 2017, Beaumont Unit 33 was able to help a community that had just lost everything. When a local church reached out for food donations to help feed rescue teams, Unit 33 jumped into action and in true Texas style, got them 700 pounds of brisket and traveled through high water just to deliver it.

They also stuffed goodie bags full of snacks and Gatorade as well as buckets full of cleaning supplies and drove around the devastated areas delivering supplies to first responders and hurricane victims in the process of trying to clean up their homes.

In the face of disaster, Unit 33 not only helped meet the immediate needs of the community, they also helped children prepare for the future by donating nearly 2,000 backpacks filled with supplies to the local schools.

And -- yes. Give them a hand.

(Applause.)

MS. WARD: And awarding nearly \$9,000 in scholarships to children of veterans.

Beaumont Unit 33 is an inspiration to us all and a pillar of their community. Keep up the fantastic work.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you to all the national division vice presidents. You did an excellent job.

And now for the moment you've all been waiting for. It's time to celebrate the department recipients.

This department reported nearly 35,000 VA volunteer hours with direct benefit to over 11,000 veterans as well as nearly 9,000 hours of mission focus volunteerism that directly benefited over 7,000 additional veterans outside the VA system. It is my absolute pleasure to announce the 2018 department recipient for the National President's Award for Excellence.

The Department of Virginia.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The Department of Virginia was involved in so many amazing projects this year. One of the biggest community service projects that they had was called "Pack a Purse". To aid in relief to Hurricane Harvey, the Department of Virginia filled purses with soaps, hand sanitizers, deodorant and feminine hygiene supplies. Then shipped them off to Texas and Florida to be handed out to their local posts and units.

In addition to the "Pack a Purse" project, they also started a fundraiser called "Supporting Virginia's Veterans". The goal of this project was to raise \$10,000 to help fund projects at three Virginia VA Medical Centers. Projects included building a pavilion for veterans to enjoy the outdoors, create charging stations for visitors to stay plugged in, and to provide shipping supplies so veterans could send gifts to their families.

As if these projects weren't enough, the VANR chairman also championed the fundraisers to aid homeless veterans who have worked hard

to gain employment to transition back into independent living status. The project goal was \$2,000. They raised \$2,500.

As you can see, these members are extremely dedicated to serving veterans. But let me tell you. They're just as passionate about enhancing their membership strength. To help energize their units, membership milestones were put into place. Certificates were given to qualified units. And special mystery awards were given to those units reaching 100 percent and 80 percent.

Units that have achieved the 100 percent plus two milestone received an invitation to attend the grand finale special tea party and surprise with the department president at the department convention.

Department of Virginia, I am thankful for all your efforts and for being passionate, active and engaged members to the American Legion Auxiliary. You have much to celebrate.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's difficult to be limited by time and only able to briefly share all these amazing achievements. But there is good news. You'll be able to read a full story on our National President's Award for Excellence winners on the website.

So let me encourage all of you to consider joining these units and the Department of Virginia on the path to excellence by planning now to submit your application for next year's awards.

Our national headquarters team created a system that allows members to apply for this award online. It takes a matter of seconds to upload your entire report with pictures. There's really no excuse not to enter.

So let's give all of our National President's Award for Excellence recipients one more round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The next item of business this morning is the nomination of national officers for the 2018-2019 administrative year. Representatives making the nominations as well as the candidates are seated on the stage. Almost.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Dubbie Buckler, our national secretary, will read the rules governing nominations and elections. If you're not one of this group that should be up here on the stage, I would make my way up here at this time. Okay?

MS. BUCKLER: Nomination of national officers shall be made from the floor. Nominating speeches shall be limited to two minutes for each candidate except the national president candidate. She will be allowed four minutes. There will be no seconding speeches.

Following nominating speeches for national officers on Wednesday, August 28, 2018, each of the nominees for national president, national vice president, national chaplain and national historian shall be introduced to the assembly by the Auxiliary member making her nomination. Said introduction to be by name and department affiliation. And in response to the introduction, the nominee for office shall be allowed a maximum of two minutes for remarks.

Election of national officers shall be held on Wednesday, August 28th, 2018. That is today. When there is but one candidate for any office, the nominee may be elected by voice. When there is more than one candidate for a national office, the election shall be by paper electronic ballot as determined by the presiding officer.

A majority of votes cast shall elect each officer. When no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, a second ballot will be taken between the candidates receiving the two highest numbers of votes with the candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot being elected.

Madam National President, that completes the reading of the nomination election rules.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I believe you're on again in a minute. You're on again in a minute.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Nominations are now in order for the office of national president. The national secretary will call the department with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: Madam President, the Department of Mississippi has an announced candidate for the office of national president. The delegation chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the lady at mic 4. We're on mic 4.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We're working on the mic over here. Aha, we hear it.

MS. BLANCHARD: Madam President, microphone 4.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the lady at microphone 4.

MS. BLANCHARD: Rose Blanchard (phonetic), past department president from the Department of Mississippi.

Would the chair please recognize June Laws for the purpose of nomination for the office of national president.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Mississippi for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. LOSS: Madam President, officers and delegates, I am June Laws, chairman of Team Mississippi 2019.

On behalf of the Department of Mississippi, it is with great pride and honor to present Kathy Dungan as a candidate for the office of national president.

Kathy is a member of the Drain Plan Unit 79, Wesson, Mississippi. She is eligible through the service of her father who served in World War II.

Mississippi takes great pride having Kathy as their candidate and know that she is well prepared to hold the office of national president. She has served on the national level for 15 years, first as national executive committeewoman, and continued to serve as the national chairman for 10 years. She is vice president of the national Future Focus committee and member of the 100th anniversary committee and served as co-captain Goal 2

Strategy A for several years. She served her department with distinction holding all elected offices. She also served as Mississippi Girls' State director and chairman for three years.

Kathy has held numerous offices and chairmanships in her unit, district and department.

Kathy retired after 22 years with the Mississippi Supreme Court serving as a judicial assistant to a Supreme Court justice. She is active in her church having served as church treasurer for many years and taught a youth Sunday School class.

Kathy believes in our motto, "Service, not Self" and is passionate about our mission of serving our heroes, our community and our youth. Her love for this organization and her desire to make a difference in the lives of others are traits that will help her carry out her duties as national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

On behalf of the Department of Mississippi, I am honored to place a nomination in the name of our own Kathy Dungan for the office of national president of the American Legion Auxiliary for the year 2018 to 2019.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Kathy Dungan is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of national president?

Hearing none, nominations for national president are closed.

Nominations are in order for the office of national vice president.

The national secretary will call departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Iowa has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

MS. KLINKHAMMER: Madam National President, microphone number 4, Vickie Klinkhammer, delegation chairman for the Department of Iowa.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Iowa for purpose of making a nomination.

MS. KLINKHAMMER: Would the chair please recognize Wendy Riggle for the purpose of a nomination for the office of national vice president.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Iowa.

MS. RIGGLE: Madam National President, delegates, alternates and guests. My name is Wendy Riggle from the Department of Iowa.

It is with great pride and honor on behalf of the Department of Iowa and my late mother, past national president, Sherry McLaughlin, to present Nicole Clapp for the office of national vice president.

When Nicole was four years old, it was determined that her grandfather, a United States seaman during World War II, would be the veteran whose service to our country she would honor by becoming a junior member of the American Legion Auxiliary. Nicole is now a 43-year PUFL member of Unit number 127 in Gladbrook, Iowa.

Her strong sense of loyalty to the ALA which provided Nicole with many opportunities as a child combined early on with her developing career

as a health care executive prevented her from following the traditional path of leadership in American Legion Auxiliary. Those choices did not prevent Nicole from maintaining a strong desire and dedication to serve.

She was elected the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Iowa Junior President and the honorary American Legion Auxiliary National Junior President in 1987. During that extraordinary year, Nicole participated in ALA Iowa Girls' State, attended Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge and competed in the American Legion oratorical contest.

As a senior member, Nicole was recognized at the department level when she was asked to serve on the Junior Camp and ALA Iowa Girls State Boards in addition to her role as the education director for more than a decade at Iowa Girls State. At the national level, Nicole was appointed chairman of Finance, chairman of Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation along with liaison roles to the audit committee and the ALA foundation board. She has served on the committees of Human Resources, Centennial Strategic Plan, Future Focus and Hundredth Anniversary.

Nicole is board certified in health care management and is a fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives. She volunteers for PEO and the Peace United Church of Christ.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are there any further nominations for the office of national vice president?

Hearing none, nominations for national vice president are closed.

Nominations are now in order for the office of national chaplain.

The national chaplain will call departments with announced candidates.

MS. ESPINOLA: The Department of Missouri has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

MS. SANFORD: Madam President, microphone 1.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate at microphone 1.

MS. SANFORD: Carolyn Sanford, delegation chairman, Department of Missouri.

Please recognize the delegate on the platform for the purpose of nomination of Missouri's candidate for chaplain.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Missouri for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. HAUCK: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. HAUCK: Madam President, officers and delegates, I am Rosemary W. Hauck, past national chaplain from the Department of Missouri.

Missouri places the name of Gayle Metzinger as candidate for national chaplain. In addition to performing a task at an exemplary level, Gayle demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to the ALA, her church and community. Gayle's eligibility for membership was gained through her husband, U.S. Air Force Major Donald D. Metzinger, retired, who served during the Vietnam era for 23 years. Her son, Kent, also served in the Army National Guard in two deployments to Kosovo and Haiti.

Gayle is active on all levels of the American Legion Auxiliary currently serving as member of the National Leadership committee and Missouri's 100th Anniversary committee. She has served as unit, district and department chaplain.

A chaplain is more than giving an opening and closing prayer. She should be a role model, innovator, inspirational, know how to show sympathy as well as empathy. These are few of the many traits Gayle has exhibited in Missouri. She has truly represented the ALA in her community by reaching out to the active military and veterans to share her talents. She does this to make a positive change in her community and our state.

Through her efforts, Unit 21 raised over \$12,000 for Camp Valor Outdoors for wounded warriors in Kingsville, Missouri. Gayle's dedication to God, her skills, willingness to help others and commitment to our organization's mission and the community make her Missouri's candidate for national chaplain.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Gayle Metzinger is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain?

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Tennessee has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes -- no one yet.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Mic 1? The chair recognizes the delegate at mic 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam President. Please recognize the delegate of the podium for the purpose of nomination for Tennessee's candidate. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Tennessee for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. CONNORS: Madam President, the Department of Tennessee proudly endorses Janice Bruce as candidate for the national chaplain for the year 2018/2019.

Janice is a member of the Sam P. McConnell Unit 159 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She gained her eligibility in the American Legion through the service of her husband, Thomas Bruce, who served in the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam.

As an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary on the unit and district levels, Janice has served as president, vice president, third district president and has chaired many committees.

On the department level, Janice has served as department president, vice president, East Tennessee vice president, chaplain for five years, national security, public relations and prayer book chairman and is currently serving as department historian.

On the national level, Janice has served as national executive committeewoman, alternate national executive committeewoman and is currently serving a member of the national legislative mini counselor.

Janice attended Chattanooga State Community College. She has attended six Washington, D.C. conferences. She is a very active member of the Sale Creek Church of God where she serves on the missionary board and as assistant choir director.

Janice serves as a substitute teacher for Hamilton County Department of Education in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She volunteers in the Tennessee Valley Healthcare system, the VA Outpatient Clinic in Chattanooga. Tom and Janice have two children and five grandchildren.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Janice Bruce is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain?

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Virginia has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate at microphone 1.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Department of Virginia. Please recognize the delegate from Virginia.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from Virginia for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. THOMAS: Madam President, all attendees, Virginia proudly endorses Dr. Deborah Blanch for national chaplain.

Deborah is a professor and teaches at a couple of local universities. She serves as a Scripture reader at her place of worship. Deborah fills in wherever needed as a chaplain and has done so for us for many years. She is the wife of a veteran, a mother, a grandmother and a dedicated Auxiliary member at Newport News Unit 368.

First and foremost, she is a devoted Christian and has served in many capacities as well as being the chaplain in the unit, district and department and is called upon to fill in when a chaplain is needed.

She does beautiful memorial services and she has helped all other leadership positions in the Department of Virginia and this year is finishing up her year serving on the national history committee.

I can tell you, if she is elected as national chaplain, I can assure you she will give 110 percent. That is what she does with any position that she holds. And I ask when you're voting to please consider Dr. Deborah Blanch for national chaplain 2018/2019.

Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Dr. Deborah Blanch is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain? Hearing none, nominations -- microphone 1?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Is there someone standing at microphone 1?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's for historian.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh. For historian? Okay. Hang on a second. I'm finishing up chaplain. Okay? Don't go away. Okay.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So hearing no more nominations for national chaplain, nominations for national chaplain are closed.

Nominations are now in order for the office of national historian. The national secretary will call the departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of South Carolina has an announced candidate. The delegate chairman should ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

MS. HOLLAND: Madam President?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yes, ma'am.

MS. HOLLAND: Brenda Holland, NEC, Department of South Carolina. I request permission for Pat Jarvis, president of the Department of South Carolina, to approach the podium for the purpose of the nomination of the national historian.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The chair recognizes the delegate from South Carolina for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. JARVIS: Madam National President Diane, my name is Pat Jarvis, president, Department of South Carolina.

On behalf of the Department of South Carolina, I proudly present Brenda Collins as the candidate for the position of national historian.

Brenda is eligible through the service of her husband, John, who is a veteran of the Vietnam era. Brenda is a 19-year PUFL member of James F. Daniel, Jr. Unit 3, Greenville, South Carolina. She served as department president 2009 to 2010, NEC, 2010 to 2011, and alternate NEC, 2011 to 2012.

Her national appointments includes Southern Division Children and Youth chairman for two years; junior activities committee member, Poppy chairman, AEF chairman, Americanism chairman, public relations chairman and national security chairman.

Brenda's immediate family consists of two sons and daughters-in-law and four grandchildren, all members of the Legion family. She is a retired administrative assistant to the pastor of her church. Brenda has volunteered at Richmond M. Campbell Veterans Nursing Home for 18 years entertaining the residents.

I am happy to place before you Brenda Collins from the Department of South Carolina as candidate for national historian, 2018/2019. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Brenda W. Collins is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the office of national historian?

Hearing none, nominations for national historian are closed.

With these nominations and the nominations made during the division caucuses on Saturday, August 25th, 2018, nominations for the 2018/2019 national officers are completed.

The convention rules provide that nominees for the offices of national president, national vice president, national chaplain and national historian shall be introduced to the assembly. The Auxiliary member who made the nomination will introduce the candidates by name and department affiliation only. Each nominee will be allowed a maximum of two minutes for remarks.

Will the representative from Mississippi please introduce the candidate for national president?

MS. LOSS: Madam President, it is -- I'm sorry.

Madam President, it is with great pleasure that I present to you from the Department of Mississippi our candidate for national president, Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, June.

Madam National President, officers and Auxiliary members, what an honor it is to be standing before you today as a candidate for national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

I want to thank those Auxiliary friends and members who have supported me and provided me words of encouragement. I want to thank June Laws for the wonderful nomination speech and who has been a great friend and supporter. I owe many thanks to my family and friends in the Department of Mississippi. Please stand and be recognized. Mississippi?

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you for your love and support.

And thank you, members of the Southern Division, all 14 departments. Would you please stand and be recognized?

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

As the largest service organization for veterans and their families, we can and do make a tremendous impact on the lives of veterans, active duty military, their families and our communities. I pledge to continue working our mission of serving our heroes and their families and our goal of making our community a better place to work and live.

Thank you and God bless you all.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will the representative from Iowa present the candidate for national vice president?

MS. RIGGLE: Madam National President, it is my honor for the second time in my life to present to you a candidate for the office of national vice president, Nicole Clapp.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Thank you, Wendy.

Madam National President, officers, members and guests, I am very humbled to be standing here today as a candidate for national vice president of the American Legion Auxiliary. I am humbled to potentially give back in another capacity to the wonderful organization in which I was raised.

As Wendy shared with you, the American Legion and Auxiliary have afforded me many opportunities as I was growing up. I would like to thank the Department of Iowa and the Central Division. Thank you very much for your ongoing support.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Since becoming a senior member, I have maintained a strong desire and passion to serve as a unit, department and national levels in a wide array of roles and responsibilities. Each of us has our own ALA story

to tell. As you heard, mine has not been the typical path of leadership in the American Legion Auxiliary but I truly believe my experience, my knowledge and expertise can benefit our organization into the next century.

If elected, I promise in the spirit of service not self to continue my dedication to enhance the lives of our veterans, military and their families. I would greatly appreciate your support and thank you for your time and consideration and God bless each of you.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will the representative from Missouri present the candidate for national chaplain?

MS. HAUCK: Madam President, it is my pleasure to introduce Missouri's candidate for national chaplain, Gayle Metzinger.

(Applause.)

MS. METZINGER: Good morning. My name is Gayle Metzinger from the Department of Missouri and I am asking for your vote to become your chaplain.

As chaplain, I promise you three things. One, I promise never to assume. Two, I promise to always listen. And the most important promise is I promise to take all things unto God.

I have heard the voice of our God. Not the big booming voice but rather a gentle voice. And I don't know if I heard it through my ears or my heart or my soul but I know that it was God speaking to me.

You may wonder why me would receive the voice of God. I realize I'm the tiniest speck of sand in this whole big universe that God created but I did hear the word of God.

I know exactly who I am. I am a child of God. I am a woman of faith. And the neatest thing about all of this is the fact that each and every one of you is a child of God. But not everybody can say I am a woman of faith because you got this niggling thing in the back of your brain. But you know what? That's okay, too. Our God is patient. He will receive you. When you reach that point in your life that you need a higher power, God is waiting for you with open arms.

Our God is a loving God. No matter what our trespasses may be, God loves us and is waiting for you to make the first move. And that first move is a simple prayer. God understands our life and issues and the burdens that we face. Our God is patient. Our God is loving. Our God is an awesome God.

Thank you for your consideration.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will the representative from Tennessee present the candidate for national chaplain?

MS. CONNORS: Madam President, it's my honor to endorse Janice Bruce as candidate for the national chaplain for the year 2018/19.

MS. BRUCE: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. BRUCE: I want to first recognize and thank Charlotte for nominating me and the Department of Tennessee for your support.

I am Janice Bruce. I'm a devoted Christian who loves the Lord and He lives within my heart. And I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13.

I served as department chaplain for five years in the Department of Tennessee. I attended five national chaplain conferences. During one of those conferences is when the Lord spoke to my heart to be a candidate for national chaplain. I believe the chaplain should not only serve as a spiritual leader but should be a person who has the compassion to touch someone's heart by showing them love.

If elected, it would be an honor to serve as your national chaplain by being a spiritual leader that can fill the room with love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness in the spirit of service not self for God and country.

I pray to God for you, our leaders, our veterans and I pray that God will build a hedge around our military and protect them from harm's way.

God bless all of you and God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will the representative from Virginia present the candidate for national chaplain?

MS. THOMAS: Madam President, delegates, it is an honor and a privilege for me to present to you Dr. Deborah Blanch as a candidate for national chaplain.

DR. BLANCH: Good morning, sisters. I am Dr. Deborah Blanch and I proudly represent the Department of Virginia.

My mother was a chaplain for many years and she instilled the values of spirituality, good living and good morals within me. I stand here today as I honor her and her service by wearing her hat. She is with us and she sends her blessings as we continue to go through ??.

What is my why? I am ALA proud. I know that as a vessel, we can all move forward together. We are molded, shaped and we are folded and we can do all things together as we go forward in the following year.

As Ms. Peggy Thomas stated earlier, if I am elected, I assure you I will give you 110 plus percent of myself because I serve one God. God and country I have always served for service and not self. For God and country, thank you for your time. Amen.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Will the representative from South Carolina present the candidate for national historian?

MS. JARVIS: Madam President, I proudly present Brenda Collins of South Carolina as a candidate for the national historian.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: Thank you, Pat.

Madam National President Diane, in the early 80s, my husband, John Collins, formed the Southern Gospel singing group. We traveled through 26 states singing and ministering from Maine to Texas. We sang in churches big and small, old and new. Some of the churches in the New England area were almost 200 years old. The tombstones in the cemetery told a story of the families in that area.

Our organization is not like that cemetery. Quite the opposite. We are alive and well. We want our members of the American Legion Auxiliary to be able to read our history the way I was able to view the histories of those families in the New England area.

Each step we take on this journey of life we are creating memories, history if you will. The American Legion Auxiliary has created many happy memories throughout the years. This is our history. I am delighted to hear stories and accomplishments of our great organization. It is my desire to record and preserve the memories as we move forward toward a new century.

I ask for your consideration when you cast your vote for national historian.

I would like to thank the members of South Carolina who have supported me throughout the years and continue to do so. And I thank you for your endorsement for national historian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: This concludes the nominations for the 2018-2019 national officers.

We'll proceed with the election of the national officers. You've nominated Kathy Dungan of Mississippi for the office of national president. In accordance with the rules you have adopted, if there is but one candidate for an office, the nominee will be elected by voice vote. All in favor of electing Kathy Dungan as national president for the 2018-2019 administrative year, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The chair declares Kathy Dungan of Mississippi duly elected as national president for the 2018-2019.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Kathy, stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Nicole Clapp of Iowa is the only nominee for the office of national vice president. All in favor of Nicole Clapp for the office of national vice president, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

Nicole Clapp has been duly elected as the national vice president for 2018-2019 administrative year.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: On Saturday, at the division caucuses, each division nominated a candidate for national division vice president. And the current division national vice presidents have certified to the chair the following nominees:

For Central Division, Teresa Isensee of Wisconsin has been nominated for the office of Central Division national vice president. All those in favor of Teresa Isensee as national Central Division vice president, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

Teresa Isensee has been duly elected as national Central Division national vice president.

Teresa, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Rita Barylski of Connecticut has been nominated for the office of national Eastern Division vice president. All those in favor of Rita Barylski for national Eastern Division vice president, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

You have elected Rita Barylski as national Eastern Division vice president.

Rita, will you please stand?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Barb Vetter of South Dakota has been nominated for the office of national Northwestern Division vice president. All those in favor of Barb Vetter, national Northwestern Division vice president, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

You have elected Barb Vetter as the national Northwestern Division vice president.

Barb, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Gloria Fochtman-Haygood of Alabama has been nominated for the office of national Southern Division vice president. All those in favor of Gloria Fochtman-Haygood as the national Southern Division vice president, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

Gloria Fochtman-Haygood has been elected national Southern Division vice president.

Will you please stand, Gloria?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Janet Romero of New Mexico has been nominated for the office of national Western Division vice president. All those in favor of Janet Romero as the national Western Division vice president, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Those opposed, say no.

Janet Romero has been elected the national Western Division vice president.

Janet, will you please stand?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: For the election of national chaplain, we'll be voting with our electronic pads.

Nominees are Gayle Metzinger from Missouri, Jan Bruce from Tennessee and Dr. Deborah Blanch from Virginia.

If you would like to vote for Gayle Metzinger, press 1.

If you would like to vote for Janet Bruce, press 2.

If you would like to vote for Dr. Deborah Blanch, press 3.

Please vote now.

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Voting is now closed. Please show the results.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We're calculating. It's a majority vote as opposed to a plurality. So hang on while we do the math, okay?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: There is a majority so Dr. Deborah Blanch has been duly elected as national chaplain for 2018-2019.

Please stand. Deborah Blanch, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Brenda W. Collins of South Carolina is the only nominee for the office of national historian. All in favor of Brenda W. Collins for the office of national historian, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

Brenda W. Collins has been duly elected as national historian for the 2018/2019 administrative year.

Please stand, Brenda.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Ladies and for the gentlemen who are in the crowd, I want to present your 2018-2019 Auxiliary national officers.

Would you ladies just stand all together?

Let's give them a hand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ladies.

And a big thank you to the entire elections and tally committee.

These women are here in the back of the room early every morning distributing keypads. They stay late after every session verifying all keypads have been returned. And they troubleshoot any keypad issues. Please help me give these women a round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The video you're about to watch is a tribute to the American Legion Auxiliary Color Guards and Drill Teams across the country. It's really two different stories, one somber, one heart lifting. Both make me ALA proud so let's take a look.

(Video played.)

NARRATOR: Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis is the final resting place of over 188,000 service members and families. The grounds are a somber yet beautiful memorial to those who served our country with honor, many who died in battle.

And when our heroes are laid to rest, you'll often find the American Legion family there to pay tribute. One such group is a Color Guard composed of ALA members of Unit 253 in Festus, Missouri. Practice makes perfect as witnessed by this dress rehearsal inside Post 253.

Unit 253 saw an opportunity to serve and they acted.

“MR. MCCART: The cemetery in Jefferson Barracks has tasked us with quite a lot. We found it to be a blessing to have our Auxiliary assist us with those funerals.”

NARRATOR: The Color Guard rifle detail fires three shots at funerals representing duty, honor and country, and tops its plate with a ceremonial bugle.

When speaking to anyone on the team, pride and honor are the overwhelming takeaways.

“MS. MCCART: I’m proud to be on the Color Guard to give our veterans their final call.”

“MS. ARNOLD: It is such an honor to help serve the veterans of our post and our nation.”

“MS. KINDER: As part of the American Legion Auxiliary, I am so proud to be a part of our Color Guard team.”

NARRATOR: And we couldn’t be prouder of the Color Guard team from Unit 252 in Festus, Missouri.

About 150 miles east, in Flora, Illinois, another Auxiliary team honors our flag and country in a different way.

The Shooting Stars and all ALA junior member Drill Team and Color Guard performs precision moves and presents our nation’s colors at special events and competitions.

“MS. MCGILVRY WELTY: The Shooting Stars Drill Team started around eight years ago. We started with kindergarten and first graders. And we still have three of the original ones with us.”

NARRATOR: Love of country is taught from the beginning.

“MS. MCGILVRY WELTY: All the girls are American Legion Auxiliary junior members of Unit 14, Flora, Illinois.

“The girls learn a lot about patriotism, discipline and team work.”

“MS. BRANDT: I’ve been teaching Drill Team for many, many years but this Drill Team is very special to me. We meet once a month. We practice for four hours as hard as we can because that’s what it takes to make a national championship team.”

NARRATOR: And their hard work paid off. Capturing top honors in the Open Class competition at the 2016 national convention in Cincinnati.

“BETH: I couldn’t believe when we won first place in Cincinnati. It was exciting.”

NARRATOR: The Shooting Stars competed in the Open Class and won the national title.

“ANNOUNCER: With a score of 88.35, the Shooting Stars Color Guard, American Legion Post 14, Flora, Illinois.”

“MS. BRANDT: And you can imagine the surprise we had when we got back to Flora after winning our national championship in Cincinnati when the streets were filled with the people of Flora walking us home with our championship trophy.”

NARRATOR: There were other rewards besides trophies and congratulations.

“MIKAYLA: I love being in the Shooting Stars Drill Team. It’s a lot of fun and we get to travel.”

“ABIGAIL: I’ve been in Drill Team since kindergarten. I learn leadership, responsibility and team work.”

“MAKENZIE: I am so proud to be on the Shooting Stars Drill Team.”

NARRATOR: The Shooting Stars recently competed at the 2018 national convention in Minneapolis.

“STACY: Wouldn’t it be great if we won again?”

NARRATOR: And win again they did. Congratulations to the 2018 Open Division national champions, the Shooting Stars of Flora, Illinois.

And we’re all ALA proud of all the Drill Teams, Color Guards and Honor Guards throughout the American Legion Auxiliary.

(End of video.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please welcome representatives from Unit 253 in Festus, Missouri, Shirley Arnolds, Wanda Kinder, Cheryl Compton and Diane McCart.

(Music played in background.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The Drill Teams the other night were absolutely amazing. So thank you for everything that you did for Drill Teams and congratulations to you. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Now, unfortunately, the Shooting Stars Drill Team had to get back to Illinois as there’s a competition on Friday. I think they had school. So let’s give both squads a warm round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And in case you thought Drill Teams and Color Guards are something new, take a look at this slice of history of Drill Team from an Iowa unit photographed in 1950.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Now I have some amazing news for you. In fact, I think this may take a drum roll.

Because of your generosity, the ALA Foundation is less than \$1000 away from raising \$10,000 at Giving Tuesday booth outside.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You can push it over our goals by stopping at the Giving Tuesday booth when you leave today’s session or if you’re on your way somewhere else out in the hallway, you can stop by. Every amount adds up to make a huge difference. Thank you for everything you’ve donated so far. I love it.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Members across the nation worked hand-in-hand this year to promote the ALA’s promise of service not self. Our grassroots members and national officers worked with the Americanism program to educate and grow our future. To tell us more, please welcome our national Americanism committee chairman, Martha Corriher.

(Music played in background.)

MS. CORRIHER: Thank you, Madam President.

When you hear the word “Americanism”, thoughts immediately come to your mind. Love and devotion to our country, the U.S. flag, veterans, active duty military, your community, American Legion baseball, ALA Girls State and American Legion Boys State and so much more.

Here’s how the American Legion explains it. The characteristics that distinguish our form of government from others is the recognition of the truth that the inherent and fundamental rights of men are derived from God and not from governments, dictators or majorities. The inalienable rights which are the gifts of man from his Creator are freedom of worship, freedom of speech and press, freedom of assemblage, freedom to work in such occupations as the experience, training and qualifications of many men enable him to secure and to hold, the freedom to enjoy the fruits of his work which means the protection of his property rights. And the rights to pursue his happiness so as long as he does not harm others in the pursuit of his happiness.

Upon these basic principles, the structure of our form of government was established. Americanism is the love of America, loyalty to her institutions as the best yet derived by man to secure life, liberty, individual dignity and happiness, and a willingness to defend our country and flag against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

What makes American Legion Auxiliary members proud and respectful of our organization and our country? Well, let me share just a few pictures and events with you.

The Department of Washington showed their Americanism spirit when they hosted their 911 remembrance ride to never forget that tragedy. How wonderful to see a female leading the way.

They also embraced our returning military by hosting and taking part in welcome home events to show those returning home our respect, love and support.

The Americanism essay contest in Washington had their judges -- students read their essays aloud to the judges. What a great way for those young people to share their project and to get experience speaking in front of public.

In Iowa, junior member Hazel Spears had the honor of presenting a flag book to her school and dressed to impress in her Poppy dress. This young lady makes me very proud.

They also got creative with competitions to show their Americanism as you can see with this patriotic gingerbread house. It shows that thinking outside of the box to promote Americanism, you can eat it, too.

North Carolina has one of the largest military footprints of any state in the country. With representation of the army at Fort Bragg, Air Force at Seymour Johnson, Coast Guard at Elizabeth City and the Marines at Camp Lejeune. Units came across at holidays together to present cards and gifts made by their members and presented them at their local VA medical centers to their vets.

Junior members enjoyed sharing cards and flags with veterans, active duty military and citizens at Veterans Day events and programs to show their respect and honor to just show how proud they were.

Junior members also shared education of the flag in their schools in the proper way. And they used their own funds to purchase new flags to present to their schools.

Landis Unit 146 was one of the recipients of the 911 grant and used it for an education day at their middle school to let the students know of the tragedy of that day and to share the American flag spirit with over 600 in attendance at the program. Every person in attendance got their own flag and there were 50 new classroom flags presented to the school because they were torn, dirty or they never had a flag in the class.

The students also took part in a service project making thank you bags and they were distributed to the emergency personnel in two counties.

The Department of Kentucky prepared and shipped care packages all to our troops overseas. These packages were filled with items to remind them of home and personal care items that they needed daily.

Michigan shows their pride by displaying and explaining the POW/MIA table display in their communities. Their dedication to remember all remains need to be returned home is their dedication respect for our military.

At Christmas, members continue to remember those fallen heroes by collecting funds and assisting in placing wreaths on the graves of those gone way too soon. The Wreaths Across America program is just a small way to show pride of their Americanism.

Wisconsin, Robert G. Romaine Post and Unit 384 created a flag garden to show their honor and respect to the flag and to their community to show how they feel and encourage the others to do the same.

These pictures are just a small example of what you do to accomplish Americanism. These actions and programs will work all over the U.S. and, for that, this chairman wants to say job well done. And I'm so proud of the way you worked Americanism. Remember to show your Americanism pride every day.

Education goes a long way and we need to share it every day with those we come in contact with. We need to thank those who lead the way for freedom. Sing your own praises. Be proud of your accomplishments, large or small. And as the saying goes, it takes a village.

So, Auxiliary members, you are that village. Take that mission of the American Legion Auxiliary to higher heights showing your pride and appreciation every day in your community, state and nation.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Martha.

Here's an update on the centennial strategic plan. We have the chairman of the Implementation team, past national president, Janet Jefford, and vice chairman, ALA staff member, Stephanie Abisi.

(Music played in background.)

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, today our strategic planning report will focus on what accomplishments each goal team is most proud of this year and what you can do in your own department. So let's get started with Goal 5, with the American Legion "Build Brands Loyalty".

As we reported last year, with funding provided by the strategic planning budget, the ALA hired a public relations media agency to help promote the American Legion Auxiliary and all we do. Through their efforts and with the help of the ALA communications department, USA Today featured an article about Girls Nation. The article contained a description of the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, Girls State program, along with interviews of three Girls Nation senators -- Hola Abdullah from South Carolina, Paris Miller from New York and Suzi Cho from Nebraska -- about their experiences at the 72nd session of ALA Girls Nation. This type of exposure for our program is the result of the work being done by the strategic planning team. Congratulations.

An excerpt of the article reads: "We teach the girls the importance of civility respecting people who disagree with you and encouraging them to elevate the level of civility and public discourse by what they have learned through this week long experience." I think this could be a good lesson for all of us.

In an effort to make learning about the importance of branding more fun, this goal team created the branding game. In basketball, you can download all the tools you need to play the game from the members only portal on our website.

So please get your voting keypads ready. We're about to introduce you to the concept with a healthy dose of cheese. With your permission, Madam President, it's game time.

(Music played in background.)

NARRATOR: Welcome to the ALA Branding Game where in the spirit of centennial strategic plan Goal number 5, we'll learn the importance of branding. Please welcome your hostess, Janet Jefford.

MS. JEFFORD: Oh, welcome everybody to the branding game. So you all ready to play?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. JEFFORD: All right. Using your keypads, pick the company or organization associated with this brand. Press either 1A, 2B or 3C. Vote now.

(Music played in background.)

MS. JEFFORD: All right. Let's see the results. Oh. That was an easy one.

Okay. Let's try another one. All right?

Once again, using your keypads, pick the company or organization associated with this brand. Press 1A, 2B or 3C. Vote now.

(Music played in background.)

MS. JEFFORD: Okay. Let's see the results. Whoa. All right. Under Armor. I guess it could be Hilton. But it looks like most of you recognize those first two logos.

Now next, you're going to be shown a wish that a particular brand wants their customers and potential customers to associate with that brand. Which brand wishes to portray great taste, fast and convenient? Use your keypads. Push 1A, 2B, 3C, 4D. Vote now.

(Music played in background.)

MS. JEFFORD: Okay. Let's see how you all voted. All right. McDonald's. Okay. That was an easy one. Of course it's McDonald's.

Understand that McDonald's hasn't been around nearly as long as the American Legion Auxiliary but they've carefully developed their brand and brand perception. We're just getting started.

I have one more brand logo to show you. How many -- all right. Let's give a clap for that brand.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: How many people outside of this room would know this is the emblem or brand logo of the American Legion Auxiliary?

Though this game is meant to have fun, the real purpose is to help us understand the importance of branding. If someone didn't know this is the emblem of the ALA, what would their impression be? Would they say we have a good reputation? The ALA brand is everything the public thinks about what our organization is and what it offers, both factual and emotional. It is our promise to our members and to the public. It doesn't count what we as members think our brand promises. What matters is how others perceive our brand. When they donate to the ALA or take the time to join and volunteer, they assume their expectations for our brand will be met. It's about how they experience who we are.

Watch for this article in the August magazine entitled "Building ALA Brand Loyalty". It also talks about the branding game. And remember, there is a version for senior and junior members.

Now would you please welcome Stephanie Abisi to discuss Goals 4 and 3.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. ABISI: Goal 4 has had an excellent year making big progress with their initiatives. During the Constitution and Bylaws meeting on Saturday morning, many of you gave feedback to the optimizing mission delivery strategy team who is looking at our national committee. This team is still seeking input and you will receive an email for you to reply to in the coming days so please keep an eye out.

During the department leadership national conference in May, Goal 4 team members met with departments who had not previously worked on a department strategic plan. And as a result, we now have a total of 45 departments who have engaged with strategic planning at some level. Congratulations to all of these departments.

(Applause.)

MS. ABISI: They also launched Phase 2 for those departments who had gone a bit further with their strategic plan and 14 departments have already submitted their information. Five hundred dollars has already been awarded to New York, Vermont and West Virginia. This team plans to continue to personally reach out to departments ready for Phase 2 who have not yet started. This team has had great success making personal phone calls.

Goal 3 and 4 plan to collaborate in the coming year as both teams have recognized the overlap in their work. After reviewing the organizational effectiveness assessment, Goal 3 recognized that leadership challenges fall into three main categories. And departments and units needed tools to address

role clarification, accountability and succession planning. So as a start, this team developed a roles and accountability chart which is a visual representation of Chapter 1 in the department operations guide. It was first provided to attendees at this year's department leadership national conference. And it is not intended to be a diagram of how each department is structured, but is a model to help people understand department roles and accountability.

Goal 3 recognizes that there has been so much information that they wanted this to be a simple snapshot of the department operations guide.

Goal 3 continues to encourage department leaders and members to act as the online ALA Academy as this will not only open doors with the ALA but these are life skills that can benefit our members. As you may know, the ALA Academy, a professionally developed online learning tool, was launched in the spring of 2017.

So how many of you have taken at least one class? Two classes? Three? Four? What about all five? Yes, there are now five courses. Well, you are not alone. Over 3,000 members have completed the first four classes and an additional 1,000 members have started a class but haven't quite finished it.

Three new classes -- yes.

(Applause.)

MS. ABISI: Three new courses were launched this year: ALA Leadership, Living our Motto as Service not Self, which addresses many of the Goal 3 initiatives, and Establishing an ALA Culture of Goodwill was launched this winter. In July, ALA Branding and Why it Matters to Me was released and it helps define what branding is and why it is more than just wearing ALA branded material.

There are still more courses being developed including Conflict Styles, Member Retention, Handling Conflicts, Diversity and Change Reaction Styles. And we have a special challenge. Keep challenging your members to take the courses because those departments who have the highest percentage of members who have completed all of the ALA Academy courses by the 2019 convention will receive a prize to help their department with training. One prize per membership category. More details will be provided this fall so please continue to promote the ALA Academy in your units and departments.

With the launch of the ALA Culture of Goodwill course this winter, the Goal 2 team, in conjunction with the ALA NHQ communications division, developed Goodwill Gail, and advice column that helps ALA members deal with conflict within the Auxiliary. Do you need some advice on how to approach conflict? Send your questions to pr@alaforveterans.org. That's pr@alaforveterans.org with the subject line of Goodwill Gail.

Goodwill Gail can be found in the ALA blog and it is also posted on the ALA NHQ Facebook page.

Janet, what else has Goal 2 accomplished this year?

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you, Stephanie.

Do you know someone in your unit, district or department who always speaks well of the organization and encourages others to learn about the ALA?

Do you know someone who is respected among other members for her knowledge about the ALA and is well versed in its programs, purposes and policies? Someone who is sought after for her opinions and recommendations, communicates effectively and is a good listener. Someone who accepts the ideas of others and is able to adapt without conflict.

If you do, then you know the perfect person to nominate for the Goodwill Ambassador award. Anyone can nominate any member or nominate yourself. Just write a 500-word or less narrative describing how the person exhibits the characteristics and qualities of a Goodwill ambassador. Submit the narrative to the unit of the person being nominated. Units will choose one winner to be sent to the department. Departments will judge the entries and send their winning entry to the divisional vice president. Five Goodwill Ambassador award winners, one from each division, will be recognized at next year's national convention. But most importantly, recognizing goodwill at all levels of the organization will help us to retain members and encourage more individuals to seek leadership roles.

Maybe each department can consider awarding their own Goodwill Ambassador award to the department winner and recognize her at the department convention. Maybe units can have their own award.

You know, earlier we talked about what is a brand. Maybe the better question is who is a brand. Think of the ALA brand as a person. From appearance to personality and everything in between, our brand persona is one that others will evaluate and judge before they choose to join, renew membership, volunteer or donate.

That is why Goal 2 is so important. How we conduct ourselves at all times really matters.

Goal 1. Enhance membership strength. Strategy B is centered enhancing diversity. The team actively searches for stories about members who represent diversity in the ALA. They then work with the communications department to publish these members' stories in a diversity blog series.

I would like to share -- first share with you a blog that posted on June 18th on our website entitled "ALA Leader is Appreciated for Her Capabilities Not Judged on Her Disability".

Great leadership has no specific shape, form or face. In fact, greatness in leadership and in other areas can be inside each and every one of us. But how would we know if there's greatness in a person if we're prejudging that person based on stereotypes and general misconceptions often associated with someone who is different from us?

Meet Marion Rocha-Carlos, president of ALA Unit 211 in Lompoc, California. Marion is also a past Department of California District 16 president and has served on the department ways and means committee since 2013.

Marion is a 40-year old lifelong ALA member. She's known for selflessly giving for all to every ALA mission-based action she takes.

Marion has cerebral palsy with dystonia and has a speech impediment which can sometimes make it difficult to understand her. But thankfully, none of that mattered to her fellow unit members and others who

encouraged her to pursue leadership roles. It didn't matter then or now and here's why.

Marion and her fellow unit members share many of the things that unite them as ALA members including a strong calling to honor and help veterans, mentor our youth and promote patriotism and good citizenship.

If we are narrow-minded and closed off to women from various backgrounds who qualify for membership, it would be our loss. We would probably miss out on having more terrific members and leaders such as Marion. Imagine if Unit 211 had predetermined that Marion had no worth to the ALA or to those we serve. Thankfully, that didn't happen. When ALA members look at Marion, they see the person she is and her capabilities. Marion is so much more than the physical challenges she faces. And we should all be proud to have her as a member and a leader.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: The second blog is about Margaret (Margie) Erskine, an Alaskan Inupiaq native, also known as the Inuit tribe. A few years ago, Unit 230 in Spring Lake, North Carolina experienced substantial membership inactivity. Marge grew concerned about what that meant for the future of Unit 230 and for fulfilling the ALA's mission. She didn't want to see the unit fall by the wayside. So she did something about the situation.

With the help of her husband, American Legion member Mark, the Erskines visited the inactive ALA members and asked each of them to return to the unit. She told them if they wanted to keep the unit and keep helping our veterans, they needed people to come to the unit meetings and get it going again. She managed to get 10 members to come back. That took nine months.

But she didn't stop at face-to-face home visits. She made phone calls, put out newsletters, sent out emails. At the same time, Marge attempted to recruit new members. Stocked with ALA pamphlets and other informational items, she would set up booths at various community events and talk to everyone she could about the American Legion Auxiliary, who we are, what we do and why we matter. She had some success with recruiting.

"Even though I look different and I say things differently than the people here in North Carolina, they still listened to me."

All of this happened about three years ago. Unit 230 has been back on its feet for a while now and has many noteworthy achievements. With much pride, Margie, now president of Unit 230, shared the news about the unit following this year's convention of the Department of North Carolina. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 230's membership continues to reach its goal. For the 2017/2018 fiscal year, we received a certificate of appreciation for 116% membership goal.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Take a cue from ALA member Margie. Build ways to retain members. Perhaps you, too, can bring inactive members back into the fold. Find out why fellow members have become inactive and see if those issues can be resolved. If so, address the issues and then let the inactive members know they're welcome to return to your unit if they still want to serve.

Sometimes it takes face-to-face visits, phone calls, newsletters and emails. Communication within your unit can work wonders. Keep members engaged in mission-based activities and outreach and also find ways to recruit new members making sure that women eligible for membership understand and feel that they are welcome in the American Legion Auxiliary.

The strategic planning groups have been working hard to give you the tools, information and training you need. Now it is up to you to put them to good use.

Madam President, you told me that during your travels this year, you have seen positive changes in the attitude and conduct of our members and that you feel this is a direct result of our strategic planning initiatives. Members are working the mission and having fun doing it. Would you like to share some of these stories?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I would love to.

In traveling around, I find that periodically, people come up and they give me unsolicited comments, things I'm just not expecting. And it has shown me that the strategic planning is really beginning to make a difference because members said they feel they now have permission to change their meeting structure. They said they could have shorter meetings, they can have service projects and they can have fun at a meeting. And they're pretty excited about that. And it's a wonderful way to keep members interested in programs and serving veterans, military and their families.

And the second place I was -- it was an unsolicited comment also -- is that understanding the difference between governance and management. I think we've been working on that for two or three years now. And that's helping with role clarification for departments between officers, volunteers and staff. And once we define those roles for governance and management, all the groups can work together for the good of the organization. No one is stepping on anyone's toes. Everyone knows what's expected. And it's been really eye opening to see that happening.

So thank you very much for engaging in strategic planning and enjoying using us.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, we have no resolution this year since we're not asking for additional money to fund strategic planning. But we still want everyone to affirm their own personal commitment to dedicate the time, talent and resources to accomplishing the five goals of the strategic plan.

So with your permission, and since we are in Minnesota, will everyone who is committed to helping us accomplish the five goals, at the count of three, shout out a loud "You betcha". One, two, three.

VOICES: You betcha.

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, that concludes my platform remarks.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you very much.

Now have you ever taken a better pledge than that?

Hopefully you noticed that there were door hangers placed on your seats this morning. Their creation was inspired by part by an Ohio Auxiliary

unit and they were featured in our next video. If you're ALA proud of the American flag like I am, you're going to love this video. So let's take a look.

(Video played.)

NARRATOR: Welcome to Willoughby, Ohio, a small quiet friendly town near Cleveland. At their historic downtown diner, you'll find jukeboxes at the counter. And right down the street, a good old-fashioned barber shop. American flags are everywhere sitting because Willoughby even has their own custom flag store.

Willoughby is home to NASA astronaut, Gregory Harbaugh, female racing pioneer, Lyn St. James, comedian Tim Conway and Palmer-Roberts American Legion Post and Auxiliary Unit 214.

Unit 214 is an active group of members who have a history of innovative projects including a Rock the Walk event, raising money for the Ohio Veterans Home, recognition dinners for first responders. Unit 214 even has their own weekly radio program.

But there is one activity that's as easy as an afternoon stroll. It's their I Spy Americanism program.

"MS. SETLOCK: It's a simple program that doesn't require a lot of volunteers. And we have a lot of fun."

"MS. ZAYAKOSKY: We wanted to recognize our neighbors for flying the flag. So we just walked up and knocked on the door and handed them a thank you certificate."

NARRATOR: And they present the residents with a certificate and membership application after some neighborly conversation and introductions.

"It was a pleasure being recognized for something I fly on a regular basis. I do the flag every day. And it was a pleasure meeting American Legion and the Auxiliary people."

NARRATOR: Residents are also encouraged to visit the Post home and attend upcoming events.

In cases where no one is home, a thank you for flying the flag door hanger is left on the doorknob along with a membership application.

"MS. WOERNER: The I Spy Americanism program is a great combination of Americanism, membership and public relations."

NARRATOR: And American Legion family members are involved, too.

"MR. FRATINO: This has been a great way for our American Legion family to work together to accomplish a common goal."

"MR. WOERNER: It's been a fun way to work with the American Legion Auxiliary members and a great way to work with the American Legion family."

NARRATOR: And the Legion family members involved really enjoy the program.

"MS. FRATINO: Besides getting our exercising steps in, we have the opportunity of meeting our community members who share their patriotism and Americanism by flying their flags. It makes me so proud to be part of this great city of Willoughby."

NARRATOR: And the mayor of Willoughby is excited about the program, too.

“MAYOR FIALA: I think it’s wonderful that the American Legion family is recognizing homeowners who are proudly displaying our American flag. First, it encourages others to do the same thing. But more importantly, it’s wonderful to drive through our great city every day and see the American flag proudly flying.”

NARRATOR: If your unit is interested in initiating your own I Spy Americanism program, ALA national headquarters has new door hangers available. Visit www.alaforveterans.org and log into the Members Only section to download your free door hangers today.

(End of video.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please welcome representatives from Unit 214 Willoughby, Ohio, Diane Woerner, Sue Fratino, Michele Zayakosky and Martha Setlock.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: What a great way to get the entire Legion family involved. It’s so simple and yet very effective.

Well, with so many wonderful inspirational ideas this year, our membership committee went above and beyond to enhance member strength. To give us more insight into what that program involves, please welcome national membership committee chairman, Donna Ray.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. RAY: National President Diane, good morning.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning.

MS. RAY: I want to start off by saying thank you to and acknowledging the wonderful committee members I have worked side by side with this year. They have gone above and beyond keeping the lines of communication and goodwill open with department chairmen and presidents.

Our team wanted to focus on Goal 1, enhancing membership, and sharing and utilizing the tools available to us. The option to renew or join online continues to grow in popularity and we’ve seen steady increases on online renewals and joins. And more units across the nation are subscribing to ALAMIS, access a tool that has helped departments and units better organize themselves and increase access to the data that everyone can use to help improve the member experience.

Another such tool we use to promote our membership objectives this year, the awards we offer for those that excel in recruiting. There were 311 individual members who recruited or rejoined at least five members and earned a lovely American Legion Auxiliary branded insulated tote.

And an additional 29 that required 25 or more members and earned the Silver Brigade award.

(Music played in background.)

MS. RAY: If any of those Silver Brigade winners are here today, I’d like them to please stand for a moment so we can recognize their extraordinary efforts while we watch the screens.

(Music played in background.)

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Thank you, Silver Brigade.

More good news is we've had 36 new charters and 18 renewed charters so far this year. These are great achievements.

In reading all the department reports this year, I see that so many worked very hard to engage with their units to encourage and support them in their goals. There were some really creative reports telling of inspirational and creative methods of supporting districts, units and members.

When we asked what led to Arizona reaching their goal this year, they reported that it was good old team work. They took a family approach.

It started at the top with the ALA department president and Legion commander who happen to be husband and wife, the Sons of the American Legion detachment commander presenting a united front. They created a Legion family competition promoting events held outside of the Post home. A traveling award was given based on how many were recruited from each group, the ALA, the Legion and the Sons of the American Legion at those events.

It encouraged creative new outreach ideas and our members stepped up with Legion families branding themselves and recruiting all sorts of venues.

Florida conveyed the same secret to success stressing the importance of working together as a Legion family. Their ALA president, Legion commander and the Sons of the American Legion detachment commander, known as the Free Amigos, traveled together all over the state leading by example.

The commander's goal this year was to visit every single post in the state. And at each stop, he and the ALA department president and the Sons detachment commander, who also happen to be husband and wife, encouraged Legionnaires to sign up their female family members. ALA leaders say this definitely led to an increase in Auxiliary membership this year.

We learned that Rhode Island's department membership chairman -- Rhode Island, are you here? -- actively encouraged units to reach out to former members and they had good success in regaining some of those members. And their southern unit had some go-getters that actively went out into the community to network with other local organizations to both share resources and solicit new members. And they had a push to hold membership events and many different local events offsite and got new members that way also. That seems to be a theme for the departments that met membership goal this year.

Also a note. Several units in Colorado took the spirit of goodwill to a whole new level.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: When Unit 58 and 17 saw the devastation from the hurricanes in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands, they contacted ALA national headquarters to see if they could help by paying the dues of their sister ALA members.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: They did so not only to ensure their memberships didn't lapse during this tough time but to make sure they were current so they could apply for AEF grants.

Members of the U.S. Virgin Islands sent this lovely thank you gift in appreciation.

Puerto Rico reports that between this kind of compassionate member-to-member support and their own persistent communication with their units, they achieved their goal this year and then some.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And there was a Department of Massachusetts who held a ceremony where they honored every member with 50 or more continuous years of ALA membership with a special certificate.

They have a total of 230 members that collectively accumulated 13,517 continuous years.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Here is a picture of a few of them holding their certificates. What a wonderful example of how to make membership meaningful.

There were so many wonderful ideas and reports that inspired me and my team and which we hope planted ideas that will grow and spread beyond just this membership year. Finding ways to share the tools and information with all units and members should continue to be a focus. And this team reported on and led some wonderful ways to do it.

Madam National President Diane, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Donna.

MS. RAY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Donna.

Through leadership, you'll plant the seeds of success and growth will come. That was the goal of a leadership committee this past year and they were able to achieve good results. For more information about that process, please welcome the national leadership committee chairman, Norma Tramm.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. TRAMM: Madam President Diane, Jack Welsh said, "Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."

The booklet, "Passport to Volunteers", is a tool developed by the Kansas Centennial Strategic Planning committee. The purpose of the booklet

--

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Yeah. Great.

The purpose of the booklet and accompanying kit is to help members gain knowledge on the various programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and become an active and more engaged member. Each program has a page with concise information and ideas on how to become involved. They have included a place to record activities of the members and also a place to write down contact and other information specific to each member.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary is in the front and also includes our mission and vision statements on the back pages.

The booklet has a 13-month calendar of events with reminders such as wear red on Fridays. The booklet includes room to add unit activity summary.

Over 600 booklets and kits were retained by members as a resource to become more active and enable better reporting. Thumbs up, Kansas, for a great idea.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: It was so great that Louisiana and California have adopted the concept with inquiries from other departments as well. Good job.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Has your unit or department ever encountered a situation that prevented success? Indiana department leadership chairman, Lisa Lipwork (phonetic), called these roadblocks. And she had a workshop entitled “Overcoming Roadblocks”. The question posed to the members in attendance: What obstacles are keeping you or us from being an active and successful unit? Members would shout out some of the challenges in their units such as cliques, fear of change, moms with younger children, being a new member, not sharing paperwork or information, the know-it-all member, too many programs, the meeting that happened either before or after the actual scheduled meeting. I’m sure that you can come up with others of your own.

Well, these obstacles were then written on orange and white construction cones and placed around the room. Then it was time for problem solving as each cone, or challenge, was addressed. The group would come up with some suggestions to overcome the obstacles facing the unit. Sometimes all it takes is the fact that your challenge is addressed and confirmed by others to helping solving the problem and eliminating the roadblock to having a successful unit.

Thanks, Indiana, for sharing your idea.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: The ALA Academy was a strong focus for our leadership this year. We’re so excited about all the courses that are available: five at this time with more to come as you heard earlier. If you’ve not had an opportunity to go online, I suggest that you put that on your To Do list. When you checked out the e-bulletins this past year, you found information on how to spread the word about the ALA Academy in September, “Did You Know” in February, to gain knowledge from the ALA Academy and, in June, the “In the Know” e-bulletin, a description of the available ALA Academy courses.

The division chairman spread the word to the departments and the departments shared information with our members. Our members liked the fact that they could take the course 24/7 at their convenience. This is such a great help to our members that are busy and unable to attend training sessions.

Some departments had laptops at their training sessions to assist members to log in and get started with the ALA Academy courses. They also provided training booklets on how to access the ALA Academy with instruction to return to their units and assist others to log on to the site.

The ALA Academy is a consistent tool that can train our future leaders. Thanks to all of you who have taken the courses.

If you don't have time to take a course in its entirety, you can start a course and it will let you return where you left off. Remember, it's open 24/7 so anytime is a good time to gain information from the ALA Academy.

Through leadership, you will plant the seeds of success and growth will come providing strength for the American Legion Auxiliary for the next 100 years.

Madam President Diane, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Norma.

Strengthening our communities is something the American Legion Auxiliary members strive for each and every day. This year member activity increased through events and fundraisers. Please welcome Beth McGinn, national community service committee chairman, to tell us more about how our members contributed to their communities.

(Music played in background.)

MS. MCGINN: Madam National President Diane, what better way to showcase how proud of who we are as American Legion Auxiliary members and what we do than to sing our praises in our local communities not only on national days of service but throughout the year.

Units reported starting the year commemorating the 9/11 national day of service and remembrance by attending Post ceremonies, hosting dinners and candlelight vigils. ALA members, community groups and organizations came together in remembrance in a variety of ways. Several beautification projects of Post homes and grounds were made possible with grants from the national American Legion Auxiliary and the Corporation for National Community Service.

It was a proud day for Unit 146 in Landis, North Carolina, who used their grant money to share the importance of community service with over 600 students, school staff, community leaders and local emergency personnel during an assembly. Students made 600 thank you cards and gift bags for the emergency personnel and their community.

Their project spanned a number of days after the school presentation as they delivered the gift bags to neighboring police and firemen. Way to go.

(Applause.)

MS. MGINN: Members honored veterans on Veterans Day by organizing dinners, preparing and distributing food baskets and visiting their local Veterans Home to honor them for their service.

Unit 275 in Glenarden, Maryland, held a Thanksgiving basket food drive from October through November with the generous donations received, they were able to provide 32 families with a complete Thanksgiving dinner meal. Way to go.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: Many of the ALA units also reported handing out food and gift baskets during the holidays to those in need and to military families. You should be so proud of the places we've been and the things that we have done in our communities. From honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his birthday assembling baskets for new military moms to gifts of every day items to local homeless shelters, cleaning up roads through the Adopt-A-Highway program and manning telephone banks for public broadcasting

stations. Our members even planted flowers and whiskey barrels at Cater Stadium in Shelby, North Carolina for the enjoyment of fans attending the American Legion baseball World Series that was held this month. And on a personal note, speaking of the American Legion baseball World Series, way to go, Delaware Post 1 champions.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: Job well done by unit 82 in Shelby who partnered with Lowes for donations of plants and materials.

We should be so full of pride for all that our ALA members are doing to accomplish the mission of mutual helpfulness through the activities that are engaging the community and their Post families.

Out of the many reports received, here is one story that exemplified to me why we do what we do and the impact our service has on others. Meet our own World War I Flying Ace Beck and his ALA human, unit and district 7 president, Kathy Jo Zorens (phonetic) from Russell D. Williams 471 in Portsmouth, Ohio.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: Together, this handsome service dog and his mom have amassed an amazing 800 hours over seven years of service volunteering at library story times, attending Girl Scout and Boy Scout jamborees and regularly spending time with autistic and handicapped children. Beck has also taught dog safety at local head start and preschool locations as well as visiting several nursing homes to spread cheer and goodwill.

Beck is the first canine partner's dog to earn the distinguished therapy dog medallion in the state of Ohio.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: And he was featured in their newsletter for his achievement. Thank you, Beck and Kathy Jo, for making the world a better place.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: The community service program has had a great year showcasing their accomplishments and fostering a culture of goodwill and promoting the brand in many traditional and unique ways. I am so proud to be a part of this team. Always remember this. Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year. But when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

Madam National President Diane, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Beth.

Would Teresa Isensee from the Department of Wisconsin please come to the podium and present the National President's scrapbook.

(Applause.)

MS. ISENSEE: Madam President, what adventures you've had this year. How many miles you traveled and the fun and stories that you basically are going to have to give. Very few departments did actually send me any pictures of your travels so most of everything that I have is from either

Facebook or Twitter that I could find. But I'm hoping by giving my email address today that I will get some more pictures for you.

So you can email me additional pictures from the national president's visits to your department at tisensee2173@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: One more time.

MS. ISENSEE: One more time. t -- Isensee --
tisensee2173@gmail.com.

Now the scrapbook may look a little bit small but inside contains --
(Laughter.)

MS. ISENSEE: -- contains several pictures that I have on the drives for you.

Madam National President, thank you for this appointment and enjoy.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you so much, Teresa.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: This is the Reader's Digest condensed version.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I will say that sometimes I look through the pictures that I have of when I was in your departments and flipping through them on the computer is sort of fun. You know, you just sit back and look at them. So thank you very much.

And please also introduce the members of the very hardworking resolutions committee: Ann Crawford, chairman; Lauren Lloyd, vice chairman; and Joyce Endres, member.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. CRAWFORD: Madam National President, members and guests, the Pre-Convention Resolutions Committee met on Saturday, August 25th at the appointed time after the Credentials and Rules Committee. Past National President, Desiree Stoy represented the national organization and Professional Parliamentarian Chris Dickey was in attendance. She offered clarification and professional direction.

Madam President, we have one resolution and one courtesy resolution.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please present the resolution.

MS. CRAWFORD: WHEREAS, in the 2019-2020 administrative year, we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary; and

WHEREAS, in years past, the national convention was open with a parade of department colors; and

WHEREAS, the display of the department colors is an impressive sight and shows pride in our departments;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the convention delegates of the American Legion Auxiliary, during its 98th national convention held August 27th through the 29th, 2018, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that the tradition of beginning the national convention with a parade of department colors resume for the 2019-2020 national conventions in honor of our 100th anniversary.

The Pre-Convention Resolutions Committee recommends that the resolutions be amended by striking out the words “the 2019” and inserting the words “only the” so the “Resolved” clause would then read:

“RESOLVED, by the convention delegates of the American Legion Auxiliary during its 98th national convention held August 27th through the 29th, 2018, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that the tradition of beginning the national convention with a parade of department colors resume for only the 2020 national convention in honor of our 100th anniversary.”

Madam President, on behalf of the Resolutions Committee, I move the adoption of the resolution as just read with the amendment.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The question is on the adoption of the resolution as just read with the amendment. So the Resolutions Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the resolution be adopted with the amendment. The pending question then is on the motion to amend the resolution.

Is there discussion on the motion to amend by striking out the words “the 2019” and inserting the words “only the”?

Are you ready for the question?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Those in favor of the amendments to the resolution, please press the number 1 key on your voting keypad; those opposed, please press number 2.

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Voting is now closed. Please show the results. That motion carries.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The affirmative has it and the amendment to the resolution is adopted.

The question is now on the adoption of the resolution as amended. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for that question?

Those in favor of the resolution, please press the number 1 key on your voting keypad; those opposed, please press the number 2 key. Please vote.

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: That’s like having the Keystone Pops behind me.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please show us the results.

The affirmative has it and the resolution, as amended, is adopted.

And please go ahead and continue.

MS. CRAWFORD: Madam President, we have a courtesy resolution. The resolution will be read by vice chairman, Lauren Lloyd, and committee member, Joyce Indris.

MS. LLOYD: Hello.

WHEREAS, designated delegates, alternates and guests have gathered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the ALA 98th national convention to hear the accomplishments of the world’s largest patriotic women’s

organization and to show their ALA pride in their membership and pride in our mission outreach; and

WHEREAS, the past national presidents, the national officers, the national chairmen and national committee members have shown their ALA pride by promoting programs, mentoring new leaders and celebrating a year of accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, the national and local convention committees, the national headquarters staff, convention center staff, city of Minneapolis and the members of the Department of Minnesota have extended a warm hand of hospitality to all of us; and

WHEREAS, multiple representatives whose lives were affected by all of our Auxiliary programs have voiced their appreciation for the thousands of hours that were proudly given by our volunteers; and

WHEREAS, we have been honored by many distinguished guests including the American Legion national commander, Denise Rohan, and Sons of the American Legion national commander, Danny Smith; and

MS. ENDRES: WHEREAS, President Diane asked us to support the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation and practice service leadership to show our ALA pride and chaired an inspiring and successful national convention;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this courtesy resolution express our heartfelt appreciation and grateful thanks to all named in this resolution who shared time with us; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to this extraordinary woman, American Legion Auxiliary national president, Diane Duscheck, by giving her a standing ovation demonstrating our love, our support and pride in all her accomplishments along with a unanimous thank you for a job well done.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you very much.

So can I assume with your applause that the courtesy resolution is adopted?

VOICES: Yes.

Joyce. PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Thank you, Ann, Lauren and

report. MS. CRAWFORD: Madam President, this concludes the resolutions

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. CRAWFORD: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Would the national secretary please update us on convention news?

(Music played in background.)

MS. BUCKLER: As you know, the convention has been livestreamed and several people have asked will we be able to see any of the videos after convention is over. How many know the answer?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. BUCKLER: So for the two people who didn't, the videos will remain on the national website. To review them, to see them, you go to the

home page, go to “About”, tab up at the bottom -- yes, hello -- is this the third, fifth, tenth, twentieth day? Sorry. On the home page, go to the “About” button -- tab, go to “Meetings and Events”, find “National Convention” and on the “National Convention” page, you will find the video buttons. And videos from the convention since 2015 are still online and available for viewing. So I know a lot of you wanted to see -- watch the (indiscernible) part again, so you’re able to do that.

For those who are going to be on the national executive committee for 2018/19, the NEC 101 orientation and training will take place at 12:30 in room 208AB. That’s 12:30, room 208AB. And as I understand it, there will be boxed lunches in there for those in case that’s an enticement for you to attend.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: States Dinner. There are still a few tickets available for sale in the ALA staff offices in Hall A. The state’s dinner doors will open tonight at 6:40 p.m. in Hall E.

Installation will begin at 2:00 p.m. in this room.

The post-convention NEC meeting will begin at 8 a.m. tomorrow in room 211AD.

Following installation today, at 3:45 p.m., the 2018-19 newly elected national officers will have a meeting in Hall A at the ALA administrative offices here at the convention center. So the 2018-19 newly elected national officers, please meet at 3:45 p.m. in Hall A. And that is on the lower level.

Coming up tomorrow, on Thursday, the vice president of the United States will be addressing a joint session of the American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary/Sons of the American Legions.

The magnetometers will open at 6 a.m. outside of Hall B right next to the auditorium. And shuttles will start at 6:30 a.m.

Now whenever we have the president or vice president of the United States, you know that things change. So please do not bring outside food or beverage into the convention center tomorrow. Coffee and food will be available for purchase after you go through the magnetometers inside the convention center. Now you can bring your empty water bottles into the facility. And, by the way --

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: I didn’t hear what was said.

VOICES: (Indiscernible).

MS. BUCKLER: Love -- oh -- okay. I think you answered my question. Let me see if -- let me see if I’m picking up on the answer to the question I was going to ask. Did you like them?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. BUCKLER: Well, we’re glad. It was part of your registration fee.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: The vice president --

(Pause.)

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: I’m not taking it personal. I was told to stretch it.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: Yes, people. I was told to stretch it.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: The vice president of the United States will be speaking at -- well, hi.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hi.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: The vice president of the United States will be speaking at approximately 11:30 in Hall B. Now we don't have minute by minute details but for those of you who have been here and done that before, you know that, at some point in time, you won't be able to get into Hall B. So we're recommending that in order to be in place before the secret service decides that they're going to remove you, you might -- try to be there by -- try to there about an hour before. At 45 minutes, you're probably okay but, boy, between -- you know, any time after 45 minutes, my personal experience, you're cutting it close. So a word to the wise on that.

All right. Now at this time, I dismiss the national officers from the stage.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: Oh my, that's already happened.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: And now I have a special introduction. As far back as I can remember, the national president's report has always been done as a video. But for those of you who know National President Diane, well, she's just not a fan of doing things the same way because that's the way they've always been done.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: So Diane approached this administrative year with some new and innovative ideas. And I'm going to do a big pause. How many of you like being greeted each day by a different group of national leaders?

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Is that fun? So it's no surprise that she approached her national president's report with the same creative energy.

Early in the process, Diane decided that she would like to do her report live because she wanted it to be as personal as possible. But don't worry. We will be recording her entire report so there will be a video available after convention.

So at this time, it is my personal privilege to invite to the stage someone with whom it has been a delight to work with all year long, your national president, my national president, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. Thank you.

This is going to be national president going off script. So when I said I wanted to do it live, the comment that I got was, "We can talk about that, Diane."

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So good morning. And what an honor it has been to serve you as national president this year. You have opened your

arms and your hearts to me as I've traveled throughout the departments meeting Legion family members, veterans and active duty military.

You know, we have an incredible Legion family. National staff is an amazing part of our family. This group of individuals has vested interest in how well our organization thrives and I want to sincerely thank them, especially Dubbie, for their hard work to keep the Auxiliary viable and relevant.

I have found staff to be partners in everything that I've done this year working together on huge projects for the good of the organization.

Other incredible family members are the commanders. National Legion Commander Denise Rohan and Sons of the American Legion Commander Danny Smith are dedicated Legion family members both deeply committed to veterans and military.

Today I'd like to tell you the stories of some of the other amazing people that have entered my life. Now I didn't actually have the honor of meeting the first young man who entered my life. And sadly, I never will. My first visit was in the Department of Maine when the remains of First Lieutenant Benjamin Cross were being returned to his hometown of Bethel. He was a 26-year old marine pilot who lost his life in the coral sea off the coast of Australia when his Osprey helicopter crashed last August.

Department President Ann Durost and I were part of a caravan winding through the main countryside. As we passed through towns along the way, entire communities lined up on the streets to pay their respects to a fallen hero. It was uplifting to see first responders on the highway overpasses standing at attention. And school children were clustered under the gas station signs with one hand over their hearts and a flag in another hand. Flashing lights of cars and trucks were parked along the roadside all paying their respects to this hero.

And this is just one of the reasons that we all belong to the Legion family, to support our heroes and their families and to plant the seeds of Americanism in the communities.

And then there are the young champions. Meet Justin Peterson from Wenatchee, Washington.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Ever since Justin did a third grade report on World War II, Justin said he's been taken by the valor of those who served. At age 9, he interviewed 10 World War II veterans and through an extracurricular report, he shared the stories with the community. To date, Justin has raised \$130,000, enough to send 175 World War II veterans on an honor flight to Washington, D.C.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: He just graduated from high school this last summer.

And here's one of the Auxiliary's latest heroes. On June 30th, Faith Petrowski and her family were on their way home from ALA Hoosier Girls State when a vehicle in front of them went off the road --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So a vehicle in front of their car went off the road into a ravine, crashed through a fence and came to rest in a field.

Faith and her parents jumped out of the car, rushed to the scene along with two other good Samaritans. The driver had suffered a massive heart attack. Faith, her father and one of the good Samaritans began rendering first aid and took turns performing CPR for 20 minutes. They helped the EMTs strap the victim to a backboard, carry him out of the field over a fence through a water-filled ravine and got him into the ambulance.

These are just two examples of how important younger generations are to the Legion family.

You know, we always say they're our future. But we can't wait for the future to embrace them and introduce them to the greatness of this organization. We need to extend the hand of learning and mentoring now. The juniors and the young Sons of the American Legion and the youth in our communities need to be given the opportunity to give from the heart with no expectation of payback.

I was in Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, actually, for Pearl Harbor Day, and I met Mr. Sterling Kale, a great example of someone who gave from his heart.

The night before Pearl Harbor Day, I became acquainted with his daughter who gave me a book about Mr. Kale's life. I began reading about the 20-year old pharmacist mate who was stationed at Pearl Harbor when the bombing began. When he noticed the water was on fire, he knew he needed to rescue as many sailors as possible. He dove into the water and began swimming under the flames continually looking up to see where he could surface between the pockets of fire.

Mr. Kale rescued as many of his shipmates as he could but, of course, he couldn't save them all. For the next several weeks, he headed a team that continued to dive into the sunken ships to recover more sailors.

During the remembrance services, I met about a dozen Pearl Harbor survivors and I told Mr. Kale how much I loved the book I had been reading about him that I had just been given. In his 97-year life, looked up at me with a little twinkle and then he goes, what, it didn't put you to sleep?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Our veterans of all ages are a humble and resilient group believing that they just did their job. Anyone would have done the same.

On the heel of meeting this World War II veteran, I learned that our help is needed and I can't think of a more capable group than you to give this task to.

If you or someone you know I related to a service member missing in action or may be able to help identify an MIA, the defense POW-MIA accounting agency in Hawaii would like a relative's DNA sample or a photo of the service member. Please contact them at their website to help them build a library of DNA samples that may assist in identifying recovered remains.

During all the times that I've made this request, only twice has no one approached me later to say my dad is missing, my uncle is missing, my co-worker's cousin is missing. So please pass the word.

As the DPAA works to honor our past, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Endowment works to protect our future. I visited quite a number of homes being used for veterans transitional housing. In one home,

19 men were living under one roof and this shelter was now their home. As I was sitting at the kitchen table having lunch with them, one man turned to me and he said, "You know, I just got out of prison." The veteran went on to say he'd been in a lot of physical pain when he came out of the war. He became addicted to painkillers. He lost his job, his home, his wife, his family. Then he went to jail.

Now he was out of prison and it was time to start over again. Now he's putting his life back together. He was attending some college classes. He was working on holding down a job and accepting responsibility.

As I mentioned in yesterday's video featuring "Home of the Brave", a resourceful Auxiliary unit submitted a grant to the ALA Foundation for purchase of computers, desks, chairs and printers so that veterans in the transitional home could actually search for jobs and submit resumes.

Another unit wanted to make a veteran shelter more like a home. So they submitted a grant for patio furniture and an outdoor grill. Imagine what your group could do to benefit veterans in your own hometown if you also applied for a grant.

As I gaze into that crystal ball of the American Legion Auxiliary's future, monetary resources alone will not sustain our organization. The money means nothing if we don't have passionate members to work that mission. Members who can put aside their differences and work together.

Last year at installation -

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks.

Last year at installation, I talked about the strategic plan, especially Goal number 2, to create an internal culture of goodwill, which ultimately encourages all of us to embrace kindness and respect toward others in order to strengthen our organization, grow and retain membership and enjoy working together.

This past year, I've seen both sides of the goodwill issue. On one hand, I've enjoyed being in departments that are working to share knowledge and information with their members. They're educating their leadership, they're supportive and inclusive and they're having fun doing it.

On the other hand --

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, sure. You're heading already, aren't you?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So on the other hand, I've also witnessed the discord among our Auxiliary members. I've seen how vindictive some members are, their manipulation using the role as leader as an excuse for bossiness and a self-serving attitude of entitlement. This I found very disheartening. We can't look at our neighbor and say if only she would change, this would be a better organization. We need to look in the mirror and be the best person we can possibly be. Each of us is responsible for our own actions and our own attitude. We need to be the change we wish to see in the American Legion Auxiliary.

Please continue your heartfelt service to military, veterans and their families. Be kind to one another. And thank you so much for allowing me to be your servant for this past year.

Thank you very much.

(Standing ovation.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, everyone. Thank you so much.

And so now -- don't get comfortable. We are recessed and we'll return for our installation ceremonies beginning at 2 p.m. in this room.

(Music played in background.)

(Whereupon, the National Convention General Session was recessed until 2 p.m.)

**INSTALLATION OF 2018-2019 NATIONAL OFFICERS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2018**

AUTOMATED RECORDING: -- of Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary. Please welcome your national president, Diane Duscheck. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good afternoon. Did you have a good lunch? Excellent.

Welcome to the installation of Kathy Dungan from the Department of Mississippi as the national president and the national officers and department presidents. It is also a special day for the Department Iowa because Nicole Clapp is going to be installed as our national vice president.

Now before we --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yes.

Before we really get into this, I made a plea to you this morning and I want to tell you the results of it. This morning we were about \$1,000 short out there for the Foundation. Now we are over \$10,000.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you for reaching deep into your pockets. What great things we can do with that money. I'm just in awe. Thank you so much.

So on with this afternoon. Please welcome the installing officer, Past National President Sharon Conatser from the Department of Illinois.

(Music played in background.)

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, National President Diane.

What an exciting day it is here for two departments, the Department of Mississippi and the Department of Iowa. But also for our American Legion Auxiliary as we embark upon a new administration and a wonderful new year.

This is the 99th American Legion Auxiliary national president, Kathy Dungan, and the 2018-19 officers and department presidents who will serve with her and beside her, not for her.

Participants in today's program are sergeant-in-arms, Mary Smith Reed, past department president from the Department of Mississippi. Color bearers for the flag will be Chief Master Sergeant Angela Duncan, U.S. Airforce, past department commander and past department president of Mississippi. The installing chaplain is past national president, Peggy Thomas, from the Department of Virginia. And a reading will be given by past National President Rita Navarrete of the Department of New Mexico.

Members of the audience, I ask that you remain seated as I ask our sergeant-in-arms to bring forward the incoming national vice president, Nicole Clapp, Department of Iowa, escorted by her father, Darrell Paustian.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. CONATSER: And now it's with great pleasure that I ask you to welcome the 2018-2019 National President Kathy Dungan escorted by her son, Christopher, and led by the Department of Mississippi banner.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. CONATSER: Please remain standing for the opening prayer given by Peggy Thomas.

MS. THOMAS: Please bow your heads and join me in prayer.

Dear God, as we begin a new Auxiliary year, help us all to focus on serving our heroes. Guide us to always serve those who are in need with integrity and dignity. Remind us in our actions to treat each other with respect and communicate with truth.

And, Father, please grant President Kathy and her team a year of blessings rich with opportunities to serve others. You have blessed us, O God, with the gift of friendship with Auxiliary members across the nation and the world. We thank You for such a blessing for members and friends who love us, who share our sorrows, who laugh with us in celebration, who bear our pain, who need us as we need them, who weep as we weep, who hold us when words fail, and give us the freedom to be ourselves.

Our Father, we ask that you guide our leaders throughout the coming year of serving our heroes holding them in Your hand. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Peggy.

The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by the light of Kathy's life, her grandchildren, Lauren and Lawson Dungan.

LAUREN AND LAWSON DUNGAN: Attention. We salute the flag.

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 and justice for all.

MS. CONATSER: Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: You may be seated.

We will now have a reading by Past National President Rita Navarreté.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Kathy has asked me to read her favorite poem that has great meaning to her. It is written by Helen Steiner Rice.

“Good morning, God.

“You are ushering another day untouched and freshly new.

“So here I come to ask You, God, if You'll renew me, too.

“Forgive the many errors that I made yesterday and let me try again.

“Dear God, to walk closer in Thy ways but, Father, I am well aware I can't make it on my own.

“So take my hand, hold it tight, for I can't walk alone.

“Amen.”

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, Rita.

Would the newly elected national officers for 2019, please rise to take your oath of office:

The American Legion Auxiliary members, have entrusted you with a great responsibility. You have been elected to provide guidance in the activities of our organization. You will familiarize yourself with the duties of your respective officers. Always remember that the welfare and success of this organization depends upon each of you.

Every Auxiliary member assumes the obligation of preserving the integrity of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary contributing to the aims and purposes of our organization.

Please raise your right hand, repeat after me, giving your name where I give mine.

I, Sharon Conatser, promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office I am about to assume. And I further pledge that I am not a member of and do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.

You may lower your hands and be seated. And would the newly elected department president please rise.

National President Kathy, will you step forward and give the oath of office to these department presidents that will serve with you this year?

MS. DUNGAN: Please raise your right hand and repeat after me giving your name where I give mine:

I, Kathy Dungan, promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office I am about to assume. And I further pledge that I am not a member of and do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.

You may lower your hand.

MS. CONATSER: You, the members of the American Legion Auxiliary, have chosen outstanding leadership to lead us this coming year. I have charged them with a very serious responsibility and I likewise charge you.

Would all members of the American Legion Auxiliary please stand, raise your right hand and repeat after me:

I solemnly promise to renew my pledge of service to the American Legion Auxiliary and to give wholehearted support to these newly elected officers.

Hands down. And our installing chaplain, Past National President Peggy, will offer prayer again.

MS. THOMAS: Please bow your heads and join me in prayer.

Father, as we go forward to begin a new year of serving our heroes, please let us always remember to embrace the Auxiliary values of service not self. Guide us all to work together in harmony and help us to serve with joy as we strive to make life easier for our veterans, our military and their families.

We ask that You bless these newly installed officers. We ask that You guide them throughout the coming year and give them the strength and knowledge to lead this organization, to do the best they possibly can for the veteran and his family and for the children in youth of this country. Be with our troops on foreign soil that daily give us so much for our freedom. We ask this and by holy name, Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

MS. CONATSER: You may be seated.

At this time, we're going to deviate.

As you know, we are an American Legion family. And as you know, we all have busy meetings. But it is my great honor to present the Legionnaire who, if he's elected tomorrow as national commander, will serve

with Kathy this year. Brett Reistad from the Department of Virginia. Let's welcome Brett.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: Presidents Diane and Kathy, past national presidents, distinguished guests and ladies, good afternoon.

VOICES: Good afternoon.

MR. REISTAD: It is definitely a privilege for me to have the opportunity to come before you and address you on this occasion. I want to congratulate you on your choice of leadership for this next year. And in particular, I want to congratulate you on your selection of Kathy Dungan to be my partner for this next year in our family leadership of the American Legion.

I've had the opportunity to meet Kathy and spend time with her and she is a wonderful lady. And I could not have picked a better partner myself. So thank you again.

I'm the only one now in the family trio that has not been elected.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: So I would love to have you present tomorrow. I think somewhere in the 9:00 time frame is when we will have our election and installation that follows.

I also want to let you know before I leave, because we're getting ready to do a walk-through for our event tomorrow, that we will have a function at the Hilton Hotel from 2:00 to 4:00 -- pardon me. Not 2:00. From 4:00 to 6:00 in the evening. And I very much hope that you'll have an opportunity to come by and spend some time with Kathy and myself and Greg Gibbs from the Sons of the American Legion.

Again, thank you so much. I'm looking forward to working with you. I will continue to work as a family. And I think we're going to have a wonderful centennial for the American Legion and I guess followed by another one.

So thank you so much and God speed. Have a great rest of your convention. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: The retiring officers will now transfer their pins to their successors. After the new officers bring greeting, they will proceed back near the table to past national president to receive their ribbon. The retiring officers will come forward, present their newly elected installed 2018-2019 officer. As the outgoing officers return to their seats, National President Diane will express her appreciation for their year of service and present them with their pin.

We will begin with the introduction of the newly elected officers. And it's my honor to present the 2018 national chaplain, Evelyn Espinola.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MS. ESPINOLA: It is my honor to present the 2018-2019 national chaplain, Dr. Deborah Blanch, of the Department of Virginia.

(Applause.)

DR. BLANCH: Good evening. I would like to take a moment to thank the Department of Virginia for their support and their love and each and every one of you that had faith in me. I look forward to serving this

wonderful organization to the best of my ability in the upcoming year. God bless.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Now it's my pleasure to introduce 2018 national historian, Susan Campbell.

(Music played in background.)

MS. CAMPBELL: It is my honor to present the 2018-2019 national historian, Brenda Collins, of the Department of South Carolina.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: Thank you to my department, the Department of South Carolina. I look forward to serving this organization to the best of my abilities.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Now it's time for our division vice presidents. Central Division 2018, Trish Ward.

(Applause.)

MS. WARD: It is my honor to present the 2018-2019 national Central Division vice president Teresa Isensee from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. ISENSEE: Thank you to my department and the Central Division. I look forward to serving our organization to the best of my abilities.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Eastern Division 2018 National Vice President, Karyn Porempski.

(Applause.)

MS. POREMPSKI: It is my honor to present to you the Eastern Division national vice president, Rita Barylski, from the Department of Connecticut.

(Applause.)

MS. BARYLSKI: I would like to thank the Department of Connecticut for their support. I want to thank the Eastern Division for their support. I look forward to serving this organization to the best of my ability and the Eastern Division will be shining their light for our veterans, military and their families.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Northwestern Division 2018, Peggy Miller.

(Applause.)

MS. MILLER: I would like to introduce the Northwestern Division vice president from South Dakota, Barbara Vetter.

(Applause.)

MS. VETTER: Thank you, Peggy.

I'd like to thank my Department of South Dakota for their love and support. Northwestern Division, we are going to have a fantastic year. Stand up and let me hear you. Northwestern Division, where are you?

(Applause.)

MS. VETTER: And I also want to thank my family who was able to be here today, especially my 95-year old World War II veteran, my father, Loren Heidenreich. Can you just stand and wave, Dad?

(Applause.)

MS. VETTER: Love you.

Thank you very much.

MS. CONATSER: Diane Spencer, 2018 Southern Division national vice president.

(Applause.)

MS. SPENCER: It's an honor and a pleasure to introduce our Southern Divisional national vice president, Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood from the Department of Alabama.

(Applause.)

MS. FOCHTMANN-HAYGOOD: From the bottom of my heart-filled heart, I would like to thank my Department of Alabama and I would like to thank the Southern Division.

Southern Division, we have 14 states. We have a chance this year to really rock so this is what we're going to do. So thank you again. I'm going to serve you to the best of my ability.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Western Division, 2018, Mary Michalski.

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: It is my honor to present Janet Romero as the next Western Division national vice president from the Department of New Mexico.

(Applause.)

MS. ROMERO: Thank you. I'd like to take this moment to thank my father for joining the military and providing me this opportunity. I want to thank the Department of New Mexico for believing in me and, Western Division, together we will make a difference and we will serve this organization to the best of our ability.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: National Vice President Nicole Clapp from the Department of Iowa, please come forward along with National President Kathy.

(Music played in background.)

MS. CONATSER: Congratulations to you, Nicole. You will now receive your pin and ribbon from National President Kathy.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: It is my pleasure to introduce National Vice President Nicole Clapp for remarks.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Madam National President Kathy, officers, members and guests, I want to thank each of you for entrusting me to serve as your national American Legion Auxiliary vice president. I am very humbled to have this opportunity to give back to the wonderful organization in which I was raised since I was just 4 years old.

I am so excited to be serving alongside National President Kathy and look forward to assisting her throughout the upcoming year.

As we all know, to be successful, you need a team of supporters. And it all starts with mentors such as past national presidents, national commanders of the Legion and national commanders of the SAL. Would you please stand those in attendance to be recognized?

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Also, we know on a team, I'd now like to recognize my team, my Department of Iowa American Legion family for all your ongoing love and support. Would you please stand?

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Including Cornelius, that is known as my companion. Cornelius T. Sweet Corn representing the tall corn.

The Iowa Standing Tall with Nicole committee has dedicated their time and talent to be enjoying this moment. The committee includes members from the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and the Riders. Thank you for the committee's efforts.

I want to publicly show my appreciation for past National Commander Dave Rehbein and past National President Ann Rehbein for their jointly leading our Iowa team. Please stand, Dave and Ann. I love you and thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: I'm very fortunate to have two departments that have adopted me as one of their own with having close American Legion family friends in Illinois and having lived so many years in Wisconsin. So thank you for joining the Iowa contingent today.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: I also, of course, want to show my appreciation for the entire Central Division. So Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and the rest of the Central Division, please stand so I can say thank you to all of you.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: There are some very special people that I am so honored that they are here sharing this day with me. I would appreciate if they would please stand when I call their names:

You know my best friends are my mom and dad, Jeannie and Darrell Paustian. Love you.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: My aunt and uncle. And those of you that know, I'm a spoiled rotten only kid because I'm not only an only child but I'm an only niece or nephew. And that's my Aunt Shirley and Uncle John from Kansas City, Missouri.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Then I know past national presidents say they have the best past national commander every year. Well, my past national commander, when I was his honorary national junior president 31 years ago -- Mr. Jake Comer and his guest, Florence Publacover (phonetic).

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: We also have other friends from the American Legion family from Massachusetts. And we have Bill and Frances Oxford from North Carolina. Thank you for joining us today.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: It means the world to me that all of you could be here. I would be remiss, though, if I didn't take a moment to say I truly wish past National President Sherri McLaughlin, a fellow Iowan, was here. Wendy, I know your mom is smiling down on us today. Thank you for conducting my endorsement in her memory. I love you.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: I look forward to working with all of the ALA volunteers and the national headquarters staff members and, National President Kathy, as I've always said to you, 'I have your back'. I look forward to following your back to fulfill the mission of our great organization in the spirit of 'Service not Self' by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military and their families.

Thank you everyone and God bless.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Kathy, would you please join me back at the podium? And I would ask that National President Diane come and present you with your pin and ribbon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So, Kathy, we belong to a great organization and have many dedicated members. And there are three wishes that I have for you.

First, you'll be doing much travel by vehicles and airlines. Travel safely.

Second, the Auxiliary has many wonderful members. Lead by example.

And third, our mission is to advocate for veterans, military and their families and to make our communities better places to live. Have a servant's heart.

Wish you the best.

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Kathy, we present this gavel to you for your part of the program. I know you're going to have a wonderful year. And thank you for this honor.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, Sharon.

I want to begin with a quote from an unknown author. "Today I close the door to my past, open the door to my future. Take a deep breath, step through and start a new chapter of my life." And thanks to you all, it will be an awesome chapter.

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary, thank you for putting your trust in me to lead this great organization as national president. I cannot begin to tell you how I feel. What an honor. I am humbled and truly blessed.

Serving as the 99th national president of the American Legion Auxiliary is not only a momentous event in my life but it is a first for the Department of Mississippi. I am --

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: I am the first ever national president from Mississippi. What an honor.

I owe a debt of gratitude to many people. Team Mississippi led by good friend, June Laws, my Mississippi Legion family, my unit, Wesson number 79, and Sharon Langley, unit president, and past National President Linda Boone for helping me with the special project this year. Thank you all.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: A special thanks to past national presidents who have mentored and encouraged me especially my good friend, Peggy Thomas, who has always been there for me. Thank you, Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, for seeing something in me and giving me my first national chairmanship. And thank you, Sharon Conatser, for the confidence you have in me in giving me the Children in Youth appointment.

Friends on stage, thank you for participating in and making my installation ceremony so special.

Would my Mississippi Legion family please stand? Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Would the Southern Division please stand and join Mississippi?

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you all for your support and love. You may be seated.

Of course, I would not be here today had I not had the love and support from my family. I love you all very much.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: The national theme this year is "Serving Our Heroes". Veterans, servicemen, servicewomen, their families and our youth are my heroes as I am sure they are yours. It is what we do in this organization. This year, I have chosen to focus on female veterans bringing to light the challenges and issues women veterans face. This will also be the national president's special project.

Serving our veterans, active duty military and their families are our mission. What a great way to work our mission than by focusing on the issues veterans face, especially women veteran issues, such as homelessness, PTSD, suicide, lack of adequate child care, military sexual trauma and much, much more. In a few minutes, we will hear from Mr. Stephen Peck, president and CEO of U.S. Vets Incorporated, a veteran nonprofit organization, whom I have asked to speak about these challenges and issues and give you some statistics.

We will be using the Veterans Project Fund, a special fund of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, to raise money for the National President's special project. I encourage departments and units to seek opportunities that help women veterans and apply for those grants offered

through the Veterans Project Fund. In turn, we will be promoting the Foundation and seeking donations to fund the special project.

I hope by focusing on women veterans we will recruit new members and maximize what we do especially for women veterans. It will say we care. We care about homelessness, suicide prevention, housing needs, their health and their families. The American Legion Auxiliary can make a substantial impact across the country for all of our women veterans. Some ways to help are provide temporary assistance in an effort to keep them from becoming homeless, help locate affordable housing and affordable child care, ask them what they need. It may be as simple as an outfit for a job interview. You can adopt the Women's Wing with your VA medical facility or focus on Women at Stand Downs.

Now I would like to ask all women veterans to please stand and let us say thank you for your service. Would you please stand?

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: In our Preamble to our Constitution, it says, "to promote peace and goodwill". I am excited to announce that in an effort to promote goodwill among our members, we have established a new award this year, the National Goodwill Ambassador award. Five deserving members, one from each division, who exhibit goodwill, promote the Auxiliary's ideals and who volunteer their time and talents serving veterans will be selected. These five ladies will be our guests at National Convention 2019. Selection will begin at the unit level so all can be involved. Check this year's annual supplement to the action plan for further details.

Also, new this year, we are offering some individualized help to departments that are facing or near a crisis. This is a limited opportunity. But we are committed to helping those departments that are in need. All you do is ask. Requests will be prioritized based on the number of requests and the level of commitment from the department. Assistance will be customized according to your request and a past national president will be assigned as a point of contact. Remember, just ask.

Due to lack of participation in the current National President's Award for Excellence, we are making a change this year. Currently, the National President's Award for Excellence is given to one department and five units. We will be offering awards in 12 of our programs, 11 awards for excellence will be offered as a unit award, and one award for excellence will be offered as a department award in membership. These are very prestigious awards and I hope with the change, more departments and units will apply. Now is the time to showcase the work you do for our heroes.

Again, we will have six Mission Trainings and the national Junior meetings will be held simultaneously with Mission Training. We know without members, we won't have an organization. And without an organization, we cannot work the mission of caring for our veterans. And to be recognized as the go-to organization to help veterans, we need to publicize which means public relations. Mission Training this year will go back to those three important key factors: membership, our mission and getting the

word out. We must value each Auxiliary member and their contribution so that they will continue to be a member of this great organization.

At the current rate, we are losing approximately 40 percent of the members within three years of their joining. Ideally, if we focus on membership, not necessarily numbers but the valued member, making them feel welcome and be open to their ideas of working the mission, we will retain those members. Valuing our members and promoting goodwill begins with you. And if we all do this, our membership will grow. Then we can do more to care for our heroes.

Of course, we need to publicize our events and stories. So I am asking that in the social media, you use #ala99 to promote your events. This is your 99 of the American Legion Auxiliary. And I want to see all, and I mean all, of the awesome work you do posted on social media.

I invite everyone to come to the beautiful gulf coast in Gulfport, Mississippi for my homecoming to be held October 25th through 27th. Team Mississippi has planned some great events. We look forward to visiting --

I need some water.

(Pause.)

I apologize. I was almost through.

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNGAN: We look forward to you visiting with us and letting us show you our Mississippi hospitality.

And finally, I am looking forward to visiting your department and seeing firsthand the awesome work you do.

I wish you an exciting and successful year as we all work the mission by serving our heroes.

God bless you all.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: I would like to now introduce my family. If they would come. I have my son, Christopher, his beautiful wife, Megan, and my two grandchildren, Lauren and the little pistol, Lawson.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: My grandchildren are the light of my life. My husband had every intention of being here, planned to be here. On Monday, he had a kidney stone, ended up in the hospital, back to emergency again. He's on pain medicine and could not travel. But hopefully he's watching. So

--

Now my son would like to say a little bit.

MR. DUNGAN: I just want to say, Mama, we're so proud of you. We love and support you and we wish you the best of year.

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, babe.

MR. DUNGAN: Love you.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: We never know what he's going to do.

(Laughter.)

MS. DUNGAN: I would like to introduce some people that are sitting here on stage with me. If you will stand when I call your name.

Member of the steering committee, Team Mississippi, Rose Blanchard, and committee chair, June Laws. Please stand.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: My personal pages are Rose Blanchard and Dee Starkey.

Sergeant-at-arms is Mary Smith Reed.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: I would like to bring June Laws, my steering committee campaign committee chairman forward. She has done an awesome job and I love her dearly. She is a great friend and she is going to introduce some more people.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, June.

MS. LAWS: Thank you, Madam President. Doesn't that sound good?

(Laughter.)

MS. LAWS: Good afternoon. It's been a long day but a wonderful day, hasn't it? Mississippi is so proud. Seated on stage today representing the Department of Mississippi are some very special guests of Kathy's who would like to make a few remarks. Pat Baughman, Department Commander, and Tina Hurst, Department President.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MR. BAUGHMAN: Good afternoon.

VOICES: Good afternoon.

MR. BAUGHMAN: I'm Pat Baughman, the Department of Mississippi commander.

(Applause.)

MR. BAUGHMAN: It's my honor to stand before you today and tell you a little about our national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. She had worked her way over the years through the unit, district and department levels where she served as department president in 2002 to 2003. She then continued to work for the veterans, not only in the state of Mississippi but nationwide serving on various committees at the national level to finally serving as our national president during the 2018-2019 year.

I am proud to announce that the American Legion Department of Mississippi wholeheartedly supports President Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

MS. HURST: Good afternoon. Tina Hurst, president, Department of Mississippi.

Commander Baughman is giving you some statistics. I'd like to tell you a little bit more about the person.

She's a mentor. One who reaches out to bring new members together with others and encourage the transfer of knowledge.

She's a peacemaker who puts the Auxiliary above herself and encourages peaceful discussions when tempers sometimes flare.

She's an advocate whose heart for veterans inspires us all to work to improve the lives of veterans everywhere.

She's a champion for those who suffer in silence from the ravages of war.

But most important, to the Department of Mississippi, she's our first national president.

Congratulations, Kathy.

(Applause.)

MS. HURST: And now, in the words of past department president, Ms. Mary Laws -- Ms. Mary, would you please?

VOICES: (Indiscernible).

(Applause.)

MS. LAWS: Thank you, Commander, and President Tina.

Next to make remarks are the American Legion NEC, Robert Gosa, and Alternate NEC, Angie Duncan.

Our NEC --

(Music played in background.)

MS. LAWS: I'm sorry. Our NEC is here but she had an accident. Anita, we'll still think about you, Darling.

MR. GOSA: Good afternoon, my lovely ladies.

VOICES: Good afternoon.

MR. GOSA: I found out I was a smoothie up here.

(Laughter.)

MR. GOSA: And I found out there were some federal Legionnaires in the crowd and some older gentlemen. So I'm going to give you a hearty "Howdy, y'all".

VOICES: Howdy, y'all.

MR. GOSA: It's an honor for me to be here this afternoon. Kathy, I remember a cold winter morning and afternoon in Washington, D.C. Seeing you out with the Poppies all by yourself in a long haul. And I sat there a long time and we talked about where you were going. And it's an honor for me to be here because you were making Mississippi great. Okay?

Also, we'd like to congratulate you, a fine lady, who the Department of Mississippi has come to love you for the work that you've done in the Auxiliary. And I'm sure that all of you people, if given the opportunity, will come to love you as we have. And without anything to say -- because they told me to have a few words. When I started, I had 12 pages.

(Laughter.)

MR. GOSA: And every time somebody would read it, they'd say you got too many.

But I knew it would take lots of words what we really want to say. Congratulations to you. Congratulations from the Department of Mississippi, Kathy.

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you.

MS. GOSA: And wish you a well year this year. Thank you.

MS. DUNCAN: Good afternoon. I am Angie Duncan, the alternate NEC for the Department of Mississippi.

And it is our pleasure to have Ms. -- or President Kathy serve as our national president this year. We will continue to stand with her as she serves

this great organization. You already know she follows our motto of “Service not Self” and we will continue to do that with her.

President Kathy, congratulations and I look forward to serving with you this year.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. LAWS: Thank you, Robert and Angie.

Representing Mississippi Delta Post 1776 is a special friend of Kathy’s and he would like to make a few remarks. Terence Polk, post commander.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MR. POLK: Greetings from the American Legion Mississippi Delta Post number 1776 of Cleveland, Mississippi.

I am Commander Terence Polk and department sergeant-at-arms of Mississippi.

On behalf of Post 1776 adjutant, Joe Kirsch, past department commander and department oratorical chairman, who could not be here today because of health reasons, but he’s doing fine. I know that he and his wife, Ms. Barbara, is watching.

I just want to say thank you, Ms. Kathy, for the opportunity to help us fulfill our mission and purpose. Kathy Dungan has been a loyal supporter of our oratorical program for many years volunteering at every opportunity. In the past 12 years, she has been a judge for our state final five times and twice for area level contests. She even volunteered this year to work at the state final when she was ineligible to judge and then she volunteered to be a judge at the national finals in Indianapolis last April while serving as your national vice president.

Kathy sets the example of your motto, “Service not Self”. Every department will be blessed to have someone like her. We are so proud of Ms. Kathy and the esteem she has brought to Mississippi. We are renaming our past national commander, James P. Dean Magnolia Girls State Scholarships to the National President Kathy C. Dungan Magnolia Girls State Scholarships in her honor.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. LAWS: Thank you, Terence.

Now would all the members of the Department of Mississippi please rise again?

Kathy, the Department of Mississippi supports you and offers you their very best for a successful year. Kathy -- Mississippi is proud to have Kathy represent us on the national level. We are honored that she is the first national president from our great state. We wish her a wonderful year as she travels promoting our mission of serving our heroes.

Team Mississippi would like to invite everyone to Kathy’s homecoming that will be held on the beautiful gulf coast in Gulfport, Mississippi on October 25th through the 27th. We’ve placed brochures on your seats for the homecoming and I expect to see you all there.

Thank you. Go, Team Mississippi.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Way to go, Team Mississippi.

Please welcome past National President Linda Boone. She's here to introduce our special guest and our next speaker.

Linda?

(Music played in background.)

MS. BOONE: National President Kathy has given me the distinct privilege today to introduce my good friend of 25 plus years, Steve Peck, president and CEO of U.S. Vets.

Steve is a leader in the national movement to eliminate homelessness among American veterans. He served as a lieutenant in the First Marine division in the Vietnam war near Da Nang from 1969 to 1970.

One of my friends had served with Steve in Vietnam and connected us since I was about to become national president as we were searching for a focus area for the organization. That connection changed my life.

Steve was responsible for educating me about the nationwide homeless veteran issue and to this day, it impacts my life.

When Steve returned from active duty, he pursued a career in filmmaking. But his experience in the service tugged at him. Twenty years later, while working on a documentary film about a group of homeless veterans living in the beach in Venice, he met a paraplegic Vietnam veteran who is suffering from severe PTSD and living in his car. His wheelchair was parked outside the car door and his silver star was in the glove compartment. Steve recalls: "I became a social worker to save guys like him."

Steve promptly returned to school and earned a master's degree in social work from USC. He joined U.S. Vets full-time as a director of community development in 1996 and was named president and CEO in 2010.

U.S. Vets is a nonprofit corporation that has 11 locations throughout the United States and is the largest community provider of services to homeless veterans in the nation.

National President Kathy has chosen to focus the American Legion Auxiliary on assisting women veterans and especially reaching out to homeless women veterans and their children. Here to give us an overview of the challenges for women who have served and how we may be able to help, Mr. Steve Peck.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MR. PECK: Good afternoon.

VOICES: Good afternoon.

MR. PECK: Thank you, Linda.

Thank you, Kathy, for having me here today. And congratulations to all of you on your -- a century of service to this country and to the men and women who serve in the military.

I'm particularly happy to be here today because I know that the Auxiliary can-do arm of the American Legion. And U.S. Vets is an organization that likes to get things done for veterans so we are natural partners.

U.S. Vets works for the Auxiliary in 11 of the communities -- in the 11 communities that we serve across the country and especially at our Long

Beach site where our 50 plus beds -- we have a program called the Advance Program serving women veterans. That is the largest program in the country.

Auxiliary Unit 496 has embraced that program purchasing computers and books and games for the children's room. And they have sponsored teas and makeovers for the women. This ongoing support means a lot to the women in the program and makes them feel a part of a larger community.

We work with women at all of our sites, of course. Of the nearly 8,000 veterans we served last year, 12 percent of them were women.

We are continually expanding our services over the years to respond to the need. And since we began our organization in 1993, we've been a large part of the movement that has reduced the homeless veteran population in this country by more than 80 percent. But that still leaves 40,000 -- go ahead. That's something to celebrate.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: But that still leaves 40,000 veterans on the street so our work is far from over. We're not only providing housing and support services, we have lots of homeless prevention programs providing mental health, counseling and employment assistance to veterans in the community to prevent them from falling into homelessness in the first place.

We also advocate at the local state and federal level for veterans issues. And of all the needs of women veterans that are talked about a lot, there are far too few comprehensive programs that provide the range of services needed. So because of our size and the expertise we've developed over the last 25 years, we decided to take the issue on. And to paraphrase JFK, "Not because it is easy but because it is hard". It needs to be done and who better to do it than us.

Our advanced women's residential program provides a whole range of support, including counseling, employment assistance, life skills training and a sexual trauma treatment program. Despite the size of our agency and advanced nature of our women's program, there are women veterans in the community who are unaware of us or of any assistance that could help them in their hour of need.

Imagine a young woman, a veteran, Iris, sitting alone in her apartment. Her young child is spending the night with her grandmother to give Iris some relief from her responsibilities as a single mom. Memories of being sexually assaulted by a superior officer intrude into her thoughts and the intimidation that followed to keep her from reporting it. These thoughts further exacerbate the post-traumatic stress she experiences as a result of her time in Afghanistan.

Then she was discharged still struggling with the anger and emotional wounds caused by the assault and now, a year later, she still does not have a job. She does not know what to do or where to turn.

These are the women we are not connecting with and the intervention that I will briefly describe to you is our effort to reach out to these women, let them know that help is available. It is critical that we do so. Statistics tell us that women veterans are six times more likely to commit suicide than non-service females. And women veterans between the ages of 18 and 29 are taking their lives 12 times as often as their non-veteran counterparts.

Our response to this distressing problem is Women Vets on Point, a web portal and information campaign that we hope will reach deep into the community.

Is our poster up there?

This online portal has been developed specifically for women veterans and serves as a scalable resource to engage both veterans and service providers. It offers information, motivational tools, and links to community resources with U.S. Vets mental health professionals as the key points of contact.

We have several goals:

To promote awareness and availability of evidence-based mental health support for women veterans;

Mobilize and engage community providers broadening the network of support for women veterans;

Deliver information, resources and tools for self-management and self-care including specific attempts into suicide risks; and

Provide a platform for sharing best practices with other providers.

It's an ambitious agenda but all of that is needed. A VA report a couple of years ago described the enormity and complexity of the need and its causes. Let me give you just a couple of examples.

Some female service members feel ostracized by their male peers which may have a physical impact on women integrating into previously all male combat positions. That ostracism may increase the potential for suicidal thoughts and actions, post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. To avoid this, women may try to conceal any health challenge that will make them seem less strong, less masculine or less capable.

Second, as a result of their increasing numbers in the military and their traumatic experiences while in the military such as combat trauma or military sexual trauma, women veterans are four times more likely to become homeless than their non-veteran peers.

And finally, research shows that women appear to experience higher rates of sexual harassment and assault and are more likely to be treated for depression than men.

U.S. Vets has formed a women advisory committee to take a broad look at issues affecting women veterans, policy or perception changes that are needed to improve the treatment of women in the military, and improve the services available to women veterans. But we need a community by community response, and that's where you come in.

We want you to join our effort to reach out to these women veterans in the community who think no help is available. Help us build our capacity to expand our effort. Mobilize your units to become a focal point in your community to create an awareness of the problem and the existence of a solution. Mobilize and engage community provider broadening the network of support for women veterans in mental health and readjustment needs. And become peer navigators to help women veterans in need negotiate the system of care.

With your presence in all posts across the country, you have the power to magnify the message many fold. To reach out to women veterans who feel alone in their desolation and to save thousands of lives so that they

can be the daughters, sisters and mothers that are so crucial to the fabric of our community.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. LAWS: Thank you so much for that presentation and I know that our members will get behind it and support our national president's special project.

It's now my honor to introduce the other part of the American Legion family to serve with Kathy and Brett next year. The Sons of the American Legion national commander, Greg "Doc" Gibbs from the Department of New York.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

MR. GIBBS: Thank you. Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here this afternoon.

I know you've already heard from my counterpart, the immediate past commander, Danny Smith, from Nebraska. So I'm not going to go into a long prepared speech.

I told my group earlier, national commanders come and go. There's a new one every year. But our mission remains the same. So what you heard from Danny no doubt will be our same mission this year.

You'll notice that my cap, when you get to the high office of national commander, you do not have your state emblem on there anymore. That's because you're representing all 50 states and all our territories where there are squadrons and posts. But I cannot leave Minneapolis safely without a shout out to New York --

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: And thank you for the support from the Department of Auxiliary of New York.

Now I am actually a dual member, maybe unofficially, and I probably don't have the correct pin on, but this is my Auxiliary card from the all women's post, Erigo (phonetic), in Buffalo, New York. So I am officially an Auxiliary member.

(Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: I think that the Sons and the Auxiliary view sacrifice of service to our country in a very different way than Legionnaires do. And let me just go back to the brief, the time in my own history.

I gain my eligibility through my father who was a combat veteran marine in World War II. He and his two other brothers all joined the Marine Corps the week after Pearl Harbor. They all quit high school and within 10 days were off to parts of the world that people didn't know how to pronounce, didn't know how to spell. And those were the days, we need to remember and remind ourselves, no cell phones, no TV, very little telephone service. The only think you could really get any information from was occasional radio broadcasts and the written word in a letter.

So there are my grandparents, their three teenage boys are gone. I think few of us understand what that sacrifice really must be like. And again, I think from my mother's point of view, from a wife's point of view, it's a very different thing.

We share that as sons. We look at that sacrifice in a different way. And we, as you, want to keep that sacrifice understood in today's youth so that they know what the depth of service to the country really is all about. And we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything that the Auxiliary does to promote that.

You'll hear more about our goals for the year as I hopefully have the opportunity to travel to your different departments. Our biggest thing is we're going to try to give the American Legion the best 100th anniversary gift ever. And that's the highest Sons' membership. We're going to push for 400,000 members this year. And we're also going to push to get that CWF over the \$8 million mark. And we're also going to support NEF this year. And I know that you always support not only the Legion but you are tremendous supporters of the Sons. So please take that word back to your local squadrons; share that with them. And if I have the opportunity to visit your departments, I'll get into much more detail.

But this Yankee is so proud that our 365,000 members selected me to serve with the quintessential southern lady. I could not be prouder. And I think this is going to be a great year. Congratulations, Kathy.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Now has come the time to welcome National President Diane Duscheck to the ranks of past national president. To recognize her accomplishments this year, we'll witness a few presentations. Past National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan will present Diane with her past national president's pin and her colors.

Past National President Linda Newsome will present Diane with her ribbon.

Ladies?

(Music played in background.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Madam Past National President Diane, I am sure that as soon stand here at this moment and accept the accolades of all of our members for the year just finished that there are truly a variety of overwhelming feelings that are a part of this very day. Joy for all you've accomplished for the American Legion Auxiliary; wonder for the opportunities you had to share with those we serve, our veterans, our military, their families and our communities; thankful for a year filled with incredible memories to last a lifetime; and happiness at all the friendships made and shared in this very special year of service.

I am privileged to present your past national president's pin. And as I place it over your heart, and as I do so, please know that those of us who have walked in your shoes are grateful to you for your year of service.

We welcome you to this very special group of individuals, past national presidents. As you know, we only accept one new member each year.

(Laughter.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: And we all wish for you continued good health and a wealth of friendships.

And now I would introduce Past National President Linda Newsome to present your ribbon.

(Music played in background.)

MS. NEWSOME: Your past national president's ribbon truly represents this exciting and busy year as you traveled in support of the American Legion Auxiliary carrying our message to our members and the community at large. You've been our ambassador on your travels overseas always aware of our Auxiliary image.

The ribbon that I hold represents so much. The red stripes stand for the courage of your conviction.

The white stripe stands for pride in the knowledge that you helped develop a plan to move our organization forward and sustain it for future generations.

And the blue stripe represents the bravery of our men and women who have served and continue to serve our great country in the armed forces.

Please know that it is embedded with love and admiration of our members for your year of service.

Now, Madam President, Past President, as I pin this ribbon on your shoulder, know that it is a symbol of the service that you have rendered on behalf of this year.

And as a personal aside, she was one of my state presidents and I'm pleased.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: We have all afternoon?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We have all afternoon.

MS. NEWSOME: Okay. Good.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Madam Past President, welcome.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Diane, please stay with me as your personal pages, Virginia Kodl and Patricia Smith, come forward for the presentation of your colors.

(Music played in background.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: I would ask now that both you and our national secretary, Dubbie Buckler, join your pages and stand between your colors.

You may be seated.

Diane, as you stand between these beautiful flags, I know that you will remember, in mind and heart, this challenging and exciting year of service to our organization, the men and women of the armed forces, our veterans, and the communities in which we live.

You and our national secretary represented us with dignity and pride as you journeyed beyond our shores as our ambassadors of goodwill, not only for the Auxiliary but for our country as well.

You answered our nation's call to service during this incredible year. When you took the oath of office last year, you embraced the year ahead with its unlimited possibilities. And now it has come to a close with many chapters written, memories to be cherished and wonderful memories to be treasured.

Waiting for you upon your arrival at home will be these beautiful flags. Our glorious American flag that carries American ideas and ideals, our history and our feelings.

Although it is only pieces of material sewn together, every color, every thread, every star and stripe means liberty and justice. We cherish in our hearts the unseen which it represents. This symbol of our nation is as much a thing of the spirit as it is of cloth.

Our Auxiliary banner represents our organization and our members who serve with conviction for God and country. It represents more than what we believe it to be and all that we believe it can be. It, too, is only cloth but woven from the fabric of dedication and devotion, a vital fragment of what we will weave into the reality of our organization's future.

I thank you, Diane, for this opportunity to present your past president's pin, the ribbon of service by Past National President Linda Newsome, and these glorious flags as a small token of our respect and thankfulness for your year of service.

Cherish the memories of this year and the lasting friendships. And take with you the heartfelt thanks from your Auxiliary family as you return to your own home and family. May God continue to bless you with wonderful and enduring memories of your year of service.

Past President Diane and National Secretary Dubbie, please be seated.

Will the color bearers please repost the colors?

Thank you, Virgie and Diane (sic) -- Pat -- I'm sorry.

Diane, as you take your seat, you will also take your place as a past national president, a past national president, of the American Legion Auxiliary.

And now please welcome back Sharon Conatser.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Thank you very much.

National President Kathy has asked Mississippi department chaplain, Reverend Bobby Cook, to say a very special prayer as she begins her travels this year.

Reverend Cook?

REV. COOK: Please uncover.

Join with me.

Our God, our Almighty God, our gracious God, our loving Lord. We're so privileged to live in a land that allows us to share in ceremonies such as this that the passing of one leadership regime goes to another.

I just ask, God, that You would continue to bless Ms. Diane, the staff that she's had and her families because I know they're not going to quit working. But, God, as I have talked with Kathy, and am convinced of her commitment and of her desire to fulfill Your will in her life as well as those around her, I pray, God, that You would give her the spirit that she needs, the strength that is going to be required from her and the wisdom to make the right decisions that will lead the women's organization, the American Legion Auxiliary, to continue their support for the veterans in this great land in which we live.

O God, You know what we need to make this nation what You want it to be. May we all have the courage and maintain that courage to find Your will in our individual lives as well as the corporate life of this nation.

In the name of our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

REV. COOK: Recover.

MS. CONATSER: You may be seated.

I have a couple of announcements before President Diane closes her convention.

First, a reminder to the newly elected officers, vice president, national chaplain, national historian, national division vice presidents. You received the time -- 3:45? The meeting is immediately following this in Hall A. I'm just looking for confirmation.

Kathy has asked that all 2018-19, so the newly installed department presidents and department secretaries to go to the table located at the back of the room after Diane closes the convention. Check in with those volunteering at the tables to ensure your name is checked off to receive a gift.

Past national presidents, national officers, national executive committeewomen, each of you will receive your gift at the end of the post-NEC meeting tomorrow.

Please remain in your seats until the close of convention and the processional of the Past National President Diane and her retiring officers.

Also, you will receive a pin, one of President Kathy's pins at the back. They will not be handed out until Diane reaches the back of the room.

Got it.

(Laughter.)

MS. CONATSER: National President Diane, please come forward to close this wonderful convention.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Boy, she is a task master. Holy mackerel.

First off, where is Wisconsin?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Wisconsin, thank you very much for your support I've appreciated all these years.

And Central Division?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: My thanks to you also. Thank you so much.

Well, will the sergeant-at-arms please retire the colors of the Department of Mississippi and escort the new national president and the new national officers from the podium to the back of the room?

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Many thanks to all of you for letting me come into your departments. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Chaplain Evelyn, can we have our closing prayer?

MS. ESPINOLA: Let us pray.

Thank you, Lord, for your presence with us this week. As we depart from this space, now we ask You to bless us throughout the remainder of the day and guide us safely to our next destination. Do not let the learning and

the conversations of this gathering dwindle but instead may they continue to re-emanate within us and bear fruit in our obligation throughout the year.

Bless our veterans and our military and their service to this country.

Until we find ourselves together again, we ask this in Your holy name. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Would the pages please retire the national colors? I'm going to be escorted by Joanie Dickerson, Wisconsin senior vice president, who is actually a -- who is also a Legion member, so she's a dual member. And when we reach the back of the room, this national convention will be adjourned.

(Applause.)

(Music played in background.)

(Whereupon, the 2018 98th ALA National Convention was adjourned.)

**POST-CONVENTION
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 30, 2018**

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This National Executive Committee Meeting will now come to order.

Please disable all electronic devices, or place them in a silent mode. And I know we're all in a hurry to get out and catch our planes, so we're going to try to make this as quickly as possible.

Please rise and remain standing for the opening ceremonies.

National Chaplain Dr. Deborah Blanch will lead us in our invocation and moment of silence for our fallen heroes and those serving our nation today for the protection of our freedom.

Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman Beth McGinn will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, followed by the Constitution & Bylaws Chairman Melanie Taylor leading us in the Preamble to our Constitution. Dr. Blanch?

DR. BLANCH: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

DR. BLANCH: Let us bow our heads. Almighty God, Father of all mankind and judge over all nations, thank You for every seat that has been filled in this room today. We come together to celebrate and honor You through our work for our veterans and their families. We pray You will guide us in this meeting and through the rest of our day.

As we gather together for this meeting, give us the use of Your gift of peace and a discernment of understanding, that we may approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just heart.

And by You we give You thanks as we all say together amen.

VOICES: Amen.

MS. DUNGAN. Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman Beth McGinn will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the National Anthem.

VOICES: 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.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now Constitution & Bylaws Chairman Melanie Taylor will lead us in the Preamble to the Constitution.

VOICES: 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 100 percent Americanism, to preserve the memories and incidents of our association during the Great 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 accomplishment of the aim and purposes of The American Legion, to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You may be seated, and this meeting is now convened.

Before we begin our business, I want to take a few minutes to welcome you in your new role as the 2018-19 National Executive Committee. Those present who are eligible to vote today and at the subsequent NEC meetings are the NEC members.

NEC members include and are limited to National Executive Committee Woman from each Department, the five National Division Vice Presidents, the National Chaplain, the National Historian, the National Vice President, and National President.

Those present at the NEC meeting with voice but no vote are the Past National Presidents and the National Secretary and National Treasurer.

We welcome our visitors and remind you that you may listen to the discussion, but are not permitted to participate in the debate, nor to vote.

I would also at this time to impress upon you, members of the National Executive Convention, that you are now serving in a national role, as the Board of Directors with fiduciary responsibility to the national organization.

As a member of the NEC, you no longer have the interest of your department as your primary focus; you are serving as national representatives of the national organization, and you must be making decisions and casting your vote according to what is in the best interest of the national organization.

For future meetings, you will again receive information in advance, and you will be expected to have read those materials in preparation for the next meeting. This is an important role, and we appreciate your diligence in attending to your duties thoughtfully and responsibility, on behalf of the National organization.

Now, to get to business at hand, the Chair asks those -- asks that those of you wishing to address the meeting make your way to the microphone in the center aisle, as this is the only way your remarks can be heard for recording by our professional court reporter for the transcripts of this meeting. Also please be sure that in making any remarks you address the Chair.

Attendance at previous NEC meetings was each member's responsibility. However, thanks to our amazing convention team and National Headquarters office, we are now tracking your participation electronically. For this NEC meeting we will be using electronic keypads for voting. If that's what you all wish to do, we have them available.

Do you all have a vote keypad? Okay.

Serving as Parliamentarian for this meeting is Chris Dickey, Professional Registered Parliamentarian. For this meeting and future NEC meetings the minutes will be approved by a minute approval committee. The Chair appoints the NECs from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Virginia as the minutes approval committee, responsible for approving those minutes for next year's NEC meetings.

As most of you know by now that our -- my National President, the National President's Project for 18-19 will be the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, with a concentration on women veterans, and a focus on their specific challenges and issues, especially homelessness.

We are so lucky to be connected to a wonderful organization, U.S. VETS, which is the Nation's largest nonprofit provider of comprehensive services to homeless and at-risk veterans.

President and CEO Stephen Peck is a leader in the national movement to eliminate homelessness among American veterans. He served as a lieutenant in the 1st Marine Division in the Vietnam War, near Da Nang, from 1969 to 1970.

When Mr. Peck returned from active duty, he pursued a career in film making, but his experience in the service tugged at him. Mr. Peck promptly returned to school, earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Southern California. He joined U.S. VETS full time as Director of Community Development in 1996, and was named President and CEO in 2010.

Please welcome Mr. Stephen Peck.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Thank you, Kathy. So I talked a little bit yesterday about this new intervention that we have created just a month and a half ago now, called Women Vets on Point. And as I said yesterday, we run the largest women's program in the country for women veterans in our Long Beach site. Fifty plus women are there receiving a wide variety of services.

What really put that program on the map was when we created a Sexual Trauma Treatment Program with the VA and in Long Beach. And since then those beds have been full, virtually. So we felt that we were doing all that we could, but a story that was in the paper a couple of years ago got our attention, talking about the amount of -- the number of women who are taking their own lives.

If you look at a VA report that that story was based on, talked about the number of women who were suffering from a mental illness. And you can see from that graph that it's considerably higher than the civilian population, but this is the statistic that really prompted us to take action.

This is really unprecedented, and no one really knew quite what to do about it. The VA convened a meeting a couple of years ago with a lot of community providers, and asked, you know, really admitting we can't handle this. We need the community to step in and help us deal with this problem.

We had the challenge with reaching women who are contemplating suicide, and really anyone who has a significant mental illness, is getting them to come forward. All of the women who were -- are taking their own lives, only 20 percent of them were going to the VA, so 80 percent were not for a whole variety of reasons.

I mean, you can imagine if a woman has been sexually assaulted in the military, and has to walk into a waiting room at a VA with 30 guys waiting there, not a comforting spot for her to be in. So we felt that we had to do something different, something that hadn't been done before, and we decided to -- the way to reach them would be online.

Everyone has a cell phone these days. A number of veterans who walk into our facility have the clothes on their back and a cell phone. That is their -- the sum total of their possessions. So we figured most people are going to be online, and if we can reach the people we haven't reached before, we're going to reach them online.

The barriers, you can see the barriers that women are facing. They don't want to go to the VA, and they don't want to -- there's also always a stigma around mental illness, and there's a number of women who when asked are you a veteran, don't respond. They think because they have not been in combat that they're not a veteran, that they don't have VA services available to them.

So we've begun asking the question in a different way. Do you serve in the military? Anything that we can -- we're just trying to think of anything we can do to get them to engage with us.

We're doing this now because really it takes time. This war has been going on for a long time. The number of women in the military is increasing. I think it's around 14 or 15 percent in the military at this point. They're going overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan, and they're suffering posttraumatic stress, family separations. The divorce rate is pretty high. They're coming back potentially with military sexual trauma, with posttraumatic stress, taking care -- as a sole provider, taking care of their kids.

So there's a lot of pressure on a lot of the women that are coming back. And the more and more women that serve, the more communities are affected, the more that the issue rises to the level that people want to do something about it. So it's taken a lot of time.

The VA, as you know, has not always got the capacity to serve the veterans that need to be served, and that's particularly true of the women. Some VAs have pretty good women centers, others do not. So it really is incumbent upon the community providers to help them provide the services that are needed with the -- among the women that we're encountering.

This is the face of the website that we have started. We -- as I said, we started this about six weeks ago, and we're -- it's accompanied by a pretty significant online program of advertising. So we've -- there are ads out there all across the 'net, and there's a mobile app for this, so they can get it on their phone, and we're just doing everything we can.

We're working with a couple of companies that are -- that specialize in communicating over the 'net. So we're adjusting languages, we're adjusting images. We look at this -- we get a report every week that we're constantly trying to find new ways to reach out to women and get them to respond.

At this point about -- well, at the end of -- at the end of July, about 3,500 women had clicked onto the site, which is pretty significant. I mean that's about a quarter of the way there where we thought we'd at the end of eight months. So we think we're doing pretty well.

But only about 500 have clicked through. And I'll show you some of the tools and resources that will give them information just on the website itself. And only about 30 have actually called us. So we have to -- we're re-looking at it, talking with our partners there, and finding a way that we can get more of them to click through.

The goals are significant. We're trying to promote mental health and mobilize and engage communities. So there's a lot of women out there who don't know that -- what mental health is available to them, or don't know where they can find that mental health. So we're trying to educate community by community that help is available, number one, and mobilize mental health

providers in the community to help them in gain the expertise to treat and have the cultural competency to treat women veterans specifically.

We've started in LA. We're still in the learning phase, so at some point we would like this to roll out across the country, but right now our site is aimed at LA, and that will be a model and act as a pilot as we roll this out across the country.

And then we want to deliver information. So the site now has a lot of information for women who may be suffering mental illness, who may be contemplating suicide. They don't have to go anywhere, they don't have to call anybody. There are a lot of tools available on there, and I'll go over those in a second, that -- where they can get a whole lot of information. And that by itself can relieve some of the pressure they feel trying to deal with this problem by themselves. But ultimately, we want to build those networks within communities that will provide the mental health that is needed.

These are the outcomes. We hope that by the end of this week -- we have an 18-month pilot here. We've been working on building the website for about 8 months, so we've got another 10 months to look at this, as I said, continually adjust, learn from what we have seen.

We hope to reach out to about 12,000 women. As I've said, we're already at 3,500, and we really don't have a clear idea on how many will actually call us. Thirty have called us so far. We figure it will be anywhere from 150 on up to 1,100 or so. But as I said, when you're doing something that has never been done before, it's kind of hard to predict.

But we feel like we've got a good start. And we hope -- what I hope is that when we partner with the Auxiliary that we can begin to create spots in each community, like your units these communities can act as catalysts, can act as a hub to begin to create those networks, begin to reach out to other mental health providers, engage them in the process, and then as we grow over the next year or two, add on to that website the numbers of every community. That's the goal, but right now, as I say, we're still in the learning phase.

We treat -- provide services to all women. As you probably know, there's a number of women who have been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted with the military, and a lot of those women -- maybe not a lot -- but some of those women are medically discharged well before two years. They don't have VA services available to them, so. And a number of those women are in our program. We can -- we can serve those women and -- but with this website we'll serve any woman. If you've been in the service for a day, we will serve you and provide you those services.

Right now, this is the -- these are some of the outreach -- this is some of the outreach that we're doing in Los Angeles County. You can see that we work with every provider that's ever even looked at a woman veteran, and we're continuing to build this network. We're continuing to work with them to get them to refer either to us or if they are a mental health provider themselves, to provide that service, and we're training them, making sure that they have the cultural competency.

The mental health partnerships that we have created throughout the county include all the vet centers, the CBOC, if you're familiar with them, the county Military and Veterans Affairs Office, and even CalVet at our

Department of Military Affairs in Sacramento. They all are now referring women to us, and again we'll provide the training as long as they really promise to engage and use the standards and use the protocols that we're going to lay out there.

These are some of the tools available. They can take any number of surveys. The first one, the PHQ-9 is a depression questionnaire that they can download and take.

VetChange is a substance abuse questionnaire that's on the VA website. PTSD Coach, that's an app they can download onto their phone and use that to assess themselves. CBT is cognitive behavioral therapy, another app that they can download and do a self-assessment.

We have stories of other women who have suffered with mental illness or sexual assault and overcome it. We want them to know that they're not alone. There are other women who have experienced what they have experienced, and come through the other end.

There is -- our main goal really is to tell them that there is hope, that there is help available, that they can get through this, but they need to engage. And the danger is that they do not engage, and they stay in their apartments and they don't reach out to anyone, and those are the women who are taking their own lives, so it's really important that we reach out to every single woman that we can get to.

They can connect with us in a couple of different ways. There's a chat room on there. They can engage in conversations through the chat room or there's a phone number. So we don't really care how they do it, as long as they do it, as long as they reach out, they take that first step. And maybe they'll look at this site for a long time, maybe they'll chat for a while, maybe they could chat for weeks, it really doesn't matter, as long as they begin to engage, that's the most important thing.

We want them to know who they're dealing with. Dr. Meada Snedder has been treating women veterans for 10 years or more. She used to work at the VA. We were lucky enough to get her to come over to our side, so she's providing a lot of the one-on-one counseling.

Christine Stanley is a retired Air Force, came out of the Air Force about 8 years ago, got her counseling degree. She was lucky enough to come available when we started this program. She is passionate about working with women veterans. She's a terrific networker, which is what we need. She is the one who has contacted a lot of those agencies that we're now working with.

As I said, we engage other providers, so they're on the website. There are referrals. This is, again, this is Los Angeles County, but this is what we hope to do with every community at some point. So they can go on there and they don't have to call us, they can call any of these other providers.

We use USC Telehealth. At some point we'll be working with the Telehealth at our site in Los Angeles. Again, any means necessary to reach out to the women who need the help. This has been a process of discovery. We are still in the discovery mode here, seeing what works.

We had another program -- we run another program in Los Angeles and Orange County called Outside the Wire. It provides mental health to the community colleges in Los Angeles and Orange County. Right now, we're

working at 13 community colleges, and it took us a long time to convince the Department of Mental Health that the VA cannot -- does not have adequate resources to provide all the services that are needed by veterans, particularly young veterans, post 9/11 veterans. So just this year in mental -- Department of Mental Health now is giving us money to expand that program.

We hope that this -- the same kind of thing will happen with Women Vets on Point. There's just -- there's always more people in need than there is money, and the VA certainly doesn't have all the money that we need, so we're engaging the Departments of Mental Health, we're engaging the state. We have some mental health money from the state for the very first time. Anything we can do to expand the services that are needed by the men and women veterans who are out there.

We know that what's been very effective is follow up. So when women call maybe they're calling -- a lot of them are calling between 4 p.m. and 10 p.m., all right. So they're there at night alone and they're feeling really vulnerable, and maybe the next morning they feel okay. So they call at night, they leave a message, they don't follow up. We follow up with them, and that's been very, very effective, in terms of getting them to actually engage. So we're going to, you know, we know that works, we're going to continue to do that.

We're working now with six interns from USC to -- so that -- to expand our ability. We want to continue to expand our ability to reach out to the women that are contacting us.

All right. You can help us in a couple of ways. As I said, we're in the learning mode. We're not -- if all 50 states call us, we're not ready to take all those calls just yet, but you can begin to act as a catalyst in your community. You can begin to talk about this website, that it is available. As I said, they don't have to do anything else but visit the website, and there is a lot of information available there.

You can begin to build a network with American Legion as the hub of that network, reaching out to people, asking if they provide services, asking where services for women veterans can be accessed, and begin to create a true network where women will be able to access the mental health that they need.

You can reach out to other agencies that want training. We will train. And at some point -- and there's a lot of information that you can get from us. We've been through this in Los Angeles. As I said, our site acts as a model. And at some point, if your community is ready to engage, we can talk about how we then actually mobilize your community.

At some point we hope that there will be at least 50 numbers, telephone numbers on the website, so no matter what community, no matter what state you're in, there will be help available. We're not there yet, but we want to begin to work with you to build that network.

There's a whole bunch of things that you all can do, and I -- we should -- I should probably share that this PowerPoint with folks, so that you have the info -- I see some of you taking notes. I'll share this with you all, so you don't have to write so fast.

There's a whole bunch of things that you can do in your community, and we will help you do that. So if you, I'll show a slide next and I'll leave that slide up for a while. There's an email, you can go to the website as well,

and call us to get information, but if you want to begin to build that network, begin to have events at your posts, Linda and I were talking last night, you could have -- put together a legal -- there's a lot of pro bono legal assistance out there. Do a benefits clinic, do a health clinic, do a makeover day. There are all kinds of things that are going on to engage people without saying do you have a mental health problem. Right?

That's the wrong question. We've learned that's the wrong question to ask. But you engage them, you begin to gain their trust, and that is the way then you get into the conversation. At some point, they will say gee, maybe, you know, I've got something going on here, and maybe there's help available, and we want you to be ready when they get to that point.

As I say, we'll distribute this PowerPoint. I've also got some handouts about the program, and about an NPR piece that was done about the program. If you want to contact us, please do so. Kristine will be really happy to talk to you, be really happy to hear from you. And let's talk about how we begin to engage communities so that more women in our country can access the mental health that they need.

Do we have time for questions or --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That would be fine, if there are any questions.

MR. PECK: If there are any questions? Was I so complete that there are no questions? Well, thank you very much for your time. I hope we'll be talking again.

VOICE: I do have a question.

MR. PECK: Oh, you have a question, yes.

VOICE: I don't really have a question.

MR. PECK: Yes.

VOICE: I'm from California and I'm from Southern California, and I've experienced the facility in Long Beach. We actually had the women come speak to us at our convention. And it's incredible what you do there to help this young -- these young women and their children. So there's such a huge need for us to do this and get involved in it, to be able to help homeless veterans, women, because they really need our help. So thank you, Steve, for what you're doing and I really support the program.

MR. PECK: Thank you so much. Great. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Steve. What an awesome project to help our women veterans, and I'm asking you to support this. So since you've already received the resolution entitled Support U.S. VETS Project, Women Vets on Point, it will not be read, but I would like to entertain a motion to adopt the resolution.

VOICE: Deborah Kryczkowski, Department of New York. I move to adopt this resolution.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It has been moved to adopt. Is there a second?

VOICE: Second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Second? Okay. Let's just do a voice vote, all in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted. Steve, you have our full support, and thank you for coming today, we appreciate it so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: As most of you know that attended the States Dinner last night, Dobbie announced at the States Dinner that she is resigning, and her last day will be in two weeks.

Yes, and I wanted to express appreciation for the years of service and the wide range of accomplishments that Dobbie has achieved as National Secretary. Dobbie has a broad range of professional skills and experiences, and that has served our organization well, and will do so in the future -- in her future opportunity.

In order to ensure proper administrative management and a smooth transition during this period at the National Headquarters, I am appointing Linda Boone as Acting National Secretary. A plan and timeline have been developed for the search process, and the Finance Committee has approved expenses for the process.

So at this time, I would like to make an appointment, and I would like to appoint Linda Boone as Acting National Secretary, until we establish that Search Committee.

Linda Boone's qualifications are she's president currently of the ALA Foundation. She's a Past National President. She has been President and CEO, from 1996 to 2005, of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, so we know where her heart is. She has served on the National Finance Committee. She is President of L.J. Boone and Associates, serving as a consultant, trainer, and speaker in management practices.

She has -- she develops and instructs leadership development workshops for a variety of offices. She will serve us well in this transition until we find a permanent National Secretary because most of you know Linda lives in Florida now, so she is on loan to us. Her home is in Florida and we cannot keep her away from her husband for a long period of time, but I do want to express my appreciation for Linda agreeing to help in this transition.

So as I said, I'm appointing her, and I also would like to appoint for National Treasurer reappointing Sara Riegel. Sara, would you stand? This is Sara. So I would entertain a motion to confirm their appointments.

VOICE: Raleen Tolzmann, Department of Minnesota, I move that these two appointments be approved.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Instead of the keypad, can we just do it by voice? All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it. Okay. Very good. You've confirmed Sara Riegel as your National Treasurer for 2018-2019.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, could I have all the National Officers stand and be recognized. That's the five divisional National Vice Presidents, National Historian, National Chaplain, and of course, our National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would you -- would y'all take a minute and introduce yourselves for those that may not know.

DR. BLANCH: Good morning. I am Dr. Deborah Blanch, and it is an honor to serve each and every one of you in the upcoming year. I'm always a phone call away or a hug away. Thank you and have a wonderful day.

(Applause.)

MS. ISENSEE: Teresa Isensee, Central Division National Vice President from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. BARYLSKI: I am Rita Barylski from the Eastern Division, National Vice President from Connecticut.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. CLAPP: I'm Nicole Clapp from the Department of Iowa, and obviously yesterday was a monumental day for my family, and I appreciate all your support, and looking forward to 18-19 and, as we look to ending the century and looking at how we together will be able to strengthen the ALA together and working side by side. So I wish everyone a great trip home and thank you again for your support. I appreciate it.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: Brenda Collins, from South Carolina, National Historian.

(Applause.)

MS. VETTER: Good morning. I'm Barb Vetter from the Department of South Dakota and I'm the Northwestern Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

MS. HAYGOOD: Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood. I'm the National Southern Division Vice President. I'm from Carmen, Alabama.

(Applause.)

MS. ROMERO: I'm Janet Romero from the Department of New Mexico, serving as Western Division National Vice President. I do want to say that I have big shoes to follow. Some of you may remember that Marcella Davison (phonetic) was past national president, came out of my home post, Provost (phonetic), New Mexico, post -- Unit 25. And I also (indiscernible) that I have to follow (indiscernible).

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies. Now, would all the Past National Presidents please stand and be recognized at this time.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies, for your continued service.

Now, let's move on to the confirmation of appointments. The next item of business is the confirmation of standing and special committee appointments for the 2018-19 administrative year and Foundation Board appointments.

You have received a copy of the appointments list. Please take a moment to review the list. Tamara, since I've not had an opportunity to look at it, did we get the two replacements before because National Historian Brenda has been replaced, and then Gloria. Okay. Thank you.

Okay. The question is on the motion to confirm the complete list of appointments to standing and special committees for the administrative year 2018-2019, and Foundation Board appointments as presented. Is there any discussion?

VOICE: Madam President, under the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation it says chairman is first name Daudistel. Does Kathy not have a first name anymore?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I don't think so. We will fix that. Thank you. That's Kathy Daudistel from Kentucky. Is there any other correction?

VOICE: Madam President, on page 2 it looks like there is a blank line under a finance member. Second page.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Second page?

VOICE: Sorry, I'm kind of sporting a sore throat and cold, so.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Is it the appointee I had? Which one's missing?

VOICE: I think it wrapped.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It just wrapped.

VOICE: Madam President, I was just looking and I think that -- there it is, yep, sorry.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That's just an extra line. There's not supposed to be a name there. Thank you.

VOICE: Madam President, is it a conflict of interest for one person to be the National Secretary and the President of the Foundation?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes, and we are going to address that issue. I was just notified of that by their Parliamentarian Chris Dickey (phonetic). Any other questions?

VOICE: May I be heard? Are we to assume that Dubbie will still take these -- the position since she has --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I'm sorry --

VOICE: Will Dubbie still be the --

VOICE: Can you go to a microphone?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I can't --

VOICE: Madam Chair, are we to assume that Dubbie will still take the position she's on here?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: As National Secretary?

VOICE: The Foundation.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh no, the National -- the position of the National Secretary will follow whoever replaces Dubbie. Okay. Yes, that's a designated position, so it follows that position. Any other questions?

Do I have a motion to adopt?

MS. WILLIAMSON: Lisa Williamson for the Department of Alaska and I move that we ratify these appointments.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes?

VOICE: Madam President, under Future Focus Committee, we have already listed as a member, Linda Boone. So are you going to replace Linda with a member or just or just not have another member to the Focus group?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Right now, I will leave it as is, because I don't anticipate Linda Boone being out of any position for any length of time. We're going to strive very hard to get a search committee to find a permanent National Secretary. So I don't want to kick Linda off of everything, so we'll just wait and see. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions? No discussion?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. All those in favor please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The motion to confirm the complete list of appointments has passed. Congratulations and thank you all for agreeing to serve in those positions.

Please now welcome Finance Committee Chairman, my good friend Peggy Thomas, to present the proposed FY19 Budget of the American Legion Auxiliary. Peggy?

MS. THOMAS: Good morning everyone.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: First I must say congratulations Kathy and Nicole. We're looking forward to a very exciting year under your leadership.

As the Finance Committee Chairman, on behalf of the entire Finance Committee, Vice Chairman Virginia Hobbs, Helen Riedlinger, Sharon Conatser, and Paula Raney, we wish you the best.

The National Finance Committee sincerely thanks our membership and the NEC for passing the national dues increase, which will take effect with the 2019 membership year. Deciding to increase national dues will help us fulfill our duty of fiduciary stewardship and allow us to continue to serve our mission and help our veterans, so thank you.

I am honored to present the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget of the American Legion Auxiliary for your consideration. I need to thank the National Headquarters staff and national chairmen for their input, guidance, and ideas to make sure we were able to develop a comprehensive yet realistic budget.

We need to continue meeting our goals, our obligations, and expectations of providing services for you, our members, our veterans, and their families, while balancing the governmental requirements of comparing ourself to the national benchmarks, which we will share with you.

Tim Bresnahan and Sara Riegel have spent many hours working and preparing the budget she will go over with you this morning. We have documents projected on the screen for everyone to review, and now I present

to you Sara Riegel, our Assistant Director of Finance and our Treasurer, to do this with you.

MS. RIEGEL: Good morning. Thank you, Peggy. It's my pleasure to be here to present the proposed budget for fiscal year '19, and Chrystal has a -- Chrystal Daulton who is over here -- wave, Chrystal. Okay. She's going to help me with the presentation this morning.

So first, let's start with this narrative, the considered narrative, which is a comprehensive summary of the budget. And this format gives an overall understanding of the budget in just two pages. I do at this time want to reiterate our thanks to the NEC and our membership for their stewardship mindset in passing the national dues increase. It was much needed and greatly appreciated.

This fiscal year '19 budget reflects our continuing commitment to budget wisely and responsibly, so that we can meet our mission service needs over the next 12 months. So let's go over some of those highlights in this proposed budget.

In this budget it includes our new national emphasis aimed at helping select departments revive their operations in order to continue our vital mission. It includes \$56,000 in Spirit of Youth scholarships and \$75,000 in Children of Warriors scholarships.

It includes resourcing year four, five of the ALA's Centennial Strategic Plan. And it should be noted here -- I think you guys have heard us say -- that because we had unused funds from the prior years and they were carried over, there were no additional reserve funds required to be relieved during this proposed budget, and therefore no resolution was required.

This budget also includes the continuation of awards to departments that develop and implement department strategic plans. It also includes the continued rollout of the American Legion Auxiliary Academy, or ALA Academy, and this is available to all levels.

This budget also includes the continuation of the department secretary training at ALA National Headquarters: six ALA Mission Trainings, six national Junior meetings, and continued funding for department presidents, secretaries, membership chairs, and national division vice presidents to attend Department Leadership National Conference.

We continue to be a co-presenter of the National Creative Arts Festival. In addition to your donations that come in, we have an organizational commitment of \$120,000 as the co-presenter of that program.

And then just as a reminder, in 2013 we stopped collecting the national 15 cents per capita rehabilitation assessment, and we will continue the trend by not collecting it again in fiscal year '19. This is the seventh year in a row of not collecting the rehabilitation assessment.

So those are the main highlights that I wanted to point out of the American Legion Auxiliary budget that we developed and are presenting.

Moving down, we're going to look at the Foundation. The Foundation continues to work and increase its mission of supporting the ALA at all levels. We are excited about the Foundation, especially what has happened at this National Convention, and what they're doing to continue to accomplish our -- in helping us accomplish our mission.

The Finance Committee is in support of the Foundation's budget that will be presented in just a bit for you and for your approval.

The last piece of the budget narrative of a -- is a summary of our reserve funds. So if we could flip to the next page, we will see the detail of our reserves. This is our savings account or, Tim likes to say, our rainy day fund. The ALA National Finance Committee carefully reviewed and identified our long-term future financial obligations that must be met.

Each budget year we describe and earmark reserve funds that we must restrict to meet the long-term contractual obligations, recurring big project needs, and our unfunded pension liability.

To be clear, we cannot change the total amount of reserve funds, we can only update how we identify the funds that we must restrict, based on our multi-year obligations. We do this to make sure that these funds are earmarked for the long term, and to make sure they cannot be used in short term for other needs.

The exact amount of the reserve funds only fluctuates based on the investment performance, and when the budget includes moving a specified amount of reserve funds to the current year expense budget.

Also, I want to make sure you all understand that earmarking and restricting reserve funds is not the same as spending. It just means that we have a responsibility -- we have responsibly set aside or restricted those reserve funds that can only be used for future -- for the future and specific purposes.

So let's continue through the proposed budget. We'll go into a little more detail for you. This slide is a good slide because it provides a succinct picture of how our money is budgeted, and how it's spent by programs, management in general, and fundraising.

I don't have a pointer, sorry, but as you can see, can you all see the pie chart? Okay. Sorry. The pie chart shows that 81 percent of our budgeted expenses are planned to be spent on our program and member services, 10 percent on management in general, and 9 percent on fundraising. Increasing our development efforts and therefore our fundraising percentage is still an emphasis for both the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

Are there any questions that you have for the slide?

(No response.)

MS. RIEGEL: No? Okay. All right. So now we'll go into a little more detail, which is my favorite part. I like complex things, so.

As you can see at the top is our revenue, our money coming in. The numbers you see on the far left are the activity number. These are income and cost centers. For example, if you guys can find ALA Girls Nation is Activity #117, the revenue listed on this line four is all for ALA Girls Nation.

We group them by activities so we can get a better picture of where our revenue is coming from, and so that you are comfortable with understanding what goes into each of the categories.

We also break our revenue down by prior year budget, current year projected actual, proposed budget, and percentage increase/decrease for comparison purposes.

So you'll see that our total budgeted revenue is 9.2 million. It is 16 percent more than the fiscal year '18 budgeted.

And then there are expenses, our cost of doing business. You have our scholarships, you have our magazine, and then ultimately you see on the next page our total budgeted expense, which is 8.8 million, a 7.38 percent increase from fiscal year '18 budget. And then there's the net difference between revenue, less the expenses.

And then as you can see, we have some footnotes. Hopefully, these will help you better understand or get a clearer picture on the information and the categories where this new budget item or a substantive change from the previous year.

In footnote 1 reflects the decrease in magazine advertising, due to a lower advertiser response rate, as advertisers note a reduction in magazine circulation.

I also wanted to point out footnote 2. We are proposing a membership dues budget of 7.1 million. This was based on an analysis of membership trends and targets, and reflects the dues increase that is effective in the 2019 membership year.

We were excited to receive some questions last week in response to the proposed budget distribution. Right now, we are going to take them -- take the time to read the questions and corresponding responses from the Finance Committee.

Sorry about that. I think I got them shuffled, I am so sorry. I'm sorry.

Okay. So we did receive some questions, and I'm going to kind of summarize them, but she -- the writer wrote or asked she understood the line items for the revenue proposed in 2019, except under fundraising, why such a large decrease?

And our response was the fundraising development activity of 133 is a decrease from fiscal year '18 budget, due to ALA and NHQ transitioning to a new direct mail vendor, and fiscal year '19 being the first year using this vendor.

The new direct mail vendor does not front the direct mail expenses, and does not guarantee a specifically met amount of contributions. The final appeal with the new direct mail -- or the first appeal with the new direct mail vendor as -- was made 2018, which was in the second half of fiscal year '18. Due to the above, the Finance decided to budget conservatively for fiscal year '19, until we have a measurable track record with the new direct mail vendor. So that's a good question.

The second question, why do some Auxiliary members get the items, for example, blankets, scarves, memo pads, et cetera, and other members do not get them?

The response, the people who receive the solicitations for donations from direct mail have a history of giving to the organization. As is advertised in every issue of their Auxiliary magazine, if a member wishes to be added to the solicitation list, she can contact us.

Remember: Only those who consistently donate remain on the list. We use a professional direct mail fundraising company, and their premiums

included for the donations are proven to generate donations. Some packages do include address labels.

The third question, please explain the marketing and public relations line of expenses better, why such an increase?

The response, this is an expense for MSL, the professional media placement firm that had been under the strategic planned budget previously. It yields an exceptionally high return: a thousand to one per dollar spent. And after three years the \$124,000 line item was moved from the strategic planned budget to the general budget.

The other increase for this activity was \$50,000 required to move the American Legion Auxiliary national website hosting platform to a more robust platform that can accommodate the increased usage of the national website.

The fourth question, I also understand that a budget is a projected idea of what you will get and what we'll -- what you will spend, but could you explain why education and citizenship is so down?

Our response, because the American Legion Auxiliary members of the Education Committee have traditionally been invited to attend conferences with the Legion Commission, the Legion has pared back that expense and therefore so have we.

The fifth question, why has the awards been the same -- why has the award or the awards been the same for years for Americanism?

The response, the budget is developed at the recommendation of the Americanism Committee.

This final question, and why did the -- why did not the scholarships increase? Sorry.

Our response was the scholarship awards were increased across the board two years ago by about 45 percent. The American Legion Auxiliary National Finance Committee has already been discussing future increases.

So those were questions that we received prior to coming here, and we appreciate them. That tells us everyone's looking at it and noticing the information.

Okay. I think we're down to expenses. So let's move on into expenses. Okay. Exhibit A, okay, this is the centennial plan, okay, strategic plan. The reserves being carried over from fiscal year '18, year four delayed expenditures are 409,437, as we project fiscal year '19, ALA centennial strategic plan expenses to be 409 -- I can't even talk today. Okay. \$409,437. The proposed additional reserve funds to be relieved for fiscal year '19 are zero. Are there any questions concerning the strategic planned budget?

(No response.)

MS. RIEGEL: All right. So that concludes our report at this point. Everyone please thank Chrystal for her assistance.

(Applause.)

VOICE: Do you have any questions for Sara? Now's the time. All right. Stay right here. If not, Madam President, I move the adoption of the 2018-2019 budget for approval.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the approval of -- well, since the motion comes from the committee, a second is not required. So the

question is on the approval of the proposed FY19 budget as presented. Is there any discussion? Are you ready for the question?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the approval of the proposed FY19 budget as presented. All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Motion carried. The motion to approve the proposed FY19 budget has passed.

VOICE: Thank you, Madam President, and I would like to say that to all of you this is Sara's first time presenting. You are a scary crowd and she did very well, did she not?

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, the Foundation Board President, Linda Boone, will now present the Foundation's budget. Linda?

MS. BOONE: Good morning everyone.

VOICES: Good morning.

MS. BOONE: I'd like to just take a moment to tell you some personal information about Stephen Peck, because I didn't want to do this before because I thought it would distract from his own credibility and everything, credentials and -- but Stephen is the son of Gregory Peck. And although he didn't go in -- Steve didn't go into acting, his son did. His son is Ethan Peck, who is -- has been in acting for quite a number of years, and the real biggie that Steve told us when he arrived was that his son Ethan has just been tapped to be the new Spock in the Star Trek Series.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: I think it's sort of fun. So, The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation budget. As you know, the American Legion Auxiliary funds all the administrative expenses of the Foundation, and so that budget -- you should have all the budget there -- and it's pretty simple.

The inspected -- expected revenue is \$423,064, and that's the total expenses. Inside that we have to list all the expenses and everything, so if you go down to the key areas of the proposed budget, it gives you some highlights of some of the increases and such. Inside that is \$170,000 we expect to give in grants this year, so watch for that.

And we're starting to launch some more definitive recruitment of planned giving donors, so there's some emphasis on that. When the Foundation meets in October, we'll be having a presentation about that, and looking forward to how we can educate and engage more people to be planned donors for the Foundation.

So the -- I move for the adoption of the proposed FY19 budget for the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

VOICE: We didn't get copies of it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Are we good? Is there a second on the motion?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. The question is on the approval of the proposed FY19 Foundation budget as presented. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Are you ready for the question?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the adoption on the FY19 Foundation budget as presented. All those in favor, please say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The motion to approve the proposed FY19 Foundation budget has passed. Thank you, Linda.

MS. BOONE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ladies, since you've already received a copy of the resolution entitled Modify Standing Rules to Change Specific Members of the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee, it will not be read.

The question is on the adoption of the resolution titled Modify Standing Rules to Change Specific Members of the Executive Committee to the NEC. Is there a discussion?

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. I'd like to move Section 1 in the Resolved Clause to read as follows:

The Executive Committee to the NEC shall be comprised of the following members: The National President, the National Vice President, 5 Divisional Vice Presidents, and 2 NEC members, with the National Secretary and the National Treasurer to be advisors with a voice and on said committee, but no vote.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Do you have that in writing so we can --

MS. SEELEY: I can email it. I have it in writing in a note.

MS DUNGAN: Okay. I need it so I can repeat it. Thank you.

It has been moved to amend -- is that the Section -- let's see, what Section?

MS. SEELEY: Section Resolved Clause 1, yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It has been moved to amend the Resolved Clause 1 to read as follows:

The Executive Committee to the NEC shall be comprised of the following members: The National President, the National Vice President, 5 Divisional Vice Presidents, and 2 National Executive Committee members, with the National Secretary and National Treasurer with a voice and on said committee, but no vote.

Okay. I will need a second. Is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: There's a second. Is there any discussion? You have the right to speak.

MS. SEELEY: The reasoning behind this is the way that the current resolution reads, there is no advisory capacity for the National Secretary who is our national advisor and technically a CEO of our organization.

Okay. Let me take that back. Not CEO, but basically the one who knows the organization from the inside. We would need that advisory capacity to make solid decisions based on their knowledge and expertise because if this advisory committee overall is to make decisions in lieu of the NEC on an immediate decision basis, we need their advice.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

MS. BOONE: Linda Boone, Past National President. The thought process of not having a bigger Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee was because the original plan for this was so that things could be done speedily, and that it could, you know, that they could get things done quicker as needed on an -- as a priority basis.

The thing is about -- in this it says that the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee can call on whoever they need for information. So having to list all those people I think is not necessary, but they would call on whatever specific topic they're addressing. So I find that unnecessary.

To have all five of Divisional Vice Presidents I think is excessive and might be difficult to convene. So that was the reason behind the original, when the Past National Presidents were talking about how we -- see, this whole committee was so new when it first started, this is still very new, and so we don't have really any big objection to the actions that have been taken, but we think this would involve more of the voting members of the NEC. So that's all.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

MS. BOONE: You're very welcome.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Anyone else?

MS. CLYDE: Susie Clyde, Department of South Dakota. Okay. So my question was this committee was formed like in 2012, is that correct?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I'm not sure.

MS. CLYDE: So and I realize my name is on here, but I had --

MS. BOONE: About '13 we think, '13, '14, administrative year '13, '14.

MS. CLYDE: Okay. So I realize my name is on here, but my question is has this committee done something that made them not -- because in talking to a few people, I guess I was told that they make decisions and don't refer to the NEC, and I don't believe that's true. I believe they let the NEC know everything that they're doing.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I think so. I don't think they've made any decisions this year as a committee. Since has been formed there has been no action taken other than to come with a recommendation maybe to the NEC, but no decisions have been made by this committee.

MS. CLYDE: Well, and that's what I thought. The other thing is I do believe that the finance and the secretary needed to be on there because they know the inner workings of this organization, whereas the NECs are all from different departments and don't know what are going on the national level.

MS. JEFFORD: But as you -- am I allowed to speak?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right. Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: Yes, Janet Jefford, Past National President. I was on the original group when we first started discussing the need for an executive committee to the NEC, you know, and, like Linda said, this was new to our organization. And it seemed like every committee we had always had the National Secretary and the National Treasurer on it. It was just something that we did.

If you look at Best Practices of Boards, executive committees are made up of voting members of the board of trustees or board of directors, whichever you want to call them. That's you.

We made an executive board up of five members, three of them -- two of them are members with no vote, and one of them is not even a member of the NEC. So we had an executive board making decisions where the majority of those members did not have the voting power on the NEC. This board of directors is actually the body that directs this organization as it -- and is responsible for its decisions and its longevity.

So in thinking about it and looking at it, we tried to come up with a way where the voting power of the executive board to the NEC would be made up of those voting members. It's good practice.

And I will have to disagree, and I'm going to disagree with goodwill, that the executive board did not make any decisions this year because -- and I'm putting myself on a limb saying this probably -- and Sara, I have to tell you: You did an awesome job at the reporting of finances, and I know you'll be a wonderful National Treasurer -- but I think many of us were dismayed that at the last, the NEC meeting, that was a complete surprise to everyone, and that kind of -- that came out of -- and I don't know for sure, but it might have come out of discussions of the executive board. And then I -- and that's why the second part of this resolution I think is so important. Board committees should take minutes --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: -- and those minutes should be made available.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: We're on the amendment.

MS. JEFFORD: Okay. I'm sorry.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you.

MS. DUSCHECK: Diane Duscheck. There was the question on whether or not the executive board had done anything, the executive board to the NEC.

There is a question on whether the executive board to the NEC had done anything this year. And as was mentioned, it was recommendations. So one of them was looking at dues increase and what needs to be done in order to sustain the organization moving forward, and there you need to have a finance chairman on there to give you guidance.

The second thing that we looked at was who to replace Marta, because she really wanted to retire for the last three years and it kept getting put off. So that was a discussion, and people on the NEC were notified of that quickly, like all of the decisions, all of the recommendations that came from

this board had been pushed out to the NEC, most of them within days, so you're not waiting weeks for anything.

And the third thing was looking at a new building to purchase as opposed to renting. As National President, I'm sure Mary Davis would say the same thing because this happened during her year.

I don't know, Mary, would you want to be down here and in Indianapolis looking for a building? So somebody else needs to do that, so we need the other people on that board, and selectively in Robert's you see the part that says, you know, a lot of times you have people that are voting members of a board that are on the executive committee, but that's not necessarily something that you have to have.

And as you keep reading that same section in Robert's you'll see that it says that you can have people that don't have any kind of voting obligation there. Thank you.

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada, as a clarification for my reasoning for asking to put all five divisional VP's on this committee.

First of all, in the day of electronic communications we can reach out and, yes, it does expand this board a little bit more. However, emails, conference calls can all be done relatively quickly if a decision is made.

Second reasoning is because during each caucus meeting, the body of our membership in those divisions is who particularly places our VPs on so they become voting members. We voted them in. Those people are our voice as an overall haul -- overall to make sure the membership is being heard in this committee.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

MS. BOZELLA: Madam Chair, Suzie Bozella, NEC Colorado. Well, having just heard this amendment, I'm in agree with -- agreement with that because of the original resolution not having the expertise on the committee, like the National Secretary.

I think we just made a policy change where we were encouraging the NECs to serve more than one year, so that would give more consistency to this committee also, so that there's somebody on there more than one year, other than the vice president, and it's not different people every year. I like that addition to the original resolution.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Anyone else? Okay. If there's no further discussion, we're going to vote on the amendment. Do you want to do a voice?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. You have your keypad. Do you want me to read the amendment again?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. It has been moved to amend as a Resolved Clause No. 1 to read as follows:

The Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee shall be comprised of the following members: National President, the National Vice President, 5 Divisional Vice Presidents, 2 National Executive Committee Members, with the National Secretary and the National Treasurer with a voice on said committee, but no vote.

Are you ready to vote? One, in favor of the amendment; two, not in favor. Please vote.

Has everyone voted? We're going to show the results. The blue is one, that's in favor of the amendment, and I can't see the numbers, but it --
VOICES: 40 to 20.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: 40 to 20. The amendment is adopted. Is there any further discussion on the resolution as amended?

MS. DUSCHECK: Diane Duscheck, Wisconsin. I speak against this whole amendment, and the reason is as we look at this even now, the five divisional vice presidents are new every year, the two people from the NEC that the president appoints could be new every year. The one person that would need any kind of continuity would be the vice president moving into the presidency.

Secondly, we've been working for a number of years to get governance and management working together, so that means staff and volunteers working together. This totally eliminates that. And the national organization's not been able to do any kind of example to our departments if we show at national that governance and management are not capable or don't want to work together.

So the president's going to be the only one that has any kind of experience on the board and any continuity. The new board would be all volunteers. If you have NEC members who are new to the NEC -- and that can happen -- you know the first year is sort of a learning curve, you don't know necessarily everything that's going on in the NEC, so there's no background there. You wouldn't necessarily know the background to make decisions on some of the things that come up.

The incoming president doesn't necessarily know all the NEC members. I know I was going around yesterday going is she going to be back again next year? And you know, unless I find out whether your department is one of those that has a multiple-year term, you really don't know.

There are very few people here that aren't -- well, there are more people that are not hand-picked now. The key corporate officers of the organization are totally left out, and I realize it says that you can use them as getting information from them, but there again it depends on your relationship as to whether or not you're going to be asking anyone for information.

The current mix gives us governance, management, and finance. And the way it's broken up right now, nobody has an upper hand. There are two from governance, there are two from management, and there's one from finance, as opposed to having five or seven from governance.

So I am not in favor of this.

MS. KNICKERBOCKER: Debra Knickerbocker, Department of Connecticut NEC. I also am not in favor of this motion and -- as amended or otherwise. I agree the -- one of the resolved clauses says that the president is allowed to pick a divisional president and two NECs every year, and I agree with the previous speaker that that does not help with the continuity that we are trying to preserve here.

And also, the fact that it could be anyone that that person would like to have on that committee, so I am in -- not in favor of this motion.

MS. DAVIS: Madam President, Mary Davis, Past National President. I am in favor of this. I found it very important as a national president, being the first time national president and you only get one try at it, that the advisors that you have when a decision needs to be made quickly are the advisors who are also going to be those who vote on what it is that we need to make that decision on.

Having advisors come in who are not voting members definitely strengthens the resolution as it is written now with the amendment, and so now you've got the advisors who can talk to you about the pros and cons. Unfortunately, sometimes I felt like I only got the cons of something that we needed to decide on, and I think you all need to hear the pros and cons of every decision that's made.

And so, I think it's important that we have those who are voting and who have the consciousness of the organization best in their -- in their interest.

MS. BROWN-PARK: Madam President, Nancy Brown-Park, Past National President. I speak in favor of the motion. I think over the last close to 100 years we've elected a national president, and we elect that national president to make good, strong decisions on those that she appoints, and I think she will do that.

So I do speak in favor. I think it makes sense to have people who are voting members on that committee who are voting members of the NEC, great advisors that can come in and help. I'm fine with the new structure, that works for me too, but I do believe that our National President will make good decisions.

And I think we need to remember this is new for our NEC to have members that are serving more than a year, so it's new too. This is all new to us, so I speak in favor.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Madam President, Deborah Kryczkowski, Department of New York NEC. I am in favor of this only -- I believe that we should have NECs on this committee to speak for ourselves, for the body. Thank you.

VOICE: Madam President, I speak in favor of this resolution, quite simply because it attunes us to best practices, and I think that should be our goal, and I have full confidence that anyone sitting in those chairs or these chairs will make competent decisions for our organization.

MS. LONG: Kathy Long from Montana. I need a clarification. We ended up changing the resolution on No. 1. Does that ultimately have to change the resolution No. 2 because we now have 5 and 2 or -- you know, I don't understand if it's going to be just the one?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It actually will affect the Resolved Clause No. 2, does anyone have any objection to making that change with this -- with the amendment that was proposed? No objection. So that would mean the Resolved Clause No. 2 is amended. Thank you.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Rita Navarreté, Past National President from the Department of New Mexico, and I think I would be remiss if I didn't make this statement.

I wish that the year move forward and that it be fully accountable to all, all members, at all, all levels. And in the spirit of goodwill that we be

transparent and we go directly to our board with questions, for clarification, for information.

And I am so pleased that there were five questions addressed prior to the convention on the budget, because a lot of hours, resources are spent in preparing that budget for us.

As past national presidents, we have a voice and no vote, and we hope that we're used for guidance, for information, and may we have strategic planning to be at a national organization, having good will, as to strategic.

At first it hit me hard but, since we've been in our plan -- and I'm a grassroots member -- we are in trouble, ladies. We all know it. And if we as a national organization and national leaders cannot set the example of how we work -- and I've already been told that's enough, Rita, thanks Rita. No.

(Laughter.)

MS. NAVARRETÉ: I have been told that I'm Pollyanna when I'm with my past national presidents, and I looked that up and it's because you know what, she also liked to dance, so that's where I'll tie it into. God bless you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Anyone? Doreen?

MS. GALLAGHER: Madam President, Department of New Jersey, Doreen Gallagher, NEC. I call for the question.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Is there any objection?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No objection. Okay. We will proceed to vote. Are we ready? All those -- this is on the entire amendment with -- as amended. It's the -- it's on the entire resolution as amended, so what should I read? The resolved clause or just --

Would you like for me to read all the resolved clauses?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes or no?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay.

MS. GIMPEL: Madam President, Toni Gimpel, NEC Idaho. On the -- if we're going to vote on the entire resolution, then the second resolved should be deleted until -- it says the appointment of two national executive committee --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Well, Resolved Clause No. 2 has been amended.

MS. GIMPEL: But you resolved it just to five appointments, that should automatically be already on there, right? They wouldn't be appointed because before -- if I'm clarifying it in my head, you were to appoint one divisional. Now all five will be automatic members, so that --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes. Uh-huh. That was --

MS. GIMPEL: -- you delete that first part that only people that will be appointed are two NEC.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Right. That's correct. Glynis, that was what you were proposing. Yes? Thank you for clarifying that. Okay. If we're ready to vote, all those in favor press 1, opposed press 2. Has everyone voted? Are we complete? Would you show the results please? Okay.

The resolution as amended to -- entitled Modify Standing Rules to Change Specific Members of the Executive Committee to the NEC has passed.

With the adoption of this resolution, we will now consider appointments for the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee for the 2018-2019 administrative year, and that would be two appointments, which are National Executive Committee people, and I have asked two, and I'm assuming after this discussion they are still willing to serve? I have a nod? Okay.

And I wish to appoint Lisa Williamson from the Department of Alaska. Lisa, will you stand?

And Deborah Kryczkowski, from the Department of New York, would you please stand?

So the question is on the appointment of Lisa William and Deborah Kryczkowski. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No discussion? Would you all like for me to -- would you like to vote. Do you want to just a voice vote, is that okay?

VOICES: Voice, yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. The motion is carried and Lisa Williamson and Deb Kryczkowski have been appointed to the Executive Committee to the National Executive Committee for the year 2018-2019 administrative year.

Is there any other business to come before the NEC meeting, new business? Hearing none, the Chair calls for the National Secretary for any updates.

MS. BUCKLER: Just real quick. If you are going to go to the joint session, and you came, managed to get into this room without going through the magnetometers, you will have to go through the magnetometers to get down to the main floor and go through the main hall. They do have all the doors closed that they said they were going to.

And with that, I will just say I have been and indeed it's been a privilege to be have been with the organization for 10 years. My driving force and throughout my career has been to leave things better than you found them. I am proud of the things that I've done, and I hope you agree that they're a little bit better than what they were when I found them. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: At the conclusion of this meeting, you might want to come by and offer your personal best wishes to Dubbie.

So as we close the first meeting of the 2018-19 National Executive Committee meeting, I leave you with these words: Let service in the community, state, and nation, be ever a main objective of the American Legion Auxiliary and its members.

So please stand now as our National Chaplain offers the benediction.

DR. DEBORAH BLANCH: Ladies, as we start this year off together, I would ask that you look to your right, to your left, and I'll ask that you hold hands as we go across the aisles, as we stand in agreement before you leave today. Thank you so much.

Let us all bow our heads and accept this, as we stand in agreement.

Father God, we stand together side by side as vessels of prayer. Let us extend and feel the commitment of Your will. Let us continue to pray, spread your word, and fulfill the purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary. We thank you for the guidance you have graced us with from our officers and fellow members. Give us, we pray, a willing attitude and grateful hearts.

May we leave today with a renewed desire, and be filled with the knowledge of your will and spiritual understanding, as we travel home.

Safe travels. God bless, God, country. For God we say for God and country and together we say in tribe, Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

CHAPLAIN ESPINOLA: Amen and Amen.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ladies, this concludes the first meeting of the 2018-19 Executive Committee. The meeting is adjourned.

(Applause.)

(Adjournment.)

(Whereupon, at 9:40 a.m. on Thursday, August 30, 2018, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

Appendix A



**SUMMARY OF MOTIONS / RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED**

BY

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NATIONAL
GOVERNING BOARDS (NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE)**

FOR 2017-2018 AND 2018-2019

and

**2018 NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES
CONVENED AUGUST 24 – AUGUST 30, 2018
IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

**2017-2018 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 25, 2018**

**2018 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
NATIONAL CONVENTION AUGUST 24 – AUGUST 30, 2018**

**2018-2019 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 30, 2018**

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2017-2018
Final 2017-2018 NEC Meeting Held Pre-National Convention
in Minneapolis, Minnesota
August 25, 2018**

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 the NEC board packet emailed August 15, 2018:

- Charter cancellations – 118 charters canceled, as listed in the NEC board packet enclosure and as amended
- Resolution of non-financial support for the posthumous recognition of Dr. Helen Hughes Hielscher, a trailblazing ALA founder

M/S/C to allow the Finance Committee, with the assistance of the National Headquarters staff, to develop a standard procedure for the annual review of pay ranges within the employee job classification.

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Convention 2018
in Minneapolis, Minnesota
August 27-29, 2018**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions/Amendments Adopted

M/S/C = Moved, Seconded, Carried

M/S/C to allow that the tradition of beginning the National Convention with a parade of department colors resume for only the 2020 National Convention in honor of our 100th anniversary.

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2018-2019
First 2018-2019 NEC Meeting Held Post-National Convention
in Minneapolis, Minnesota
August 30, 2018**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted

M/S/C = Moved, Seconded, Carried

- M/S/C to support the US VETS Project “Women Vets on Point” by encouraging departments and units to learn and assist in improving mental health issues affecting women veterans.
- M/S/C to confirm the appointment of Linda Boone as Acting National Secretary until a Search Committee is established.
- M/S/C to confirm the continuing service of Sara Riegel for the office of National Treasurer for the 2018-2019 administrative year.
- M/S/C to approve the complete list of appointments to American Legion Auxiliary national Standing Committees, Special Committees, Foundation Board for the 2018-2019 administrative year (as circulated onsite in a list distributed to every member of the NEC and every meeting attendee (see the ALA National Red Book Directory online in the Members Only section of the ALA national website www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- M/S/C to adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 American legion Auxiliary National budget as circulated in advance via email on August 16, 2018, to the 2018-2019 administrative year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY19 Budget Proposal Packet.
- M/S/C to adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2019 American Legion Auxiliary Foundation budget, as circulated in advance via email on August 16, 2018, to the 2018-2019 administrative year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY19 Budget Proposal Packet.

Appendix B



**AWARDS PRESENTED
DURING NATIONAL CONVENTION
AUGUST 24 – 30, 2018**

*(Visit www.ALForVeterans.org
to see a full listing of 2017-2018 awards.)*

LIAISON TO CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

AWARDS:

Excellence Award - Department of Wyoming
Meritorious Achievement Award - Department of Ohio
U.S. Udie Grant Award - Department of Florida
Garland M. Murphy Jr. Award – Department of Florida

NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE:

Allied Unit 369, Indiana
Barrett-Davis-Watson Unit 233, Georgia
Otis Sampson Unit 59, Wisconsin
Beaumont Unit 33, Texas
Palmer Roberts Unit 214, Ohio
Department of Virginia

PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY COMMITTEE AWARDS:

Salute to Active-Duty Servicewomen Award

Army: Sergeant First Class Lillie Chambers
Marine Sergeant Victoria Pasohammond
Navy: Logistics Specialist Second Class Jessica Young
Air Force: Master Sergeant Kendra Sorice
Coast Guard: Lieutenant Helen J. Crump

Unit Member of the Year

Margie Yusko, Alabama
April Sinclair, Alaska
Linda Welch, Arizona
Charlotte Purdy, Arkansas
Lucienne Marie, California
Darlene Romero, Colorado
Sharon Riegsecker, D.C.
June Steele Jones, Delaware
Penny Kanbara, Florida
Dr. Cynthia Orms, Georgia
Vanessa Wilkins, Idaho
Shirley Hall, Illinois
Sabrina DeGolyer, Indiana
Karen Huber, Iowa
Deb Crawford, Kansas
Auburn Adwell, Kentucky
Christie Lisonbee, Louisiana
Diane Jewett, Maine
Kimberly Rogowsky, Maryland
Dora Morelli, Massachusetts
Pauline Meyer, Michigan
Debra Marsden, Minnesota
Carlean Parker, Mississippi
Sherill R. Compton, Missouri
Iola Barney, Nebraska

Sophia Lorena, New Jersey
Rose Anna Cirac, Nevada
Paula Richey, New Hampshire
Vanessa Wilkins, New Jersey
Irma Perea-Beck, New Mexico
Stephenie Clemons, New York
Patsy Smith Rountree, North Carolina
Debra Muus, North Dakota
Susan Schofield-Fratino, Ohio
Faye Hager, Oklahoma
Susan Smith, Oregon
Donna Monfelt, Pennsylvania
Judith Fardig, Rhode Island
Frances Mayer, South Carolina
Kate Aulner, South Dakota
Myrna Miller, Tennessee
Wendy Trahan, Texas
Julia Sharp, Utah
Judy Henning, Vermont
Nalena Klaas, Virginia
Savanna Kauffman, West Virginia
Regina Tepp, Wisconsin
Myrtle Rawdon, Wyoming
(Note: Not all American Legion Auxiliary departments submitted names to be considered for this national award.)

Woman of the Year:

Presented to Elizabeth Mackey, Retired Director of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival