



SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

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

**August 24-29, 2019
Indianapolis, Indiana**

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
NATIONAL OFFICERS
2018-2019**

National President

Kathy Dungan, Department of Mississippi

National Vice President

Nicole Clapp, Department of Iowa

Division National Vice Presidents

Central: Teresa Isensee, Department of Wisconsin

Eastern: Rita Barylski, Department of Connecticut

Northwestern: Barb Vetter, Department of South Dakota

Southern: Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood, Department of Alabama

Western: Janet Romero, Department of New Mexico

National Chaplain

Dr. Deborah Blanch, Department of Virginia

National Historian

Brenda W. Collins, Department of South Carolina

National Secretary

Linda Boone, Department of Oregon

National Treasurer

Sara Riegel, Department of Indiana

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**PRE-CONVENTION
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2019**

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ladies, please take your seats.

(Cross-talk.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ladies.

(Cross-talk.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Executive -- the National Executive Committee Meeting will now come to order.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Place all electronic devices in the silent mode and stand for the opening ceremonies.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Dr. Deborah Blanch, National Chaplain 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 Constitution & Bylaws National Chairman, Melanie Taylor, leading us in the Preamble to the Constitution. Deborah, please lead us in prayer.

DR. BLANCH: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

DR. BLANCH: Let's take a moment of silence before we start our prayer. Amen. Heavenly Father, we ask that thy blessings may rest upon us as we gather here for this meeting. May our deliberations have thy divine guidance and may we now, and in the days to come, rededicate our organizations and ourselves to the advancement of our sacred ideals ever remembering that the American Legion Auxiliary's principal service is for God and country. Direct us so that we may perform our duties faithfully and efficiently. And abundantly, as always, bless us now and forever more, and we all say together, Amen.

ALL: Amen.

MS. MCGINN: I pledge allegiance --

ALL: -- 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.

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

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies. We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The preamble.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh, I am so sorry. I'm in a hurry.

ALL: For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories of the incidence 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 DUNGAN: Thank you, Melanie. 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.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You may be seated. You may be seated. This meeting of the National Executive Committee is convened. It's hard to believe it's here. We are in Indianapolis 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.

I just see so many smiling faces of friends that I have met. It just warms my heart. I mean, y'all just look out there. I just love every one of you and I - the memories that I have -- well, let me get on.

I especially want to thank you for embracing my special project this year, Female Veterans. The last report that I received stated that your generous donations to the Veterans Project Fund via the Auxiliary Foundation to support my project totals \$78,224.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Thank you so much. I visited with many of you in your Departments, or rather most of you in your Departments, and I saw first-hand the awesome work that you do for our heroes, and I'm so proud that I was a part of those events. I have so many wonderful memories. We've had a very successful year, and I'm proud of the work we accomplished, but without you, the NEC, I could not have accomplished these things this year. So your kindness will never be forgotten. So thank you all for supporting me.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Today, as we conduct our business, it is my hope that you will ask questions and make informed decisions about each issue presented. Your input is valuable. Thank you for the work that you do - thank you for the work you have accomplished so far, and I look forward to a productive meeting today.

Please remember to make your way to the microphone in the aisles each

time you wish to speak, as this is the only way your remarks can be heard for the court reporter's transcripts of the meeting.

Now, when you entered the room today, your attendance was recorded electronically by our hardworking National Headquarters team. If you have any questions regarding your attendance, please see someone from Headquarters at the end of the meeting. Would the Headquarters wonderful team please stand so that they can see you? Everybody, just stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: We've got two in the back. All the -- four in the back. Thank you, ladies. Thank you, Travis.

Is that the only gentleman?

It is my pleasure to introduce the head table. I will begin with our National Vice President, Nicole Clapp.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Next, I will start with the National Vice President -- Division National Vice President, Teresa Isensee, Central Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Rita Barylski, Eastern Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Barb Vetter, Northwestern Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood, Southern Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Janet Romero, Western Division.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, our National Chaplain, Dr. Deborah Blanch.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our National Historian, Brenda Collins.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And our National Secretary, Linda Boone.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And our National Treasurer -- I need to say that twice because I forgot her last night. Our National Treasurer, Sara Riegel. I'm sorry, Sara.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And our Convention Parliamentarian, Chris Dickey.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, I would like to take a moment to introduce my personal pages. I have June Laws.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Where's June?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Mary Smith-Ried.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Dee Starkey.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Glynda Wheelis.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies. Now, past national presidents, please stand and be recognized.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That's enough, Nancy.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I know. I'm teasing. We will be utilizing a Consent Agenda this morning. Information about the Consent Agenda and how it works was circulated in advance, along with the following items listed on the Consent Agenda. The unit charter cancellation since February 2019. Now, there is one correction that needs to be noted. Nebraska's cancellation, it should be Long Pine, not Pine. So we need to add "Long" in there. Long Pine, not Pine, on Nebraska's cancellation.

Does anyone wish to remove anything from the Consent Agenda?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair will now entertain a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President, Georgia would like to remove Unit 110, Monticello, from the charters.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Georgia would like to remove Unit 110 from Monticello.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Monticello.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Is there anything else that needs to be noted to -- do we need to remove anything else?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Well, this -- the Chair will now entertain a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. As amended or do I -- as amended.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I move.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. (Indiscernible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Deborah Kryczkowski, Department of New York. I move that we accept the adoption --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Is there --

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: -- as amended.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Is there a second?

MS. GALLAGHER: Doreen Gallagher, Department of New Jersey. I'll second it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All I do is just -- there's no discussion on that, so it has been moved and seconded to accept the Consent Agenda as amended. All those in favor of adopting the Consent Agenda, please say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Those opposed, say no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it and the Consent Agenda as adopted -- is -- as amended is adopted. Okay.

The Chair is pleased to report that the Minutes Approval Committee met and approved the Minutes of the NEC meeting from February 2019. This committee is comprised of NEC members from the Departments of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Kansas. Thank you, ladies, for doing a wonderful job this year.

Now, we'll move to the Executive Committee Report. The Executive Committee to the NEC includes the following: National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, and the Finance Committee Chairman. This committee was not called to action to handle any business, so there's nothing to report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Audit Committee recommendation. The National Audit Committee has made a recommendation that the NEC vote to rescind the committee charter. This recommendation is based on the rationale that the National Audit Committee is the only standing committee that has a separate charter. All other national standing committees are detailed in our standing rules.

Further, the committee shared with me that the original charter, ratified by the NEC August 2010, is out-of-date and if not rescinded would be in need of several updates to reflect changes that have occurred over the years that were not captured in the charter. Since the Chair of the Audit Committee is not present, would someone like to make a motion to rescind the National Audit Committee Charter?

MS. TAYLOR: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: She is present?

MS. TAYLOR: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Jeri, would you like to --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would you like to make that motion? My apologies. Thank you, Melanie.

MS. GREENWELL: Thank you, Madam President. On behalf of the National Audit Committee and as a member of this NEC, I move the adoption of the proposal.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: To rescind the National Committee -- okay. Is there a second? Is there a second?

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. I second.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You're supposed to go to the mic.

(Laughter.)

MS. SEELEY: Do you think I need it?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you for your willingness. The question is on rescinding the National Audit Committee charter. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Hearing none. All those in favor say

aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it and the recommendation is adopted. Thank you, ladies. The Chair now calls on Peggy Thomas, Chairman of the National Finance Committee. Peggy?

MS. THOMAS: Madam President. Good morning, everyone.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: Everybody happy?

ALL: Yes.

MS. THOMAS: Oh, good.

(Cross-talk.)

MS. THOMAS: Well, I want to begin by saying good morning to you all.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: I would, at this time, like to present to you your National Finance Committee. And as I call your name, please rise and remain standing until all of you have been introduced. Vice Chairman, Virginia Hobbs. Committee members, Helen Riedlinger, Paula Raney, and Sharon Conatser. And myself, of course.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: I want to tell you that these Auxiliary members spend hours poring over budgets and other financial matters. We all take our responsibility seriously and each member of the committee has invaluable skills to offer in finance. Thank you, ladies, for all your hard work and dedication to this organization.

Each year, you tasked your National Finance Committee to do the following: oversee the investment planning, monitor financial statements, review fundraising campaigns, champion member benefits, review policies, and other financial matters. This ensures the ALA national organization meets nonprofit benchmarks and governmental requirements. In keeping with best practices, the committee makes fiscal policy recommendations for the NEC action and that's you all.

The National Finance Committee designates one member as a liaison to the ALA Foundation and another one to the Audit Committee. The purpose of this is to provide information between the two that might impact decision-making.

Due to responsible oversight, we were able to, again, fund visits to Departments by our five National Division Vice Presidents and continue the departmental organization effectiveness training at National Headquarters. Training this year was focused on financial policy and practices, and many departments sent both their treasurers and the secretaries to this meeting.

This fiscal year 2019, 516 members attended the six mission training sessions. The six National Junior meetings had 128 attending this year, a slight decrease over last year. Fundraising efforts by our development staff resulted in \$21,000 and that was on -- Giving Tuesday. Direct mail brought in \$500,000, and the bricks in front of our new headquarters building brought

in \$117,000 for the ALA and the ALA Foundation, and I think that's wonderful.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: USAA credit cards. Our members use them to bring in a minimum of \$25,000 in revenue each year. This is a reward to us, the ALA, for using the USAA card, and 90 percent of this is now shared with the Departments. So, ladies, if you haven't got your USAA credit card, apply as soon as you leave this convention, but not before.

(Laughter.)

MS. THOMAS: Due to many years of sound diversified investment strategies overseen by the Finance Committee, the organization was able to purchase the beautiful new headquarters building at 3450 Founders Road here in Indianapolis, exclusively from our financial reserves. And if you haven't been there, when you have the opportunity, please go because it is your building.

The adoption of the 2019 dues increase has helped us fulfill our duty and will help us to continue serving our mission of helping veterans, our military, and their families. Thank you, NEC, for taking that action. As we do each year, we urge all of you to recognize your fiduciary stewardship so the ALA will be around for another generation.

Now, Sara Riegel, our Treasurer, will come to the lectern to give you a few words. And I want to say while she's on her way here that Sara has been a joy and a pleasure to work with and she is always ready and willing to help all of us, and I think you all need to give her a round of applause because she stepped into an empty slot.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Sara?

MS. RIEGEL: Thank you, Peggy. Thank you, Madam Chairman. First of all, good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. RIEGEL: I have to say thank you very much to the Finance Committee after this year. Peggy stole my thunder. She pretty much went over all the things that I was going to speak about, so.

(Laughter.)

MS. RIEGEL: And that's okay. I'm good. But I did want to, just in recognition of all that we have to do today, and face, and challenge, I didn't want to be redundant in offering the information, so I would like you all to come to the NEC meeting next Thursday on the 29th, where we will be presenting the fiscal year '20 budget, and so we will be able to give you more information.

Thank you so much for this past year as well. I know that Kathy, I really love hearing, especially after all of the hours that we put in, all the -- when she touches base with all our grassroots members. All right? So thank you very much and we'll see you next Thursday.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Peggy, and thank you, Sara. As our current strategic plan comes to a close, I appointed a special committee to

chart our course for the journey ahead. This committee includes Linda Boone, Chairman, Janet Jefford -- would y'all like to stand so everyone will know who -- they probably do know who you are, but I still want you to stand.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Linda Boone, Chairman. Janet Jefford, Nancy Brown-Park, Lisa Chaplin. Lisa? Stephanie Abisi, and Tamara Shumate. This group was -- thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This group was asked to develop a process and goal for our next plan. I've asked a few members of that committee to report today. Ladies?

MS. JEFFORD: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. JEFFORD: Would you please take out your packets on the strategic planning? Today, we have the opportunity to kick off the next century of the American Legion Auxiliary by setting the direction of our organization for years to come. This can be accomplished by adopting the proposed five goals of the strategic plan and the process included in your packet.

Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to focus energy and resources, ensuring that we are working toward common goals, establishing agreement with intended outcomes, and assessing and adjusting the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.

Effective strategic planning directs not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how we will know whether it is successful or not. So our first step was to establish the parameters for our committee. Our team adopted a charter that will guide our work through the duration of this plan.

The charter outlines the responsibilities of the team, which includes developing and refining goals that fit with the vision and mission of the American Legion Auxiliary. We will be responsible for monitoring progress and reporting to the NEC and members on a regular basis.

However, our work does not include the development of action plans and implementation, as the National Headquarters staff will be responsible for leading that portion of the plan. There is no longer an implementation team nor a future focus team. Our team may take part in helping form strategies and action plans, but our main responsibility is to monitor progress and report to the NEC.

We have learned a lot from each strategic plan. This time, in addition to defining the strategic planning committee charter, we knew that our strategic plan needed a direction that clearly outlines development, implementation, and evaluation. Lisa Chaplin will explain a little about the process.

MS. CHAPLIN: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. CHAPLIN: In the packet you received, the proposed strategic plan was included, so take a look at that. This is our trajectory and compose for the plan. At the center of this process, you'll find the values, vision, and

mission statements, and those are not changing. They serve as constant reminders that our values, vision, and mission must always be at the center of our work.

As you can see, we start with goals, which you'll be adopting this morning along with this process. From these goals, strategies, tactics, and action plans will be developed. Each new strategy and tactic will have a system to measure our progress toward achieving the goal. These measurements or metrics will be reported to the NEC three times per year.

We hope to focus less on the process of planning and more on the outcomes for our members and mission work, with the ultimate goal of a stronger more mission-focused organization. Stephanie and Nancy will review the goals and give us a brief glimpse of plans that are already underway. Ladies?

MS. ABISI: Our last plan did not directly refer or touch our mission. Teams often worked with little direction and focus on the mission. Our plan with -- our hope with this plan is that the five proposed goals are more mission centric and ensure relevance to those that we serve.

So our proposed goals: cultivate a variety of mission engagement opportunities, enhance organizational effectiveness of departments and units, recruit and retain members through mission engagement, ensure financial stewardship of resources to maximize our mission delivery, and enhance and foster the family relationship with the American Legion.

During the next few minutes, we will review some potential strategies and metrics to give you an idea of the direction that each goal is headed. Also, if additional funds are needed for action items in this plan, the cost will be included in the general operating budget proposals. Our current plan is to not ask for a special allocated budget for strategic planning. Costs associated with this plan will be clearly explained and associated with outcomes and metrics.

So let's take our first goal, cultivate a variety of mission engagement opportunities. As was mentioned earlier, this plan is more mission-focused. We plan to continuously evaluate current and future mission programs for relevance. We will review annual data of program impacts and trends to improve our mission delivery. We plan to better utilize ALA media channels to communicate our mission-focused messaging with internal and external audiences.

So one of our biggest focuses over the next year will include a refresh of the website and the systems that operate the website. The costs for this project have been included in the FY '20 budget proposal.

Our second goal, enhance organizational effectiveness of departments and units, includes developing a training plan for our organization at all levels: national, department, unit, and national staff. Strategies include: developing an annual training plan, outlining curriculum, delivery timeline, target audiences, desired outcomes, and number of participant targets.

One of our first measurables will be the expansion of mission training in the 2019-2020 year, to include a total of eight trainings. Five traditional mission training and a second level of more advanced training, looking at further engaging the volunteer to increase our membership. Again, the funds

for these plans have been included in the FY '20 budget proposal.

Nancy?

MS. BROWN-PARK: Our third goal, recruit/retain members through mission engagement addresses not only growing membership, but developing those members so that they will stay in the organization long-term. Ultimately, we want to create a menu of mission engagement opportunities aligned with members' interests.

We have an exciting opportunity with the changes to the eligibility and the Legion Act. We must seize the moment so that we do not lose the momentum. Over the next year, we plan to pursue joint marketing efforts and communication strategies with the American Legion.

Our next goal, ensure financial stewardship of resources to maximize mission delivery, focuses on the physical health of our organization. Our development team will continue to develop a diverse income stream, which includes increasing program revenue via donations, sponsorships, grants, and affinity programs. We will continue to include an annual review of long-term revenues and expenditures to develop projects and remedies for deficits.

And last, but certainly not least, enhance and foster the family relationship with the American Legion. Using the perspective of unit post members, we hope to synchronize mission delivery efforts for both organizations. We will continue participation in the American Legion Auxiliary Washington Conference. The fiscal year '20 budget proposal includes expanding the authorized attendees to the legislative chairman from each department. We will annually review the return on investment of the conference and make changes as they are necessary.

As we have briefly explained, this plan is more internally focused, which you -- while you may not hear about the National Strategic Plan at every turn, you will begin to see the outcomes of the work being done as a result of you adopting the goals and processes.

So, in conclusion, effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful. By developing a more mission centric plan, this plan will help the organization be stronger and be here for the next century of veterans and their families.

Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: On behalf of the Strategic Committee -- the Special Committee on Strategic Planning, I move we adopt the proposed planning process and the strategic planning five goals. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Since the motion comes from a committee, there's no second required. The question is on the adoption of the new strategic plan goals and the process. Is there any discussion?

MS. LLOYD: Good morning. Lauren Lloyd from the District of Columbia. I'm very excited to see this plan. I do have a question for clarification. On the evaluation process, are you -- is there a plan to have a reputable organization to help us with the measurement of the impact and the -- sorry -- and the -- the impact and the measurables that are met?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It's really hard to hear because the speakers are

--

MS. LLOYD: Okay.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: We can't really hear very well.

MS. LLOYD: Sorry. So to repeat the question more clearly, is there -- I see in the plan that there is a recommendation for evaluation through a reputable organization. So do we already have that person in mind or that organization to do the measurables to make sure it's an evidence-based evaluation?

MS. JEFFORD: We got it. Thank you.

MS. ABISI: The current plan is that we will evaluate ourselves based on -- our last plan didn't have a lot of metrics built into it, so this plan will and it won't move forward. So our -- the people working on the plan will set their own metrics, evaluate those metrics, and then report to the committee, who will then report to the NEC. So right now, the plan is not too involved, but that doesn't mean that we won't involve a consultant or an agency later on.

MS. LLOYD: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Laura. Any more questions, discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No more discussion? I'm excited about the plan. I think it's a good plan. It's a good start. It's going to move us forward and it's more mission based and that's what we're all about, working the mission.

Since there's no more discussion, all those in favor say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it and the recommendation is adopted. Thank you, ladies. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, we'll move on to new business. First item under new business comes as a proposal from our National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. The Chair recognizes Melanie Taylor to present the motion.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam President, on behalf of the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move to rescind the Code of Conduct that was adopted into the standing rules on August 19th, 2017 during the Pre-Convention National Executive Committee Meeting in Reno, Nevada.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the -- rescinding the -- the question is on rescinding the Code of Conduct in the standing rules. Because the motion comes from a committee, no second is needed. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

MS. DUSCHECK: Madam President, Diane Duscheck, Wisconsin. When we had the Johnson, Grossnickle & Associates evaluation, lack of goodwill was one of the things that really stuck out that was taking a toll on

our membership, and so this Code of Conduct was put in, in order to help us out with that.

And as I looked back at the minutes of that meeting, it appeared -- well, it appeared from the information that we got in the mail that it was a very negative meeting and it really wasn't. There were only four people that talked about that particular motion, and even the person that had concerns about it not being complete enough, like we needed to clarify things, said, "I think it's awesome that we're actually trying to hold ourselves to a standard that the public would understand and want to come and join us," and everyone else that spoke that day was in favor of having this Code of Conduct. And even in the strategic planning report, they said that this Code of Conduct actually looks at the good side of what we'd expect from auxiliary members. So I think that keeping the Code of Conduct would be a good thing, but a motion that would be needed is during this next administrative year, we need to get a committee together to help clarify more about what we're meeting with a good Code of Conduct.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Diane.

MS. BOZELLA: Madam President, Susie Bozella, Department of Colorado. I speak in opposition to this resolution. I have talked with several members in our department and we all agree that the Code of Conduct should remain in our documents. After the Code was passed at National Convention in 2017, our department adopted it and placed it in our constitution and bylaws. We also adopted or developed a pledge form to use.

The current Code of Conduct is not perfect, but it neatly defines the expected behavior of an ALA member. If used properly, it can provide a path to disciplining a member, who breaks the Code and has previously signed a pledge form as part of our office. It can serve as a reminder that she has, indeed, pledged to follow these guidelines.

Unfortunately, as we all know, there are some ALA members who are abusive verbally to fellow members or who do not treat others kindly. I agree that it could be improved in some ways or that a part could be added to address the consequences of breaking the Code of Conduct.

I feel that removing this Code of Conduct would be a step backwards. More than ever, we need to have these behavior guidelines.

And last, I would ask what would happen to the departments who have adopted this Code in their department C&Bs or their districts and units? Can we keep our own department Code of Conduct?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. What was the question?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. To answer your question can the departments keep their Code of Conduct in their constitution and bylaws, yes, you can. Is there any more discussion?

MS. SEELEY: Madam President?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I'm sorry. Glynis?

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. The Department of Nevada actually is in favor of rescinding the current Code of Conduct to possibly be rewritten with a better one. There are items in the Code of

Conduct that are almost impossible to implement and it also -- in the Department's overall opinion when we did discuss it, it was now all of a sudden you want us to have a goodwill towards one another, but at the same time, you're making us our own ALA police.

And that was just not fair at all, because there are items in there that make it almost like a mean girls club again, and that was one of the things that actually came up, because we're trying to eliminate that not create new ALA police. So Nevada is very much in favor of removing this the way it is with the possibility of creating a new one.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam President?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes?

MS. TAYLOR: When this was circulated -- excuse me. When this was circulated to the NEC, the rationale was included and there was a lot of discussion originally about this Code of Conduct. Who would define the violations, how would these be addressed, could behavior be retroactively addressed in this, and during the original debate there was a lot of talk about, as Glynis just said, the mean girls society.

So suggestions were made to rewrite this Code of Conduct in a less broad terminology, but there was no motion made.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Is there any more discussion? Okay.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Madam President?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Deborah Kryczkowski, Department of New York. I move to amend and to rewrite this proposal, to rewrite it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: We have a motion on the floor.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. We have a motion on the floor. That's a separate motion and it can be done after this motion.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Okay.

MS. WILDRICK: Madam President, Treva Kay Wildrick, Department of Florida. Two points. First point, our unit -- excuse me -- our workshop at department just proposed or just presented this Code of Conduct through our Juniors and it was unanimously "adopted." And we brought it all back to our units, and I know Old Glory Unit 183 unanimously voted and signed the document that we are all in favor of this Code of Conduct. We want to make sure that we are representing our organization in a proper manner.

My second question or point, we were told over many, many years that a book was in progress in regard to our Code of Conduct and how we are going to determine inappropriate behavior, how to deal with those types of situations. Do we have any type of progress report as to where that book is?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It has not --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Great minds think alike.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It has not happened. Would you like to speak?

MS. WILDRICK: I feel if we have no type of Code of Conduct, who are we? As far as being our own police, you can do it in a proper manner. We all are ladies of distinction. We don't have to be bullies with one another, but we do have to control the bullies that are being around us, and unfortunately, our

world is coming to that point, and we have to be strong and we can do this and make sure that we are proper.

MS. BOONE: So TK --

Ms. WILDRICK: Yes?

MS. BOONE: -- the booklet that was promised before is not going to happen. What we have in place is an Academy, an ALA Academy that is about to be released. It will be released shortly after this convention about how you deal with difficult situations and how do you have complaints versus conflict and walkthroughs. It's a really good self-guided tour of how to deal with behavior. So that's how we're addressing that to give the unit, average unit member, tools to deal with conflict --

MS. WILDRICK: Okay.

MS. BOONE: -- instead of -- we've -- in my opinion, we've escalated the poor behavior, too, that it overshadows so much and we need to be working the mission. We need to be focused on the mission, and I -- for a lot of years, there was a woman I didn't like in my department, and I really didn't like to be around her, but she was the best person to serve our veterans and I could stand to work with her, and be around her, and whatever, because we were both focusing on the mission. And so I think sometimes we get away from that.

But anyway, the Code of Conduct is very -- it requires a pledge. The way it's written now, it requires a pledge and there is a lot of implied punishment, so it -- you know, rewriting might be a better option.

MS. WILDRICK: Well, kudos to the ALA Academy. Woo-hoo.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Linda. Thank you, TK.

MS. WALLACE: Eva Wallace, Department of Washington. When this came up originally for discussion, I agree there was discussion that we would receive something, so it was never implemented in our department, per se, because we were under the impression that we would be receiving how to implement this program, which I think is a good program.

I think we need to have some sort of level of understanding of how we work with our other members and everything. I was not against it, but I would like to, as the others have said, I think we still need to have something that tells us how we treat each other. I'm not sure that the ALA Academy is always the right format because I -- so many of our members don't necessarily access that and go into that.

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. If I'm not mistaken, the way that Chris just actually said, if we rescind this, we can then come back once this motion is either approved or denied, and then create a new motion to make a better document.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes.

Ms. SEELEY: Okay. So then a lot of this conversation, we can just make another motion and make a new document?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Even if this motion is not rescinded, we can make a motion to rewrite.

MS. ENDRES: Joyce Endres, Department of Wisconsin. I was the goal champion that addressed this internal culture of goodwill, and goodwill is an issue in the American Legion Auxiliary. This was a recommendation that

came from the goal to committee and there was lots of discussion, lots of vetting by our legal counsel, by many, many people that addressed this.

I agree the process is complex, and I agree with the amendment of rewriting it, but I really personally feel that we do need to have some regulations at our unit, county, district, department, and national level on the conduct of certain people in this organization. That certainly needs to have a process to help us make it better and make that goodwill culture grow in this organization.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Too late now.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, I think we all can agree that we need to cultivate a culture of goodwill in the organization, but maybe a compromise can be just like we have a mission and a vision, and we have a Code of Ethics that was adopted a while ago, but we don't sign a pledge. We accept it, and we accept everyone's good, their ability to abide by that mission and vision. So maybe the same way it could be here. We have a Code of Conduct, but we don't ask anybody to be signing a pledge or signing their life away. And some of the things in here about abiding by all state, federal regulations, how can we police anything like that? So I think a -- it would be good to vote to rescind this Code of Conduct and write a new one and not include having to sign a pledge.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Thank you. If there's no more discussion --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: -- we will now vote. The vote is to rescind the Code of Conduct in the standing rules. All those in favor, say Aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it and the recommendation is adopted.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It's adopted to rescind --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: -- the Code of Conduct in the standing rules. That's what the motion was.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Madam President, Debbie Kryczkowski, Department of New York. I move to appoint a committee to rewrite the Code of Conduct to include no signatures.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. There's a motion to rewrite the Code of Conduct to include -- can you help me?

(Cross-talk.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No signature, no pledge form. Is that all, just to rewrite it to -- okay.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Without the pledge.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Without the pledge.

Does anybody need clarification more than me? In other words, do we need the same prototype (indiscernible) just without the pledge?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That's what she's saying?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. I just need for my own understanding, your motion is to keep this current Code of Conduct and just remove --
(Cross-talk.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To rewrite it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Totally rewrite it?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Without --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: But without -- so in other words, a total --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Signature.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: -- reworking?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Now -- I just needed to clarify. Okay.

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

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. There's a motion and a second. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No discussion. We'll call for the vote. All those in favor say aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The ayes have it and the motion to rewrite the Code of Conduct, but do not include the pledge, the written pledge, is adopted.

Is there any other new business?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: No new business. Linda, are there any updates?

MS. BOONE: Probably. Most of you want to know when the heck am I going home. So I'll give you an update on the search. As, I believe, we told you before, we hired a search firm and they brought us a number of candidates. The search committee went through those candidates' resumes, along with the leadership of the organization, and we picked five to interview, and on Thursday and Friday we interviewed those five candidates via Zoom, which is like Skype. And so we are moving forward to select three to do in-person interviews in a couple of weeks. So we have some real good viable candidates, so hopefully we'll be hearing more as we move forward. We'll see how those interviews go.

Don't forget, you know, check your agendas. You've got your pre-con meetings that everybody needs to go to, and then please come to the constitution and bylaws pre-con meeting at 1:00 p.m. today. The National

Judge Advocate will be there to be able to clarify any questions you might have and then the division caucuses, the fun stuff, starts at 3 o'clock. All right?

That's it, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Linda. I just want to say one thing. Someone made the suggestion that a committee be appointed to work on this Code of Conduct. I just quickly talked to the Vice President, Nicole, and she -- there's no way that we work on a committee and name them today, so -- and since this is my last Executive Committee meeting, Nicole has agreed to appoint those committee members. So we want to -- I want to make sure that you know that we have taken it seriously, and we will work on it, and she will appoint that committee.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Before we have closing prayer, we have a very serious issue to address. Past National President, Linda Newsome, would you please come to the podium to address this issue?

MS. NEWSOME: Madam President, members of the National Executive Committee, and all of those in the room who have been so gracious to come and join us this morning, yes, we have a very important piece of business. First of all, I would ask that Sue Stewart please come to the podium. Susan? (Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: If you need to, take her by the elbow and get her up here.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: She look like she's coming to her --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She looks like she's coming down the aisle

--

MS. NEWSOME: -- maker.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- getting married.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Come on, Sue. I won't bite. I promise. For those of you who are not aware, Sue Stewart has been in our National Headquarters Office, and correct me if I'm wrong, which I'm sure you will do, since 1978.

VOICES: Wow.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: I believe you came right out of kindergarten. Well, each of the past National Presidents, who are seated here today and those who couldn't make it, have worked with Sue. Each and every one of us. Man, that's --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A lot.

MS. NEWSOME: -- fortitude. That was our good fortune. Sue has made such an invaluable contribution to our organization that I'm sure you feel as I do, that she will be sorely missed, but I understand that Linda got her phone number so, you know, she's not quite out of play.

The PNP's especially would like to say to Sue -- actually, it's Stu. That's what we call her, right? We would like to say to you, Stu, we offer you nothing. Nothing, but good health. Nothing, but a lot of fun. Nothing, some

sleep.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That would be nice.

MS. NEWSOME: And nothing, but a really, really nice retirement. And to that, and hopefully this will help you get home. Oh, you are home. Okay.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: What? You have to say something.

MS. STEWART: No.

MS. NEWSOME: Yes, you do.

MS. STEWART: No. Thank you all, very much. It's been my honor and my pleasure to work at ALA National Headquarters for 41 years --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

MS. STEWART: And I will sorely miss every one of you, and I truly appreciate working with all the people up here and all of the past national presidents that I've known all this time. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. That's amazing, isn't it? Forty-one years.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Woo-hoo.

(Cross-talk.)

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Just this morning I was given a book by one of the Division Vice Presidents, Teresa Isensee, *Seize the Moment*. Just a quick glance. I found one quote and I just have to share it. "Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. Climb slowly, steadily, enjoy in each passing moment, and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey." That was just something to think about.

Please stand with me as our National Chaplain offers the benediction.

(Ring of the bell.)

DR. BLANCH: Hello my beautiful sisters. Again, good morning. It's a good day to be here and be alive. We were on a special wake-up list. Members, bow our heads and accept this benediction at this time. Father God, we thank you for your guidance as it was presented to us today. Bless and keep our officers and members who have made important decisions for our organization.

Thank you for Madam President and continuing to keep her protected and blessed. We want to extend an extra prayer as we always do every Thursday on our Facebook page to our wounded veterans before we leave. We are grateful for these courageous, courageous women and their courage and we ask that you continue to send your angels and give them blessings and peace as they go through their day and their life.

Let us all continue to have grace, mercy, and peace as we depart from this meeting. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we all say together, Amen.

ALL: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you for your dedication and good work.

It's been a pleasure serving with you this last year. This meeting of the National Executive Committee is adjourned. Have a wonderful convention and thank you all.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 9:06 a.m.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019**

VOICEOVER: Tonight, American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Please welcome your National President from the Department of Mississippi, Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Wow. Thank you for being a part of our 99th National Convention. By your actions, deeds, and very presence at this Convention, you play a major part in the advancement of the American Legion Auxiliary's primary mission: serving active duty service members, veterans, and their families.

We're over 600,000 strong. And obviously, all our members can't be with us today. But you are here. Your personal mission is to take back to your departments and units the entire convention experience. All you'll learn, everything that inspires and drives you, and to in turn teach, inspire, and motivate our membership. All of you are, in fact, influencers within our great organization. By example, you can help the American Legion Auxiliary grow our mission, as exemplified by serving our heroes.

Influencers. Now, remember that word because your involvement, your influence is absolutely critical. At this convention, we're trying a few new ideas that we think you'll find useful as influencers.

First, we've expanded the number of National President's Award for Excellence. Instead of five-unit and one department award, we'll recognize every program that's mission-related at the end of the session. By doing so, we'll honor more outstanding work done at the grassroots level by our members. The committee reports presented in this day and the other day's session, which will be Wednesday, will be awarded at the end of the session.

For example, Auxiliary Emergency Fund report will be given this morning and at the end of this session. The National President's Award for Excellence for our Auxiliary Emergency Fund will be presented. That is exciting. And speaking of recognition, this year the American Legion Auxiliary will honor three -- three, now, women of the year recipients.

And in keeping with our theme, each of them played an important part in serving our heroes, including my special emphasis "female veterans."

You'll hear from all three at the luncheon, but each day during our 99 Convention, we'll introduce one of our honorees via video, so you'll understand the legacy of their work for America's veterans.

For the first time, we'll celebrate the great work of the members who earned the title "National American Legion Auxiliary Goodwill Ambassador." Something that I am so proud of. As you know, an Auxiliary Goodwill Ambassador delivers goodwill; promotes the Auxiliary's ideals; and volunteers their time, talents, and passions to raise awareness of the need to serve veterans. Talk about super influencers.

And in case you thought we forgot, we'll introduce our incredible past national presidents in tomorrow's session. Now, talk about influencers.

In a few minutes, we're going to introduce you to three pioneers in the advancement of veterans' advocacy and care. Together, they were the founding fathers of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. And as you know, their mission of ending homelessness for our male and female veterans was my primary emphasis during my year as your president.

The efforts of a relatively small group of people early on have made significant strides in the lives of our veterans.

Now, listen up influencers. Imagine what 600,000 advocates can do? (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And after we've met the pioneers of homeless veteran advocacy, we're going to learn about an incredible agency doing wonderful work right here in Indianapolis.

We've come up with an idea how this convention body can help them serve our heroes. More of that later on.

But first, let's meet via video our first 2019 American Legion Auxiliary Woman of the Year, from the Department of North Carolina -- (Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: -- Patricia Harris. Please watch the screen. (Video played.)

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion Auxiliary proudly honors Patricia Harris, as their 2019 Woman of the Year. In recognition of her lifetime commitment to serving women veterans in need.

MS. HARRIS: My dad, a World War II vet, only gave me two minutes to wear his American Legion cap. And that was because at six, he said that if you want to wear this cap, you have to earn it yourself.

You know, I really enjoyed my time growing up in the American Legion Auxiliary. My parents used to let me go with them to their meetings, and that is where I really learned a whole lot about selfless service, commitment, and patriotism.

ANNOUNCER: Patricia followed in her father's footsteps and joined the Army.

MS. HARRIS: I joined the United States Army and I was also in communications. I'm a wartime veteran, a combat vet. And that was the most rewarding time of my life.

ANNOUNCER: And though rewarding, it wasn't always easy.

MS. HARRIS: In the late 1990s, a lot of us women veterans came back and we were the first combat veterans that boldly were denied that right. Serving in the Persian Gulf War, we saw a lot of things and we did a lot of things, and there weren't any support services for us at that time.

So Women Veterans Support Services, Incorporated was a brainchild of mine to kind of smooth over the effects of not having the VA, which was not open at certain hours, like 2 o'clock in the morning.

ANNOUNCER: WVSS started as an advocacy program, but has grown into so much more.

MS. HARRIS: Because we understand each other. Because we are women veterans. And because of that need, we felt like it was important that we give back to her and make her feel special, and to get her family back centered. And also, we extend our services to male veterans that are raising daughters to help them too, because those are the families that are hardest to place in shelters.

ANNOUNCER: WVSS has a special emphasis: helping women veterans cope with domestic violence and sexual assault.

MS. HARRIS: So WVSS at this point is really putting on the Project Protective Red Shoe, and that's going to go and try to really combat that issue and bring it to the forefront, and try to get other agencies and family justice centers on board with dealing with women that serve and that are still serving that are having those issues. Because the most disturbing thing in the world is to go to a VA hospital or to a vet center and see the little pull tabs are all gone when they ask you, "Are you experiencing any domestic violence?" And that's sad because that's telling me that we have a big problem.

ANNOUNCER: Patricia's partnering efforts are paying off. Help is on the way.

VOICE: The Department of Military Veterans Affairs is so excited to partner with Patricia Harris and the Department of Administration around the issue of impacting domestic violence for female veterans. We foresee this program being an opportunity to not only help those in North Carolina, but all across the country.

VOICE: Patricia is a champion for women veteran services, and we are delighted to have her knowledge and skill, adding to our overall approach in North Carolina, as we work to do better to ensure services reach everyone in need.

MS. HARRIS: I think that as a family, as American Legion family, we can wrap our arms around those women and welcome them back home and welcome them back into the communities where they came from.

VOICE: Patricia Harris. She epitomizes her love for her veterans, her caring, especially for female veterans.

MS. HARRIS: We have a dream of establishing the Deborah Center. The Deborah Center is going to be the one place where we can establish a transitional -- an emergency sheltering, you know, for her and with her children if she needs it, to safety. To get them off the street. To help them become whole. And to have whatever she needs in that one spot.

ANNOUNCER: Patricia A. Harris is the past commander of the North Carolina Veteran's Council and past state commander of the American Legion Department of North Carolina. She is currently the alternate National Executive Committeeman for the American Legion and is a dual member of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Thank you, Patricia Harris, for your lifetime of dedicated service to our men, and especially women veterans.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please welcome former junior member and current dual member of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, Patricia Harris.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you so much, Patricia. You'll have a chance to hear from Patricia at the Woman of the Year luncheon tomorrow. Thank you.

We're calling the next segment of our Convention opening, "Look what passion and teamwork can accomplish."

All of the gentlemen you're about to meet, all founders of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, fit that description. Not only are they being presented to you to honor the groundbreaking efforts and to help homeless male and female veterans, we hope they'll serve as inspirational influencers to each of you.

To increase our relevance in the effort to eradicate veteran homelessness, we need to pick up the baton and fulfill the mission that no American veteran should ever be homeless or without medical care, food, and love.

Now, many of you know the great work of U.S. VETS and their president and CEO, Stephen Peck. Steve is a national leader in providing housing, employment, and mental health services to veterans at 11 locations across the country. Serving 3,000 veterans every day, 50,000 have benefitted from housing and services, and 13,000 have gotten jobs.

Let me tell you a little bit about Steve. He served as a lieutenant in the First Marine Division in the Vietnam War near Da Nang from 1969 to 1970. When he returned from active duty, he pursued a career in film making that might be a connection to a name that you already know. But his experience in the service tugged at him.

Twenty years later, while working on a documentary about a group of homeless veterans living on the beach in Venice, California, he met a paraplegic Vietnam veteran who was 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 box, Steve recalls. Steve says, "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 as director of community development in 1996 and was named president and CEO in 2010. Steve was the 1993 recipient of the American Legion Auxiliary's Public Spirit Award. Steve will serve as moderator for our session with the founders of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Please welcome Steve Peck.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. PECK: I'm going to introduce a few guys that I have known since 1993. They are the founders of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. When that group was founded, there were 250,000 homeless

veterans in America. Today there are fewer than 40,000. So we're having an impact.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans was incorporated in 1990 by a small group of community-based service providers who were troubled by the disproportionately large percentage of homeless people who were veterans, and the lack of veteran-specific programs to help them.

They opened the Washington, D.C., office in 1993 in order to work more closely with Congress and the executive branch agencies to ensure the inclusion of veterans in federal assistance programs.

The VA Grant and Per Diem program, now some 13,000 beds nationwide, was established as a result of their advocacy. NCHV is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of hundreds of community-based service providers and local, state, and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid, and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans every year.

While in the beginning there was a group of concerned veterans, five began the task of formalizing the organization, and three of them are with us here today.

Bill Elmore left the U.S. Air Force in 1972 and took a position as a janitor at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, just a few months prior to the notorious fire in 1973.

Bill created the Vet House, the homeless veteran and transitional program on the grounds of Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis in 1989. Bill has been a major player in developing significant veteran impact legislation since 1979, such as the Vet Center readjustment counseling centers, the VA Homeless Veterans Grant and Per Diem program, Veteran Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act, and others.

From 2000 to 2012, Bill served as the first associate administrator for Veterans Business and Development and the Small Business Administration. Since retirement, he continues to provide consulting services for veteran-specific projects. Bill is a friend of, and belongs to, the same legion post as Past National Commander Joe Frank, from Missouri.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Michael Blecker has been associated with Swords to Plowshares based in San Francisco since 1976. In 1974, Swords to Plowshares started on a single grant in a small location on Valencia Street. Now, over 40 years later, with an annual budget of \$19 million, they are still doing the same thing they set out to do: heal the wounds of war; restore dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency to all veterans in need; and to prevent and end homelessness and poverty among veterans.

He is a co-founder of the California Association of Veterans Service Agencies and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Michael represented and won one of the first cases at the Board of Veteran Appeals for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in 1979.

Michael served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1970 with combat infantry experience in Vietnam in '68 and '69. He holds a juris doctor from New College of California School of Law and a bachelor's degree with honors from UC Berkeley.

Ralph Cooper is community and residential veteran services provider for Cloudbreak Houston, LLC, the largest developer of housing for homeless veterans in the nation. President of BrwCoop Business Enterprises, located in Houston, Texas, and past director of Veterans Benefits Clearinghouse in Roxbury, Mass., a non-profit agency.

VBC provided a wide range of services to all veterans and their families, especially veterans of color from the greater Roxbury area of Boston.

Cooper is a co-founder of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and one of the founders of the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: I'm going to talk to these guys about the early beginnings of the NCHV. The NCHV just simply didn't exist. There wasn't a homeless veterans movement until these guys really galvanized this issue. So Bill, I heard it started to -- NCHV started in your hotel room over a pack of beer with a few guys. Tell us a little bit about that night.

MR. ELMORE: Well, we were mostly directors of self-help programs in various cities and communities around the country, and we were at a job placement conference where we all had small contracts with the Department of Labor to help homeless veterans secure employment. And we went around the room and did a show and tell; here's what we do, here's who we are. And everybody mentioned that not only did they do job placement, but they were struggling to try to understand and figure out how to provide housing to the veterans that were coming into our centers.

So we decided -- at that point, I raised my hand and I said, "What we'd like to talk about this lack of housing opportunity that our veterans were engaged with are dealing with."

So we decided to get together in my room that night. And more than 20 of us got together. And that night, over a few beers, we drafted a four-page letter to the Secretary of HUD because HUD did housing. The VA did not at that point do housing.

And that really became the genesis. The next morning we announced at the conference that we had formed this coalition, and we faxed that letter. That's how long ago it was, we used a fax. We faxed that letter to the Secretary of HUD that morning. That's how it started.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Michael, you've been working with the issues surround homeless veterans, particularly getting them access to the benefits they have earned. What has kept you engaged all these years?

MR. BLECKER: Well, you know, it's really the mission, right? I mean the mission of the American Legion. The mission that drives folks, right? I mean, our founder was a combat medic, his name was Jack McCloskey. And you know, Jack always used to say, you know, I've made

promises to dead people, right? And that's a pretty high bar, right? And it's, like, we got work to do. And whatever the needs were. And we always felt that you got to be in the community where the need is the greatest, right? And help those who have those needs.

And so we always, like, we're in the tenderloin in San Francisco, what have you, and making our doors available. And then finding out what the issues were. And then how do you address those issues, you know. Issues around poverty. Issues around vets who were living very self-destructive lives after the war. You know, there's a statistic that more veterans had died from their own hand than from combat in very self-destructive ways.

So we could see that happening among our friends and our comrades, and you know, we just knew work had to be done. And that's what sort of drove me doing this work.

MR. PECK: Ralph --

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: -- what brought you to commit yourself and to become one of the leaders of this movement?

MR. COOPER: Well, good morning everyone.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. COOPER: I'm from Roxbury, Massachusetts.

(Applause.)

MR. COOPER: And I'm a member of William E. Carter Post No. 16.
(Applause.)

MR. COOPER: Back when we started, we made up -- African Americans made up 11 percent of the military. But we made up 50 percent of the homeless population. So that clearly was an issue and a problem. And what we decided to do was to try to impact the VA for services from African Americans and the veterans and their families. We ended up realizing that we had to include all veterans and their families in order to be successful with impacting the VA.

And so we started an organization called Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse, right there in Roxbury, Massachusetts. And we were able to service about 3,500 veterans and their families annually, and we also did housing. We had about 600 units of housing that we made available for veterans in our community.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Bill, what lessons have you learned over this time that would help the auxiliary members in their movement to help veterans?

MR. ELMORE: That's a really good question. Just a touch of background, our self-help Veteran Service Center was started in St. Louis, Missouri, actually in a suburb of the city, in American Legion Post 212 in 1974. So we had operated for a number of years.

I think what I learned, and perhaps as important to the Auxiliary members, is one, you have to step up. You have to take responsibility. You have to step into the breach, no matter how big or how well managed the Department of Veterans Affairs is, there are always going to be gaps in services and opportunity for our veterans when they come home.

The second thing I think is don't be surprised, plan for and expect to hear "no." I was shocked my first initial years in the veterans service delivery systems by how many times we were told no, or we were just told it was in our heads.

I began to plan for being told no. And I think the Auxiliary, not only will you be told no as you wade into things like homelessness amongst veterans, but the weight of the American Legion Auxiliary, your ability to bring attention, your ability to bring resources, and bringing your passion to the table is central and critical to all of those small organizations across America who take these issues on.

You're critically important because people pay attention to the American Legion. When we started our Veteran Service Center, nobody wanted to pay attention to us except the men and women in Post 212 in Bonita Park, Missouri, who said, "You guys, we don't know what you're doing, but you can use our post home." And I've been a proud member of the Legion since. And I'm proud to say that. So step up --

(Applause.)

MR. ELMORE: -- step up, fill the breach, be honest, don't take no for an answer, expect that sometimes confronted, and if you have to embarrass bureaucrats, do it. I became --

(Applause.)

MR. ELMORE: -- I've been on both sides. Not only did I embarrass a lot of bureaucrats, I became a bureaucrat by the end of my career, and I was embarrassed a few times as well, and deservedly so. So step in and help us do this job as well as we can do.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Michael, as you look back on it, to what do you attribute the success of the NCHV?

MR. BLECKER: Well, you know, a lot of what NCHV was also driven by the Stand Down Event. I know folks in this room know about Stand Downs, you guys have been, like, key volunteers, right, for the Stand Down efforts in your communities?

(Applause.)

MR. BLECKER: It's great, really. And the Stand Down was like an effort to say, you know, to really dramatize the problem, right? And I remember the founder, Robert Van Keuren, was saying, you know, we got 700 veterans together in this park and we had a chicken feed, you know. And it's, like, wow, what can we do with that? We can really make sure that the bureaucrats can't pretend there's not a homeless problem in their communities when you have 700 folks right there, and especially when you call the media, and you got attention, and so that was part of, like, you know, organizing that we have a problem. And that's what you really have to start with.

There is an issue here that affects our neighbors, our citizens, our communities, we've got to do something about it. And you can raise your voice to do that. And NCHV, which is really geared around that issue of homelessness, which really rose from the communities.

You know, at the top, they pretended there was no problem. There's not a problem with homelessness. But in the communities, in the streets, in the rural areas, we knew that was not the case. In fact, there was a problem. It was not just a problem, it was a crisis. You know the difference between a problem and a crisis is when it's happening to you, then the problem becomes a crisis, right?

So we knew it was a crisis, and we forced that issue -- NCHV rep and an issue. And really there was nobody addressing that in an informed way. So NCHV, you know, we were able to get a lot of attention and talk about that issue, because we knew about it. And I think that connection made a big difference.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Before that, we want to talk about Stand Down a little bit more. And this is to any of you. How do you, at the same time confront the VA for what they're not doing, and engage the VA to get them to help you do it?

MR. BLECKER: Well, you know, when you have an event like Stand Down, you have, like, the media, they're on all the channels, it's on the newspaper. It's hard to avoid it, right? But it's not just, you know, you're really counting on fellow citizens to put the pressure on. Like I said, it has to drive from the bottom up, really. And then the local officials can't ignore it. And then they contact the "folks who are responsible," whether that be the VA or you know, the city and county, right, or whether it be anyone. And that's where the pressure has to apply, right? You have to, like, demand this stuff.

For a community-based organization to have, like the support of the American Legion, is really a big deal, right? I mean it's really a big deal because the American Legion, you know, 99 years or 100 years, I'm not sure which is correct, but whatever, that has a lot of currency, right? And especially, and it always has been, really. If go in there and say, you know, I'm with, you know, this community-based organization, but I have the American Legion as my partner, and they support me, you're going to -- that's a big deal.

MR. PECK: Do you have something to say about that?

VOICE: Yeah.

MR. PECK: Okay. You mentioned Robert Van Keuren. So Ralph, Robert Van Keuren in San Diego, along with John Nachison, are the co-founders of the Stand Down Program that they started in 1989. You went there early. Ralph, tell us about those early experiences.

MR. COOPER: Well, I was watching the military television and I saw these two guys on TV. I was there and the thing looked like MASH, and they were talking about turning homeless veterans into a successful working individual on a weekend. And I've been working on homeless veterans and I have a master's degree in counseling, and I knew that I worked with some of the homeless veterans for over a year, and wasn't able to get them to where they should be. So I said these guys are full of bologna.

(Applause.)

MR. COOPER: Well, they heard about my comments and asked me to come there in '89 to visit Stand Down. And myself, Ken Smith, and several others went there and they called ourselves forward observers. And you know, when I got there, like there's 700 people waiting to come into this humongous park area, which was a school. I just couldn't believe it. And I said, "Wow. I don't know how this thing is going to work."

But before I left there, I saw men and women actually turn their selves around, get a job, I said, now, I still can't work, so I said I want to come back again next year. Okay? Because I still don't believe my eyes. And on the weekend, they were able to really get a lot done.

So I brought Stand Down to Massachusetts. And for 17 years, Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse spearheaded the Stand Down in Massachusetts. Well, we started in Boston, but other counties and towns in the area picked up the ball. And so there was no longer -- we could no longer call ourselves the Massachusetts Stand Down, but we were the Stand Down in Boston and got a lot accomplished.

(Applause.)

MR. ELMORE: For me, and I was a forward observer as well, went out to San Diego from St. Louis, there were a number of things that struck me about Stand Down. One is the American Legion Auxiliary was there, and you all were there in force. You and the VFW, and many of the other groups were providing a lot of the infrastructure support so the veterans were fed three meals a day for that three-day weekend.

I saw veterans who showed up dirty, long hair, et cetera, walk out of there with a smile on their face, with a name that everybody else knew, engaged with VA. They had misdemeanors adjudicated in a handball court. They didn't get penalized by jail time or fines. They had to enroll in detox programs to respond to what they went through the court for. So it was a solution that helped veterans confront the things they needed to do with the people who had the resources right there.

The other thing that Stand Down really struck me was it represented a military model. Stand Down's a military term. Put these men and women in tents. They chose their own leaders. They established the discipline that was necessary to have over 1,000 people on site for a weekend and there were no issues. No confrontations that got out of control. Nobody got hurt. People got helped. People got haircuts. They got dental care. They were introduced to the VA. They were introduced to Veteran Service officers. They filed claims. They went into detox.

It was an amazing experience, and back at the core was the support of the volunteers from the community, the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary is America's greatest community-based organization. Okay?

(Applause.)

MR. ELMORE: You have been for 99 and a half years, I'll compromise on my --

(Laughter).

MR. ELMORE: -- and you will continue to be for the next hundred years going forward.

(Applause.)

MR. ELMORE: And I've said this before, but it's the weight of your engagement that brings groups like Swords to Plowshares or the Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse the ability to get the attention of the policy makers, and the politicians, and the media, and the community, and the volunteers to step up and fill these breaches, because there has always been breaches and there will always be breaches, and we as a community need to fill that. For that, I thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: I'm going to ask Bill again. Another one of our -- of the NCHV founders, Jerry Washington, sadly passed away in 2001. He organized veterans' programs in Tennessee, his home state, and in Florida after returning from Vietnam. He was dedicated to teaching and serving veterans, especially those who were having trouble coming back.

Bill, tell us a little bit about Jerry's contribution in those early days.

MR. ELMORE: Jerry and I became very good friends. We first met at the founding in Jacksonville, Florida. I initially was silly enough to volunteer to be, I think, the first chairman, and through that became the first legislative liaison with Congress. So we began working immediately with people on the hill to try to create and focus resources towards veterans who were homeless, because -- and Ralph touched on it, 35 percent of the homeless in America were veterans, but less than one-tenth of one percent of the VA, the Department of Labor, the HUD, the FEMA, all these federal agencies, less than one-tenth of one percent of their funding in 1990 was going to homelessness amongst veterans.

So Jerry became -- I was like the left arm, he was the right arm. I have a tendency to flail around. I get excited, I'm passionate about this stuff, and I'm a "take no prisoners" kind of guy, if I think you're trying to feed me and our community a line of bull.

Jerry was the moderator -- he was the professor. He kept me in line. He would look at me and I knew I had to sort of calm down, or tone down, or slow down, or not accuse people of things, because bureaucrats don't intentionally generally ignore our community, but they do because the process requires their focus wherever the system points it. So we had to affect the system.

So Jerry became sort of the yin to my yang. He became the guy who not only helped us strategize who to approach and how to deal with Capitol Hill and people at VA and Labor and so on, but he became the moderating voice that said slow down. Be thoughtful. Don't be accusatory. Be serious. Present solutions. Help us move forward, not just cast blame.

Jerry was critical in that, and for that I will always be grateful, because the legislative work I did as a volunteer on behalf of homeless veterans through NCHV early on, really gave me the skills necessary to create other legislative initiatives with the support of the American Legion that have

helped change the face and the face of opportunity for veterans in our families across America now for the last 30 years. So thank you, Jerry.

(Applause.)

MR. BLECKER: Well, you know, the other thing about Jerry, and actually this worked, is that when you're dealing with veterans and these needs come up, you really have to be prepared to deal with them. And we, early on in the days, we had a lot of veterans who had returned, for instance from Vietnam, who had less than honorable discharges. This was, like, a large number, like 250,000, who were given administrative separations. And the administrative separation could be the basis -- you know, very minor offense you could miss formation, you could have a disciplinary problem with your officer in charge, but anyway, or just difficulty just adjusting to Garrison duty after being in Vietnam.

So the 250,000 veterans of the Vietnam War left that war with less than honorable discharges, administrative separations, which made them ineligible for any kind of medical care, which made them ineligible for the GI Bill, and it was really like they were completely isolated and out there. And those are the folks that we had to fight for, to say was that discharge issued fairly? And if it wasn't, then we would fight and get that corrected or upgraded.

We'd go to the VA and say, "You can change the character of that service for purposes of benefits. You have the power of to do that. Don't discount this individual who spent his time and put his life on the line because of this 'bad paper he received.'"

But those are the kind of issues you have to be positioned to do something about. If you're going to be out there in the community, you know what I mean? You can't shy away from this, you have to address it up-front and deal with it.

And now we're in this period where, you know, there's a "Sea of Goodwill" toward the post-911 veterans. And Lord knows they've earned it and deserve it, right? The Sea of Goodwill.

(Applause.)

MR. BLECKER: But we can't wait for the Sea of Goodwill to happen. And the Sea of Goodwill may dry up. And we have to make sure we're there for them, right? And sometimes veterans are not going to be the most popular issue. But that doesn't mean you can't step back. You have to continue to step up and fight for them, because if it's not us, who's is going to be, right?

And that's what sort of drove us and drove our commitment to do that. So even if it may be popular now, it may not be popular down the road, but our commitment can't lessen, right? It really can't.

(Applause.)

MR. COOPER: Jerry Washington was the glue. He kept it all going on. And as far as the bad paper discharges, African Americans experienced a disproportion in a number of those. And they were, you know, very, very hurtful in trying to get employment or doing any other kind of thing.

But one of the things that we had to do is we had to convince people like Chairman Montgomery. Sonny Montgomery from Mississippi told us

that if the veteran was homeless, he wanted to be homeless. Now, Joe Kennedy from Massachusetts told myself and Gunnery Sergeant Ernest Branch that he wanted us to meet with Sonny Montgomery at his mother's house during the Clinton inauguration. And we did that.

And we went down and talked to the Chairman, and the Chairman looked at us and said, "How much money you boys want?" And we said, "Mr. Chairman, we don't want any money. What we'd like you to do is come to Massachusetts and visit the Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse." And Ernest Gunnery Branch pulled his Marine Corps pin off and pinned it on Sonny Montgomery, who said, oh, I can't -- I'm not a Marine, but Ernest Branch knew that a Southern gentleman who accepted a gift had kind of, like, owed you a little bit. So --

(Laughter.)

MR. COOPER: -- so he had to say yes, he would come. And what he told us was, "I'll come to Massachusetts, but I want that boy, Kennedy, to come and pick me up at the airport." We said, "That's a done deal, Mr. Chairman, and we'll get that done for you."

And that was the one thing that really happened good. He came, he met veterans at our facility, and we fed him a good Southern home-cooked meal. We had Chef Lee come and made fried chicken and greens and cornbread, and so he said, "You boys really know how to feed a fella here."

And so we were able to influence him like you all can influence in the community, so that he would say yes when this legislation that Joe Kennedy sponsored went forward, because that was the big stick in the mud was that we couldn't get the House Veterans Service Committee (sic) to say yes. We couldn't get the (indiscernible) to say yes. So we finally were able to do it and granting per diem HVRP and all those programs that you all know of now started right after that.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Thank you, Ralph. And we have a few minutes. Have you left anything out?

MR. COOPER: (Indiscernible).

MR. PECK: Bill always has something to add.

MR. ELMORE: Yeah. The last 12 years of my career, I went to D.C. and became a federal bureaucrat, so I have the outsider's view of bureaucracy and an insider's view of bureaucracy, and let me say very clearly I don't have a single enemy at the Department of Veterans Affairs -- that I know of.

(Laughter.)

MR. ELMORE: I take shots at bureaucracy because bureaucracy by its nature is inwardly focused. Our role from the community of veterans and our families is to help turn that gaze out to the communities where you live, where you live, where we live, where homeless veterans live, on the streets, under the bridges, in the parking lots, and all those other things.

So while I'll take my shots, and I'm good at embarrassing bureaucracy. I'm good at that primarily because I know the programs and the policies after my 40 some odd years of doing this work. You all are experienced as well.

Help us step into that breach. Bring your passion. Bring your ethics. Bring your honesty. Bring your ability to raise money. Bring your ability to feed homeless veterans at a Stand Down and a thousand other ways. It's really up to you.

But without the American Legion, again, that I'm a proud member of, and the role that the Legion historically has played in how America engages our warriors when they come home, without the Legion, there would have been no GI Bill. You know that. Without the Legion's support, there would have been no resolution to Agent Orange exposure. Without the Legion's involvement, the homeless veterans Grant and Per Diem Program that it took us four years to get passed through Congress, thank you Joe Kennedy and many others. Without the Legion's involvement and support, that likely would have never happened. You guys bring the weight of not just your history and institution, but your righteousness. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. BLECKER: Yeah, I also feel like (indiscernible) put you all on alert because I was on this commission on care when they passed the Choice Act in 2014. You may know about that, right? The Choice Act and it's called The MISSION Act, with it's now being implemented and it's supposedly to enhance health care.

Well it also is a real threat to the VA health care system. And I think all of us really need to know that, because however the issues that come up about VA health care, and the demand on VA health care is extraordinary, right? The only health care system that's everywhere. They have a commitment to every rural area, every urban area has got to have a VA presence, right?

And the VA has done some remarkable things around health care, especially wrapping around mental health, with physical health, and nurse health, and social work health, and recognizing the issue of senior vets with geriatric patient alignment care teams. And you always have to say, well, this didn't happen and that didn't happen, but then you have to compare what do you compare it to? What is private health care in this country?

And my fear with this MISSION Act is it will dismantle too much of the VA health care system, right? And the VA health care system will have a harder time recruiting doctors, right? And nurses -- there's 90,000 nurses that work with the VA health care system. And there are nurses -- I want to just fall on my knees for nurses, right? They are the saviors, nurses, thank God for nurses.

(Applause.)

MR. BLECKER: And I want to say that it's really important for the American Legion to stay extremely alert about this "choice," and what that will mean in terms of veterans leaving the health care system. And therefore, leaving the ability for the medical centers to recruit doctors, have the capability that they now have. That will be reduced. So I just want to, kind of lay on that particular threat. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. COOPER: Thank you so much, Mike. You know affordable housing. You all know that it's so hard to get someone to build affordable housing. There's a law called income credit tax credit and we have to ensure that that stays law.

I work with an organization called Cloudbreak Communities in Houston, Texas, and we met with the Secretary Carson in Phoenix last month. And we kind of pushed this forward that we need to make sure that the Internal Revenue Service becomes a partner with us, as we move forward trying to find places to build affordable housing for our homeless veterans. That's a very difficult task. And if you live in any of the big city areas, you'll see that there's not too many opportunities for any rent that's under \$1,000 a month.

So we need your help. This is important that we continue with the low-income tax credits and make sure your Congress people see to it that it stays there so it can continue to help eliminate homelessness among veterans. I mean that's an oxymoron, isn't it?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, yeah.

MR. COOPER: A homeless veteran. No, we should not have any homeless veterans in this great nation.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Thank you, guys. You can see the passion and advocacy continues. You have been enlisted.

We have another guest with us today. The current Chair of the NCHV, Steve Benz. He has traveled from his law firm in Washington, D.C. to show his appreciation to the founders.

Steve, are you there? There he is.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Thank you, Steve. Thank you, guys. Thanks for your continuing work with veterans.

A reminder that this afternoon, the NCHV founders and I will be presenting during the breakout session how to create a movement for veterans. Please join us to hear more about what it takes to be successful in advocating for veterans.

And now I think I am turning it back over to Kathy, it is my understanding. There she is.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Let me get to my script. I apologize.

Thank you, Steve, as well as Bill, Ralph, and Michael. On behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary and in recognition of your service to America's male and female veterans, I am honored to present each of you with the Serving our Heroes Award. Thank you for -- go ahead.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you for taking time to be with us today and for sharing your experiences and accomplishments. I can't think of a better way to open the American Legion Auxiliary's 99th National Convention.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Thank you, gentleman. As I mentioned earlier, Indianapolis is lucky to benefit from the services of HVAF, Helping Veterans and Families. This wonderful organization has helped both male and female at-risk veterans return to self-sufficiency since 1993.

On Friday morning, some of you may have participated in the Legion Family Community Service Project this year benefitting HVAF. Their motto is "no hero should ever be homeless." And they are doing their part. Last year they provided 2,269 veterans with a safe place to sleep, and beyond housing they have employment specialists who help veterans find and keep a job. They have a pantry that includes clothing, hygiene products, and food items. Their outreach program goes into the communities to find veterans in need. And their advocacy program engages in activities to raise awareness in the community. They recently celebrated 25 years of service to veterans. Let's take a look.

(Video.)

MS. LLOYD: I'm Louise Lloyd. I am a board member of HVAF and also a 25-year volunteer.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHWARTZ: My name is Rick Schwartz. I was a board member for 20 years.

MS. LLOYD: We've had such wonderful results to help our most vulnerable veterans and given a home, a house, meals, and a good place to sleep.

I had been the State President of the American Legion Auxiliary and the National President called me after my service was over and asked me if I would help her in Indiana. She said, "We have so many homeless veterans in Indianapolis, could you help me do something?" And I said, "Well, I'm getting ready to retire, but I'll help if I can, you know." And it just went from there.

We kept getting people to come in and discuss it and talk about our plans and what could we do. And it's very hard to get started with an organization. And to especially start with one dollar. We bought a house within the city of Indianapolis for a dollar, and look what we have now. It's amazing. And we moved five men into that place and it was -- gives me goose pimples. It was a wonderful day.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Well, the programs have grown and the services have grown both in breadth, the number of people can handle, and in depth. We got our own case management here, job training skills, you know, that kind of thing.

MS. LLOYD: We have men that come here, not only from Indianapolis, but from around the State of Indiana and other states. They hear about our place here and they come here and want to live here.

VOICE: One of the big things that helped us get off the ground was former Congresswoman Julia Carson, who had a real dedication to veterans. She was able to get us about \$400,000 over three years. So we had a chance to start getting some staff. And then to start putting the infrastructure

together. We were given four houses as a result of the Fort Benjamin Harrison decommissioning, but after that, we were trying to find houses.

Again, Congresswoman Carson stepped up again, literally in Congresswoman Carson's backyard, she owned an apartment building that had four units. And she gave that building to us and helped us build that building.

Another key moment, I think, was when we opened the Vista Center. We got about five houses outside the wire at the former Central State Hospital. We refurbished all those houses and the governor came, handed us a key, dedicated the houses to us.

What was really interesting is that within about six months, all of the houses across the street had all gotten facelifts. It was really kind of neat, but that was really our biggest project to date. Those five houses doubled our capacity at the time.

MS. LLOYD: Well, it would be wonderful if in 25 years, that we did not have a homeless veteran. That is what I'm looking forward to. Not having a homeless veteran.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You may have recognized some of those faces in the video. Maybe they were just a tad bit younger.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: In the spirit of our theme, serving our heroes, I have a request of each one of you influencers. At the back of the room, you'll see two large containers marked HVAF.

Over the next couple of days, I ask that you go out of your way to find a grocery store or convenience store. There are several within an easy walk from here or your hotel, and purchase a food item or two, or three, or personal hygiene products, like we can get canned meats, canned fruit, peanut butter and jelly, anything that's durable and initially doesn't require refrigeration. Canned vegetables, instant side dishes, cans of soup, saltine crackers, cereal, pasta, pasta sauce, mac and cheese, and our female veterans need hygiene products, tampons and pads, and they need makeup, deodorant, toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

Let's show how much our members attending this convention can do. And then use this as an example when you return to your units and departments to show the world what 600,000 of us can do. Please let's fill those boxes and help HVAF. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now, don't go anywhere, but feel free to stretch your legs for a little bit while they set the stage. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, the 99th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention will resume shortly, as we reset the stage and prepare for our business meeting.

(Break.)

ANNOUNCER: -- the Auxiliary National Convention. Here we begin our business meeting is Convention Chairman from the Department of Indiana, JaneAnn Hamby.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Good morning delegates and guest.

Welcome to Indiana for the very special 99th Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Before we begin, I would like everyone to please ensure that your electronic devices have been placed on silent mode. Thank you.

It's my honor to present to you the 2018-2019 National Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

We have National Historian Brenda Collins of South Carolina.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: National Chaplain Dr. Deborah Blanch of Virginia.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Central Division National Vice President Teresa Isensee of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Eastern Division National Vice President Rita Barylski of Connecticut.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Northwestern Division National Vice President Barb Vetter of South Dakota.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Southern Division National Vice President Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood of Alabama.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Western Division National Vice President Janet G. Romero of New Mexico.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: National Treasurer Sara Riegel of Indiana.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: National Secretary Linda Boone of Oregon.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: And National Vice President Nicole Clapp of Iowa.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Please rise as the National Colors are presented by the Hendricks County, Indiana, Young Marines.

Afterwards, please remain standing for the introduction of our National President.

(Presentation of Colors.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: This morning, it is my special privilege to introduce a wonderful lady from the great State of Mississippi. Our National President served our heroes every single day of her presidency by faithfully working our missions and treating every service member, veteran, and Auxiliary member with kindness and respect. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our National President, Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) 'Cause a Mississippi girl don't change her ways, just 'cause everybody knows her name. Ain't big headed from a little bit of fame. Mississippi girl. Mississippi girl. Mississippi girl.

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Madam President, I present the gavel, so that you may officially open the 99th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, JaneAnn. Oh, thank you. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The 99th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will now come to order.

Dr. Deborah Blanch, our National Chaplain, will lead us in prayer. Remain standing as Beth McGinn, National Americanism Committee Chairman, leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance. And then remain standing for the National Anthem led by Anita Biggs.

Beth, please lead us.

CHAIRMAN MCGINN: 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.

MS. BIGGS: With me, please.

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

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: National Constitution Bylaws Chairman Melanie Taylor will lead us in the reciting of our Preamble. Melanie?

ALL: For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories of the instances 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 through posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishments of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Melanie. We've just messed up all over. I skipped over the prayer. And I don't think the posting of the colors. I'm sorry about that also. Dr. Deborah Blanch, will you come open in prayer?

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Good morning everyone.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: All that are standing, God sees you. All that are not able to stand, God hears you. Amen.

Let us take a moment at this time for unspoken requests, and for those that may not be here and would like to be here today. Let us take a few minutes for that.

(Pause.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Thank you. Now, let us all pray together: Father God, as we start off this session, we send up extra requests for the welfare of peace, shelter, and the understanding of our women veterans. May we understand and accept all of the guidance of the leadership that we are receiving here today.

Let me guide our hearts and our minds as we continue to go forward and work together for your good, for God and country, we say this together three times: Amen --

AUDIENCE: Amen.

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- Amen --

AUDIENCE: Amen.

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- and Amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Deborah. Let me find where we are.

You may be seated.

Good morning. It is so great to see all of you. Thank you all for traveling to Indianapolis to be a part of this amazing event. We're going to have an awesome time together.

When you leave this Convention, my goal is that you leave feeling the three "E's." That's "Energized," to continue delivering our mission of servicing veterans, military, and their families. "Educated" on topics facing the veteran and military communities because we can't help unless we truly understand. And "excited" to go back home and continue serving our heroes.

We have already heard from four awesome guests and we have plenty more to come. So please, let's have fun, celebrate, and start planning for how we will join together in our communities to continue serving our heroes.

Now, please join me in welcoming this year's National Convention Appointees. I have my National Pages June Laws, Mary Smith-Read, Dee Starkey, and Glynda Wheelis.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you ladies. Distinguished Guest Committee Chairman, Past National President Carlene Ashworth --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Past National President Chris West, Distinguished Guest Committee Vice Chairman.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Past National President Desiree Stoy, Distinguished Guest Committee.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And Chris Dickey, Convention Parliamentarian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And now for some special greetings from some very special people. Please welcome Indiana Department President Betty Slagle.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) For the (indiscernible) in Indiana, then I long for my Indiana home.

MS. SLAGLE: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. SLAGLE: Madam National President Kathy, National Officers, delegates, alternates, and guests, I think that covers everyone. On behalf of nearly 43,000 members of the Department of Indiana, welcome to our home again.

I know that many of you were here in 2012 when Indiana last hosted the National Convention. It is so nice to see so many familiar faces.

If this is your first visit, I hope you'll have time to wander Indiana, as there are many interesting and educational cities and landmarks to explore.

The ladies of our Department and the Indianapolis community would like to extend our Hoosier hospitality to everyone. We hope you enjoy your stay while you're here in Indiana. Have a wonderful time. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please welcome our National Convention Chairman JaneAnn Hamby.

(Applause.)

VOICE: (Singing.) I'm goin' back to Indiana. Back to where I started from. Goin' back to Indiana. Indiana here I come. I'm goin' back to Indiana.

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Madam National President Kathy, all dignitaries, guests, and especially you, the Auxiliary members. Welcome to Indiana, the home of the National American Legion Auxiliary headquarters. We're so happy to be hosting the 99th National Convention and serving our heroes.

We invite you all to stroll around our great city during your free time. Most of us like to shop and eat. And within walking distance from the Convention Center, there are several favorites to the well-established chains for both dining and shopping. Explore the many unique neighborhoods tucked inside our downtown area that serve as homes to our most trendy food and coffee hot spots.

In the center of downtown Indianapolis is the soldier and sailor monument, which honors all United States veterans. And while you're there, don't forget about the American Legion Mall and its beautiful memorials. Take a short stroll to the wonderful museums, the Eiteljorg Museum, the

Indiana State Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Children's Museum --

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: -- the Indianapolis Zoo, and the Canal Walk in the White River State Park, and also a beautiful site to see.

We Hoosiers love our sports. We're the home of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Museum, the Indiana Pacers, and the Indiana Fever, Indianapolis Colts, and the Indianapolis Indians. And if you like horses, we have Hoosier Park Racing and Casino. Well, as you've seen -- that we have a variety of things to keep you busy during your free time.

So it's my pleasure now to present to you the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the local committees. These ladies will be working for you all throughout the week, helping make things go as smooth as possible. Please hold your applause until they've all been introduced.

My right-hand lady and Vice Chairman, Karen Lowe.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: The local page Chairman Nancy Magginnis. And Vice Chairman Sue Wehr.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Hold your applause, please.

Mailroom Chairman, Sue Comerford and Vice Chairman Dora Lee Campbell. Flowers and Corsage Chairman Lisa Liford, and her Vice Chairman is Shirley Firkins. Our National Driver is Jane Thurston for the President, and for the Secretary is Susi Greathouse.

If you have any questions, ask any of us. We're wearing our black and white checkered scarves with our poppy pins and a big smile.

For your conveniences, the pages are stationed throughout the Convention Hall, or just feel free to stop by Room 103, our local Committee office.

Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: Madam President Kathy, I hope you've had the time of your life representing our wonderful organization as you travel throughout the world. I treasure this appointment as your National Chairman, and I hope that you will always remember how you've really touched my life. I really appreciate it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: And I hope you have a wonderful convention and everything is good.

And this concludes my remarks.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Thank you, JaneAnn.

CHAIRMAN HAMBY: I've enjoyed it.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Finally, please welcome our immediate Past National President from the Department of Wisconsin, Diane Duscheck.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) What have you done today to make you feel proud? It's never too late to try. What have you done today --

MS. DUSCHECK: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. DUSCHECK: On behalf of the Past National Presidents, I'd like to welcome all of you to the 99th Annual Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary. Congratulations on your past year of service. And thank you for your dedication.

What a great opportunity it'll be over the next week for each of you to learn more about the national organization, to make important decisions about the future of the Auxiliary, and to meet an entire hall of new friends.

Reports from the Committees will highlight stories of your successes and outstanding volunteerism of you, the dedicated members of the American Legion Auxiliary, and all you've done and continue to do for the good of veterans, military, their families, and your communities.

For each of you, we hope the Convention will be a successful, exciting, and educational experience so when you leave later this week, you'll have a multitude of information to take back to your departments and share. Enjoy the Convention.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You notice that we are coordinated.

(Laughing.)

MS. DUSCHECK: I got the memo.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Diane. We will again be utilizing the electronic voting system. Your Delegation Chairman should have already picked up your voting keypads before today's session began, and each delegate should have a keypad.

Remember the Convention's Standing Rule No. 15 states that voting keypads are not to be removed from the assembly hall. Each department's delegate chairman is responsible for all keypads issued to their department.

Departments will be charged a \$100 donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Veteran's Project 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.

Now, we will be using the No. 1 on the keypad for yes, and the No. 2 key for a no vote. If you choose to abstain from voting, simply do not press any keys. Now, if you press the wrong key on the keypad, just wait a moment, then press the correct number. The keypad will register only the last key pressed. Okay.

Our first item of business is the adoption of the reports which organize the Convention. The Credentials Report will be presented by Credentials Chairman Sue Britton from the Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: Madam National President, the Credentials Committee met on Saturday, August 24th, and the following is our report.

Alabama, 10. Alaska, 8. Arizona, 16. Arkansas, 8. California, 20. Colorado, 9. Connecticut, 10. Delaware, 8. District of Columbia, 6. Florida, 31. Georgia, 11. Hawaii, 6. Idaho, 7. Illinois, 23. Indiana, 34. Iowa, 21. Kansas, 13. Kentucky, 10. Louisiana, 9. Maine, 10. Maryland, 21. Massachusetts, 10. Michigan, 24. Minnesota, 27. Mississippi, 9. Missouri, 14. Montana, 8. Nebraska, 19. Nevada, 6. New Hampshire, 12. New Jersey, 12. New Mexico, 10. New York, 32. North Carolina, 11. North Dakota, 12. Ohio, 32. Oklahoma, 8. Oregon, 10. Pennsylvania, 46. Puerto Rico, 6. Rhode Island, 6. South Carolina, 10. South Dakota, 14. Tennessee, 9. Texas, 18. Utah, 8. Vermont, 10. Virginia, 12. Washington, 11. West Virginia, 10. Wisconsin, 24. And Wyoming, 8. For a total of 739 delegates.

Madam President, on behalf of the Credential's Committee, I move that the role of delegates hereby submitted be the official voting attendance of this Convention.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the adoption of the Credentials Committee Report as presented. Is there any discussion?

The question is on the motion to adopt the reports of the Credentials Committee. All those in favor, press the No. 1 on your voting keypad. Those opposed, press 2. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Voting is now closed. Please show the results.

We have 100 percent. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The majority is in the affirmative and the motion is carried as the Credentials Report for the 2019 National Convention has been adopted. Thank you, Sue.

MS. BRITTON: You're welcome (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Rules Chairman, Judy Morris, will present the proposed rules for the Convention.

(Applause.)

MS. MORRIS: The rules are printed on pages 124, 125, and 126 of your Convention Program.

Madam National President, by direction of the Rules Committee, I move the adoption of the National Convention Rules for 2019 as printed.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the adoption of the National Convention Rules for 2019 as printed. Is there any discussion?

All right. All those in favor, press the No. 1 key on your voting pad. Those opposed, press 2. Please vote now.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please show the results.

All right.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It's 98 percent. There being two-thirds in the affirmative, the Motion is carried and the rules for the 2019 National Convention has been adopted. Thank you, Judy.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: National Secretary, Linda Boone, will give the program report.

SECRETARY BOONE: Please refer to the agenda that was distributed to all of the delegation's secretaries during registration. The delegation secretaries were charged with making sure each delegate received a copy. That's it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the program with the previously distributed agenda.

Would someone like to make a motion?

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: What microphone? Three? Okay.

MS. BUCHANAN: Ann Buchanan, Department West Virginia, I move to accept the agenda as presented.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Is there a second?

AUDIENCE: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the motion to adopt the program with the changes noted. Are you ready for the question?

The question's on the motion to adopt the program with the changes noted. All those in favor, press 1 on your keypad. Those opposed, press 2. Please vote now.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Voting is now closed. Please show the results.

We have 98 percent. The affirmative has it, and the Convention Program is adopted.

By adoption of these reports, the 99th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary is officially organized for conducting business.

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program focuses on making grassroots connections and forging relationships with the communities to increase membership, as well as awareness. Let's welcome American Legion Auxiliary National Girls State and Girls Nation Committee Chairman, Norma Tramm, for more information.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. TRAMM: Madam National President Kathy, do we make a difference in the lives of those citizens that attend American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and the Senators that attend ALA Girls Nation? Well, let's reflect on New Hampshire ALA Granite Girls State.

Citizen Caroline Dillon, was instrumental in passing a bill during the session. The bill was for free feminine hygiene products in high schools. Caroline learned about period poverty, where those who can't afford feminine hygiene products often miss work or school during menstruation.

Caroline didn't stop at the end of the session. She went on to work with Senator Martha Hennessey to draft a bill which would require public high schools and middle schools to provide free hygiene products in bathrooms. The bill passed and will become a law starting with the 2019-2020 school year.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Caroline made the front page of the Concord Monitor. Yes, we do make a difference. Caroline was given the opportunity to make a difference, and many junior and senior high school girls will benefit from her actions.

The American Legion's 100th birthday, the Rose Bowl Parade, and California ALA Girls State. How many of you saw the Rose Bowl Parade or pictures of the American Legion's float?

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Our own National President Kathy was among those riding on the float. What an exciting time for the entire American Legion family.

The California ALA Girls State Alumni Foundation worked with the American Legion to sponsor an ALA Girls State, American Legion Boys State, decorate the float day.

The 2018 ALA Girls State citizens, staff, and alumni were asked to participate on the first day of the float decorating. They each received a t-shirt, which was purchased by the ALA Girls State Alumni Foundation. What an amazing opportunity for these young people.

Keeping our ALA Girls State citizens and alumni active with our programs and activities is vital to their continued interest in our organization. A select few are afforded the opportunity to attend ALA Girls Nation.

Senators arrived on Saturday, July 20th, from all over the United States. They quickly became acclimated to the program. During opening convocation --

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: -- senators and staff helped to make a poppy wreath and four lucky senators were selected to do the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

This year, the ALA Girls Nation Project was U.S. Vets. Senators brought many items, such as body soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, socks, and t-shirts. As you can see, the senators were very generous and filled five large boxes.

Clifton Lewis, Executive Director, and Deborah Truchon, Operations Manager, shared information about their program and accepted the donations. The American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad, delivered a moving speech and then greeted each senator and had a short conversation as he presented them with his pin and special coin.

The Senators sang beautifully at the World War II Memorial, and then spent time touring monuments at the National Mall. Senators were given the opportunity to place a flower on a bench at the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial. It was an insightful day.

On Wednesday, National President Kathy joined us on our trip to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, and our Senators were able to ask Vice President Mike Pence questions for 30 minutes; an opportunity of a lifetime.

ALA Girls Nation Senators took the hill on Thursday, along with American Legion Boys Nation Senators to have conversations with the

Senators representing their home states. ALA Girls Nation President, Ana Gaston, was sworn into office by National President Kathy at the Hart Building.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: As the week ended, National President Kathy gave the Senators a gift of her pin and a message to sustain them for their future. Thank you, President Kathy, for making ALA Girls Nation special by your presence. We cannot forget all of the outstanding bills Senators submitted prior to attending, and the great debating of the bills.

Ladies, you sent excellent Senators to ALA Girls Nation. I found this anonymous quote: "Confidence unlocks every opportunity in life." Confidence is what you (we) provide for those who attend ALA Girls State, ALA Girls Nation. These young women are then better equipped to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in life.

Madam National President Kathy, this concludes my platform remarks. But before I go, I have the distinct pleasure of introducing you to the 2019 ALA Girls Nation President, Ana Gaston.

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Ana is a rising senior at Fishers High School in Fishers, Indiana and was elected by her peers to serve as the 72nd President of ALA Girls Nation. She's the President of her speech team and participates in Model United Nations, French Club, and plays the piano. Ana enjoys staying politically up-to-date and making sure she fulfills her civic duty to the best of her abilities. Please welcome Ana Gaston.

(Applause.)

MS. GASTON: Hello everyone.

AUDIENCE: Hello.

MS. GASTON: Thank you for having me.

Following my week at ALA Girls Nation, I was bombarded with questions left and right from my family, friends, and even teachers. Everyone asked me if I enjoyed my time there, if I made friends, and what the program actually was.

Two of these questions are much easier to answer than the other. Yes, I enjoyed my time there. It would be impossible not to. The activities I was able to participate in were easily the highlight of my junior year, if not my entire life up to this point. I could never imagine meeting the Vice President, both of my Senators and their exceptional aides and staff, nor would I had believed you if you told me I would be elected President out of some of the most exceptional young women our country has to offer. Which is what makes the second question just as easy to answer.

The friends I made at Girls Nation are truly incredible. The three girls in my room alone opened my eyes to new perspectives, gave me the best hugs when I was homesick, and displayed the passion and courage that I hope every young girl in this country can possess. Even after our short week together, the staff from the American Legion Auxiliary and the girls have become nothing short of a family.

But that third question. What is Girls Nation? That is one that I've tried answering to myself. At first, I would describe Girls Nation and Girls State as a week-long government camp. But that definition oversimplifies the irreplaceable memories and experiences that you carry with you. Girls Nation was life changing. Sure. But that still falls short of describing the way that a group of 100 girls came to the revelation that soon the country's future will be in our hands. And luckily because of those programs, we know what to do.

Soon after I found out the election results, I was asked to do a radio interview with the former Girls Nation Senator. And she asked me what the most important thing for older generations to do was when it came to understanding people my age politically. And I told her the most important skill was one I had learned during my week in D.C. The ability to speak to one another and not just to listen to them, but to place yourself in the shoes of the other person. To have compassion for what adversity they may have faced, and understand how their experiences influence what they believe and why they believe it. I coined this as compassionate listening. Now, I'm not actually sure if I was the first person to create this, but for the purpose of this speech, we'll pretend it was my idea.

(Applause.)

MS. GASTON: Compassionate listening is a trait I have spent the past 17 years of my life not appreciating. When someone else had ideas that so starkly contrasted with mine, I was quick to blame ignorance or even a flaw in their character. Especially when it comes to the more contentious social issues, we don't catch the dismissive opinions that we form about others, based on a simple disagreement in policy.

At the end of the day, it took multiple conversations with brilliant young women who wanted to see change and progress like I did to understand that they had lived equally beautiful and rich lives to mine, but that their experiences were extremely different. This difference can be unifying, though, when we listen compassionately.

For example, if I told you that I like pineapple on pizza, you may be thinking, "What is wrong with this girl?" But if you understood that pineapple on pizza reminds me of family dinners and movie night, you might think, "Okay, she's only partially crazy." It is compassion like this, however, that is imperative when we listen to those with contrasting views.

I understand that acquiring this skill isn't easy, because there are grown adults who may never get it. But that's what's so special about the women of the American Legion Auxiliary. They have taught me more in one week about kindness and progress than some people will learn their whole lives. So Girls Nation was a learning experience.

But that still just doesn't capture what that week meant to me. Girls Nation was intimidating. I have lived in the beautiful, sometimes, State of Indiana my whole life. And for most of that life, I have considered myself hardworking and open to trying new things, as my Harry Potter house would suggest. But when I arrived in the Baltimore airport, I could tell I was not in Indiana anymore.

(Laughing.)

MS. GASTON: Left and right were people bustling around who knew how to maneuver such a big city, and once I settled into the 4-H Center, I was surrounded by girls who were every kind thing I could say about myself and more.

The first 48 hours of Girls Nation were spent feeling imposter syndrome. Like I didn't belong, wasn't qualified, or lacked some of the passion to be there. Little did I know, 99 girls around me were feeling the exact same way. It is intimidating to feel like the things that have made you unique are talents that a room full of other people all have. Yet, in that room of future senators, activists, poets, peacemakers, and presidents, I have never felt more at home.

So yes, Girls Nation is in so many ways intimidating, but only because it is scary to see a struggling world and know that the same meager hands I used to write this speech will be the hands that craft a legislation to better our tomorrow. The hands of the fellow boys --

(Applause.)

MS. GASTON: -- and Girls Nation's Senators, and boys and girls state delegates, and any young girl or boy who has the courage to stand for something that sets their soul on fire will be the hands that create a future so free of hatred and injustice that the world will stand in awe.

(Applause.)

MS. GASTON: What the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary do for high school juniors through their Boys State and Girls State Nation Programs, is what others may call an expensive work of charity. But it is what the Legion and ALA call an investment.

Yes, the two organizations spend a lot of money on us government nerds, but the time that the staff give us is so valuable.

Girls Nation was empowering. These women saw in me something I didn't recognize in myself. A strength that I had no idea was there, buried under insecurity, fear, and complacency. Insecure about my own intelligence, fearful that I wouldn't have the answer, and complacent that my world was fine, assuming that someone else with this strength would change the world for me.

But if I have taken one thing away from my fellow Girls Nation's Senators, it is that complacency and fear and ignorance are the biggest threat to democracy. I may not be repaying the Auxiliary cent for cent very soon, but I owe a newfound courage and understanding to them, meaning that whatever I do in the future is greatly in part to the work of the Auxiliary. An organization who does not form the growth of American teenagers to gain some monetary reward in return, but rather to benefit the country. It is a selfless action, but one that combats fear and complacency. One that forges the leaders of tomorrow.

John Lennon in 1971 wrote the song "Imagine." He said, "Imagine all the people sharing all the world." Now, some would say he is a dreamer, but if that's true, then maybe we should all be dreaming a little more. I know my dreams have only started to realize, and the dreams of my friends are coming

to life as well. These dreams that I was told to grasp onto and chase with my whole heart.

So I must thank profusely the American Legion Auxiliary. The impact this organization has made on me is the kind that confirmed I should grasp onto those dreams. Of a world shared among all, a dream of peace and a dream of nurturing one another. I must thank the American Legion for supporting boys my age and doing for them what the Auxiliary did for me.

And finally, I must thank my parents; my initial supporters. The two people who saw that potential and strength in me from the beginning. My super heroes and two dreamers who share the hope for a world for all, not just a few.

I may have been open-minded before, and I may have loved politics before, but never could I believe that those strong women in power suits could one day be me. Never could I imagine people sharing all of the world could start with me. But here I am sharing my dreams with you.

Those three questions seem a bit easier to answer. Yes, I enjoyed my time there. And I more than have enjoyed the experiences I have had because of Girls Nation. Yes, I made friends. The best that you could find. Girls who share those dreams of peace and love, who find strength in insecure and complacent people, and girls who change the world one senate session at a time.

But that last question, "What is Girls Nation?" Girls Nation is the beginning. It is a transformative and humbling beginning. The beginning of pursuing my dreams, learning about compassion, and ending apathy. There are no words to perfectly encapsulate what that week meant to me. But that is what a truly powerful experience will do to you. Leave you completely speechless. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Isn't she awesome?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This is our future.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ana, on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary, I'd like to present this little gift to you. Would you like to open it?

MS. GASTON: Yes. (Laughing.) This is beautiful.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It's a bracelet from the ALA Girls Nation.

(Applause.)

MS. GASTON: Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Let's just get a picture.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Ana.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Norma, I had such a great time at Girls Nation, thank you for your report and for introducing all of us to Ana. She is just awesome. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Members helping members is an idea we can all get behind, and every year the Auxiliary Emergency Fund is busy providing financial help to our members who have experienced devastating loss.

Please welcome National Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee Chairman, Suzanne Knapp, to tell us more.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) Urgent, urgent, emergency, urgent, urgent, emergency, urgent, urgent --

MS. KNAPP: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. KNAPP: Madam President, delegates, members, and guests, I have a few questions for you today. Do you know the next community that will be hit by a tornado and when? Do you know when the next wildfire will devastate tens of thousands of acres of land and engulf the homes of our fellow members? Can you predict when rivers will rise and when mudslides will fall? Or can you tell me who in this room will be the next person to have a medical situation that will turn your life upside down?

Madam President, I do not know the answer to these questions, and my guess is neither does anyone else. That is why the Auxiliary Emergency Fund is important to every member of this organization. You never know when an emergency will happen. Yes, we have insurances. We might have federal assistance eventually. But do you know what we do? Right now, in the event waters rise quickly, or the hurricane makes landfall, the members of the American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee promoted and asked for you to help and keep our Fund healthy.

Thank you each member, unit, and department who gave to this worthy cause. Because of you, those funds are helping members hurt by Wyoming forest fires, the Florida hurricanes, and floods throughout our country. We helped members suffering from medical situations and loss of income. Every penny collected in a water bottle, coffee can, or collection plates goes to those in need. Every spaghetti dinner, raffle, or other fund-raising event insures there is money in the fund to help those in need because we don't know where the next tragedy will be.

Creativity was plentiful in the reports. And I thank you for taking the time to raise money for the AEF. The Department of Arizona reported helping two female veterans who needed food baskets, a member needing help because of cancer treatments, and a veteran getting off the streets.

The Department of California adopted a flower for its theme for the year. It was a zinnia flower, which means never forget. California added to this and said, "Never forget women helping women."

And units in the Department of Wyoming helped spread information services and items at a veteran's Stand Down, used to help homeless veterans receive the services that they need.

Remember that to qualify for an AEF grant, the person must be a member in good standing for at least the past three years. Why should a

family join the Auxiliary? Because we have their backs. Since September of 2018, we have granted \$162,803.84 in emergency financial assistance.

(Applause.)

MS. KNAPP: Sixty-one grants to cover the cost caused by natural disasters, and 48 were grants for temporary financial assistance.

On behalf of the AEF Committee, thank you for your support of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Your donations of \$171,349.80 have made a difference in the life of our fellow members.

(Applause.)

MS. KNAPP: Thank you for doing all you have done, and we ask that you please continue to promote and donate in the years to come, because we never know when an emergency will happen.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Suzanne.

Each year the Child Welfare Foundation Board reviews hundreds of grant applications for more of the nonprofit youth-oriented organizations. Here to tell us about their fantastic work is the liaison to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Past National President Sharon Conatser.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) Ooh, Ooh, child, things are goin' get easier. Ooh, ooh, child, things'll get brighter.

MS. CONATSER: Good music. Madam National President, we continue to support our pillar of children in youth through the Child Welfare Foundation. The American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation, established in 1994, has awarded over \$16 million in grants over the years. The American Legion Auxiliary is proud of its participation in, and support of, the American Legion's priority in enhancing and educating the public about the needs of children across the nation.

The American Legion received 150 grant applications this year for consideration by the Board. The Board Screening Committee recommended awarding 24 grants, totaling \$766,760.

Among the recipients is Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, the JED Foundation, Children's Organ Transplant Association, St. Vincent Hospital Foundation, Lakeview Memorial Health Foundation, Mercy Medical Angels, United Through Reading, and Our Military Kids, just to mention a few.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Departments work throughout the year raising funds for the Foundation. And thank you to the departments that sent a report to me. Great ideas for fundraising are out there, such as the Department of Oklahoma Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation Chairman Jody Chisolm presented a challenge to units at their fall conference to get 100 percent donations to the Child Welfare Foundation. They received a Child Welfare Foundation prize if they did that.

Contributions to the Foundation this year totaled just under 620,000. The American Legion donated \$89,027.49. The American Legion Auxiliary donations were \$69,043.97. And of course, coming in on top, the Sons of the American Legion donated \$427,315.84.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: The difference was made up from individual donations and the Eight and Forty. Way to go our American Legion family.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: The Sons of the American Legion continued to increase their donations every year. Let's continue to support our children with donations to this awesome Foundation. These funds continue to support the Child Welfare Foundation and we are able to support many worthwhile programs that support 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 I have with me this morning.

Stacy Cope is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Brownsburg, Indiana, Unit 331.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Stacy is the Youth Program Manager specializing in temporary financial assistance at the American Legion National Headquarters. She's been on staff at National Headquarters for over two years.

And joining Stacy on stage today will be Peggy Moon. She's a member of the Kriesel Jacobsen Post 560 in Zimmerman, Minnesota.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: Peggy's an Air Force veteran and has served her post, district, and department in many capacities. Peggy served as Department Commander in 2015, and at the 2019 Minnesota Convention, she was elected as the alternate NEC for the years 2019 to 2021, and will assume that position at the end of this Convention. Peggy serves as Vice President for the Board of Directors of the Child Welfare Foundation. Peggy's been married to her husband, Carl, for 45 years. They have two daughters and six grandchildren, all members of the American Legion family.

Please help me welcome Stacy and Peggy.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) Thank you for being a friend.

MS. MOON: Boy, you guys rock.

Thank you, Sharon, and thank you all for that very warm welcome. I wish to address Madam President, Past National Presidents, distinguished guests, all delegates, and let me especially do a shout out to my fellow Auxiliary members from Minnesota.

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: I got to tell you, you make me proud every day and I am so thankful and humbled to be a member of our organization.

Through all of our generous donations together, we are impacting the lives of hundreds of thousands of children all across our great nation. And at this time, we would like to recognize those departments that have gone above and beyond for the 2018-2019 award year.

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

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: The next is the Meritorious Achievement Award, and it's awarded to the top department experiencing the highest increase in per capita giving during the contribution year. This year that winner is the Department of Michigan.

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: You're so welcome. Congratulations.

The U.S. Udie Grant Legacy Award is the award to the top department nationally, based on combined total contributions of the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, the Eight and Forty, and the Sons of the American Legion during a contribution year. The winner of the Udie Grant Legacy Award is the Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: (Indiscernible). Also, the Garland Murphy Award is awarded to the most active department in the nation based on actual contributions received during the contribution year. And again, that goes to the Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: (Indiscernible), okay?

I have one more gift, and that's Madam President, is for you. This is going to go very nicely with what you're wearing.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh wonderful.

MS. MOON: And it is our five-diamond Child Welfare Foundation pin. And we want you to wear this proudly.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I will. Thank you so much.

MS. MOON: You're welcome.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I appreciate that.

(Applause.)

MS. MOON: Thank you all very much. Have a great convention.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: (Indiscernible.)

MS. MOON: Thank you. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you Sharon, Stacy, and Peggy.

Before we move into our next few reports, let's talk about the National President's Award for Excellence. Traditionally, we only awarded six National President's Awards, but I knew I wanted a big celebration, especially now that I've witnessed firsthand all the amazing work our units are doing around the country. And boy are you all working.

It all begins at the unit level, where the mission is (indiscernible), our grassroots members in action. So it is my honor to award 12 National President's Awards for Excellence: one winner in each of the mission delivery

programs. Eleven of the awards will be given to units to recognize the awesome work done in those programs. The final President's Awards for Excellence will be given to the Department that went above and beyond in membership. At the end of this session today, and at the end of the session Wednesday, I will hand out the National President's Awards for Excellence to the winning unit for each program reporting on that day.

For example, coming up next we'll hear reports from legislative, juniors, poppy, leadership, community service, public relations, and education. So at the end of our session, I will be giving the President's Awards to the winners in the legislative category, as well as all of the other mission delivery programs we hear from today. The same will happen on Wednesday, when we hear from Children and Youth, Americanism, National Security, VA&R, and finally membership, which will be the category that will have a department winner.

Sound good?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Awesome. Let's begin today's program report with legislative.

As advocates for our veterans, it is our duty to ensure legislatures are thinking about what our military's face while deployed, and what they will need when they return.

Here to tell us what was accomplished this year, please welcome National Legislative Committee Chairman Dr. Lisa Chaplin. Lisa --
(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) I'm just a bill. Yes, I'm only a bill. And I'm sitting here on Capitol Hill. Well, it's a long, long journey to the --

MS. CHAPLIN: Good morning everybody.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. CHAPLIN: Madam National President Kathy, Vice President Nicole, the Legislative Committee's goal this year was to demystify the legislative program in an effort to engage more grassroots members.

We recognize that there were many degrees of familiarity with the program and set about to find ways to engage everyone, from expert to novice. We focused on providing tools for each and every member to become involved from the basics of advocacy to tracking the progress of a bill.

We distributed information through our monthly newsletters and through articles written for the In The Know eBulletin, and through social media. We encourage letter writing by providing templates. And some units prepared letters about specific American Legion priority issues, so that members who chose to, could merely sign, seal, and mail a letter.

We used a Legislative Facebook group page to try to reach even more members to provide links to advocacy resources and to share information about critical issues, and to urge our members to contact their Congressmen and to request their support on specific issues at critical times.

We developed a recurring series of brief videos, which we tagged Tuesday Legislative Moments. Perhaps you've seen some. Which featured members of the American Legion family speaking on a variety of topics,

ranging from our roles in the Legislative Program as Legion family members to specific American Legion agenda items. We were even fortunate enough to have Congressman Mark Takano, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee contribute to our video series.

Some of the postings were shared nearly a hundred times, reaching beyond our own organization's membership to raise awareness of legislative issues affecting our veterans, our service members, and their families.

In true Legion family fashion, we invited American Legion and Sons of American Legion members to join us on our Facebook page. We wanted to engage in dialogue and share information with departments, posts, and squadrons. And our group membership increased by over 350 this year, and encompasses Legion family members throughout the U.S., and Puerto Rico, and in Europe.

Across the country, ALA members joined with their counterparts in the American Legion and Sons of the American Legion to call upon their state's elected officials to advocate locally for their veterans living in their communities, as well as military. And we gathered with them in Washington, D.C. to meet with our U.S. representatives and senators to garner their support for American Legion's Legislative priority issues coming before them, and to thank those who have supported the American Legion agenda thus far.

Our collective voice speaks volumes, and we've used it to urge our U.S. Congressmen and women to support the Legion Act, the Pay Our Coast Guard Act, the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act, and to protect the American Flag. We've also engaged with them on issues related to Veterans suicide prevention, veteran homelessness, and health care issues affecting women who have served.

We've initiated a Legislative advocacy team comprised of ALA members who have existing relationships with their elected officials.

When critical issues arise, we now have a force of individuals in place ready to take immediate action when the American Legion issues marching orders for us.

In reading reports from 52 departments, a recurring theme was that the Legislative Program can be interesting and fun. From the Department of New Hampshire, Chairman Lisa Rojek's report quoted a member as saying, and I quote, "Legislative, if presented correctly, is very interesting and one of the best ways to get your voice heard, as well as a way to raise awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission."

From the Department of Massachusetts, Chairman Marie Smith reported that numbers were considerably higher in all areas of communication between members and their elected officials at all levels of government this year. She quoted one unit's Legislative Chairman as saying, "This was a fun chairmanship." And she looks forward to taking even more action.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Lisa.

We can learn a lot from our junior members. After all, they are our future. This year the American Legion Auxiliary juniors were very busy.

Here to tell us more is National Junior Activities Committee Chairman, Carol T. Robinson.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) Baby shark, baby shark, baby shark, mommy shark, mommy shark, mommy shark, daddy shark, daddy shark, daddy shark, grandma shark.

MS. ROBINSON: Excitement. Energy. Vision. Compassion. Hope and fun. That's what the juniors bring to the Auxiliary. And who can resist the baby shark?

(Laughter.)

MS. ROBINSON: That song will be in your head the rest of the day.

(Laughter.)

MS. ROBINSON: It is our goal to create a lifetime spirit of volunteerism in juniors. And I'm proud to tell you of some of their accomplishments. The junior members earned over 1,300 patches.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: And volunteered over 75,000 hours in their communities by working with the veterans in the nursing homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, schools, and many other activities.

Department of Alabama --

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: -- has a week-long leadership camp every summer, where the juniors and SAL work on patches. This year they had 20 young SAL working on patches.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1187 in Castle Rock, Colorado, has one junior member named Sara. What an amazing young lady. She does the monthly menu boards for the Legion meetings. She signs the Pledge of Allegiance at functions, and helping wherever needed. Recently, she was given \$100 to gather as many stuffed bears for the Children's Hospital in Colorado. She collected 37 plus bears. She did a lot of shopping and pricing to get as many bears as she could. She called this project "Buddy Bears" in memory of Buddy, a family member.

Our juniors participate in various programs, proudly representing the American Legion Auxiliary. If I listed everything the juniors from each department did this year, we would be here quite a while. Probably the rest of the week.

Elections were held for each division and the following National Honorary Division Vice Presidents are for the upcoming year, 2020.

Central Division, Brianna Burton from the Department of Kansas.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Eastern Division, Paige Ainsworth, Department of Vermont.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Northwestern Division, Shanna Clyde, Department of South Dakota.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Southern Division, Delaney Oliver, Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Western Division, Angel Schwertferger, Department of Alaska.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: I'm sorry. Okay. So you see they're busy. You know the juniors rock, correct? I can't say it any better --

AUDIENCE: Juniors rock.

MS. ROBINSON: -- than this. Look at that. Juniors rock. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks, but if I may, I would like to introduce a special guest.

National President Kathy, it gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of the National Junior Member of the Year, Ms. Zoe Walz from the Department of Iowa, Englewood Unit 512.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Zoe is here.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBINSON: Zoe is here to tell us how she dressed her community in red in support of the troops. Zoe?

MS. WALZ: Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity and thank you to the Committee for selecting me as Junior Member of the Year and to Cindy Meyer (phonetic) for nominating me.

The American Legion Auxiliary is an important part of my life, especially as a military kid. My dad has been in the National Guard since before I can remember and has spent almost five years of his life overseas defending our country.

Prior to his last deployment, I started my biggest project to support the troops. Zoe's RED Friday Projects sold red t-shirts in support of RED Friday's. R-E-D stands for Remember Everyone Deployed. I sold t-shirts all over the nation, raising money to send care packages to my dad's unit, and for veteran suicide prevention. I raised well over \$12,000 and after sending care packages --

(Applause.)

MS. WALZ: -- I had raised enough money to sponsor a service dog through Achieving Freedom. This project taught me so much, but it was more humbling to see the support from our armed forces. My entire community was RED every Friday my dad was gone. I am so glad my dad is home and cannot say thank you enough for this honor.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you for your report, Carol, and for introducing all of us to the Junior Member of the Year. Wasn't she precious?

National Poppy Day gains serious momentum nationwide last year. Here to tell us more about how the nation embraced this day of awareness is Virginia Nelsen, National Poppy Committee Chairman.

(Cheering.)

MS. NELSEN: Well, maybe I can read, maybe I can't.

(Laughter.)

MS. NELSEN: Hello ladies.

AUDIENCE: Hello.

MS. NELSEN: Promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary Memorial Poppy is a national priority and proudly detailed in your reports. The two most popular projects were National Poppy Day and Little Miss Poppy. It is fair to say that National Poppy Day was huge. You arranged proclamations from Maine to California, and North Dakota through Texas. You made it happen.

Now, for a little audience participation. If your unit hosted a Little Miss Poppy, please stand. For real, stand.

(Laughter.)

MS. NELSEN: And now stay standing. If your unit, district, or department helped sponsor a National Poppy Day Proclamation, stand and stay standing, please.

Now, the camera should be looking at you. Wow. Look around and give yourselves a hand.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: I already knew that we had 25 Little Miss Poppies, and 43 proclamations as reported. But on Facebook and here, you broke all the records. Congratulations. We are the largest women's patriotic organization anywhere. And Facebook is where you truly showed it to the world.

This year, I was looking for those special poppy moments that made the heart swell. And those featuring women veterans, let me tell you about my two favorites. It's a tricky name. Captain Caitlin Kavgazoff receives Belle Center's first Poppy of the Year from her daughter Violeta, Little Miss Poppy.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Willard Stout, Unit 266 of Belle Center, Ohio, from the Central Division kicked off their annual Poppy Distribution Campaign with Little Miss Poppy. And here is their Little Miss Poppy Violeta Kavgazoff, offering the first poppy of the day to her mother, Captain Caitlin Kavgazoff, currently serving in the Air Force.

Both of Violeta's parents, Jason and Caitlin, are veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom. This beautiful photo made the front page of the local newspaper with a four-column article telling the story of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Memorial Poppy, and Unit 266.

Violeta has been a member of the Willard Stout Unit 266 Auxiliary for four years, continuing the tradition where her family had been members since 1919, when their post was chartered.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: This story and remarkable photo filled my heart with emotion. And it has been repeated across the USA in your units, with your Little Miss Poppies, and our juniors, making us all proud. Now, many of you

featured women veterans, inviting them to join, inviting them to participate, and stepping up to support them.

There was one unit who I truly and literally felt put the face of the woman veteran on the poppy program and continued all year. That unit is from the Western Division with ties to the Eastern Division too. Here's a key example of them meeting and exceeding the criteria that I was looking for. Since 1995, Las Cruces, New Mexico --

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: -- hosts a Veteran's Day parade. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 10 in Las Cruces participated in that parade, featuring the theme "A Salute to Women Veterans." Their unit had a float and made t-shirts that matched the theme.

Unit Member Alejandra Sadler found a drawing on the internet in the public domain. And Unit 10 used it as the singular inspiration for their float. They thought it came from Pennsylvania. We did a little research and found that it was a poppy poster. Kaitlin Miller from Weatherly, Pennsylvania, had submitted it --

(Applause.)

MS. NELSON: -- in a poppy poster contest through Unit 361. Her beautiful poster had placed as a winner on the National level. So thanks to Kaitlin in Pennsylvania.

These poppy ladies in New Mexico made good use of this excellent poster that captures National President Kathy's theme perfectly. The unit had both junior and senior members on the float. The photo was enlarged, matted in a large frame, and featured on an easel on the float for everyone to see.

This wonderful poster features a woman in combat gear with a garland of poppies around her helmet. It states, "I won't forget who I am or what I represent." Reminds me of the song.

A job beautifully conceived, and kudos to American Legion Unit 10 in Las Cruces, New Mexico, with sincere and grateful thanks to Unit 10 President Patricia Padilla-Torres for sending in the story, the photos, but most of all for making women veterans a priority in her unit.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Now, I would like to have someone special meet you.

President Kathy, please join me to recognize our National winner, National Little Miss Poppy Ms. Zoey Filegar.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Zoey is sponsored by John Stanley MacDuff Unit 381 from Cambridge Springs in the Department of Pennsylvania.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Zoey is eight years old and works the program throughout the year. She is an ALA Good Deed Award winner. She was recognized by the Salvation Army and later she was recognized by Erie United Methodist Alliance, for funds she raised to give homeless veterans a hand up.

She proudly tells the poppy story in word and by example month after month all year long. Most important, she offers caring and comfort to those

veterans who need a little time and sunshine. And Zoey, please share some things with us. Go ahead.

MS. FILEGAR: Hello. I am Zoey Filegar from Pennsylvania. I want to thank my unit, department, community, and (indiscernible) to help serve and honor our veterans. They have a special place in my heart. They must never be forgotten. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Ladies, I want you to see Zoey's shoes.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Can we get the camera on them?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Isn't she awesome?

(Applause.)

MS. FILEGAR: Thank you.

MS. NELSEN: Ladies, in closing, a heart-felt thanks to each of you for your steadfast devotion to veterans. You are poppy ladies, every one.

And to President Kathy, I love serving on your team.

And ladies, it was a pleasure to work with all of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Ginny. Through leadership, you will plant seeds of success and growth become. That was the goal of the Leadership Committee this past year, and they were able to achieve good results.

For more information about that process, please welcome National Leadership Committee Chairman Trish Ward.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) I don't know where or how you sing it to your leader now. Sing it to your leader now. I don't know where or how you sing it to your leader --

MS. WARD: Madam National President Kathy, the concept of leadership can be hard to define, and it means different things to different people. But for our members, leadership lives in the desire to be more effective, be more relevant, and be more successful in working our mission. As Oprah Winfrey said, "Forget about the fast lane. If you really want to fly, harness your power to your passion."

Harnessing the power of the self, supporting the individual growth of our members, and empowering the team to achieve was the battle cry to accomplish and thrive on behalf of those we serve.

We kicked off the 2018-2019 administrative year with a rock-solid project every member, unit, or department could embrace. Leadership Rocks came to life as members collected rocks, painted them with patriotic themes and supportive comments, and then left them for others to find and be inspired.

Great job ALA Sacajawea Unit No. 93 in Three Forks, Montana.

(Applause.)

MS. WARD: This group were true rock stars when it came to supporting each other, helping build confidence among their team, and motivating their fellow members. But it didn't stop there. Colorful, inspirational rocks could be found across the ALA landscape from Georgia and Kentucky, to Nevada and Utah, everyone got in on the fun to make plain old rocks come to vibrant life with uplifting messages of hope, honor, and courage.

Lifestorming is about the independent and bold creation of meaning for ourselves. Truly successful people are happy because they lead lives full of meaning, just ask Maleah Ivie, President of Unit 16 in Mackay, Idaho. It was a simple request. Each month members were asked to share their skills, talents, and passions. Maleah was truly inspired to lead her unit by getting members to communicate, engage, and connect. The outcome of this effort, a tighter team with greater trust and stronger focus.

Who thought clothespins were just for hanging clothes? Well, they're not. The American Legion Auxiliary Sunflower Girls State Team found a great way to inspire each other with hand-painted clothespins containing notes of encouragement. Messages like, "Thanks for all you do," and, "Yes, you can," inspired the staff to be bold and courageous while they work together to develop their state's future leaders. Clothespins were found clipped to everything from computer screens to chairs, and served to remind everyone that small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

As a core component of the Centennial Strategic Plan, both in Goal 2, create an internal culture of goodwill, and Goal 3, develop leadership at all levels, department teams worked hard to make sure that leadership best practices were a focus throughout all programs.

Great Leadership tools, such as the Department of Kansas's Connect Card and Ohio's Weekly Facebook Leadership Challenge helped members reach out, engage, and understand how embracing leadership in thought and deed can drive greater success.

In support of this fact, we recognize that great leadership starts with achieving critical milestones. Thanks for 52 awesome Leadership Department Chairmen, we're proud to announce 100 percent year-end reporting for the Leadership Program.

(Applause.)

MS. WARD: It remains the goal of the leadership program to make the concept of leadership believable and achievable for every member, not just those who are currently serving in leadership positions. We know that leadership is as much a belief in self as it is a definition of roles and responsibilities.

As our organization moves into a new century of service, it is the concept of leadership that will define how we're perceived by those with whom we collaborate and those we serve.

As Harry Truman so eloquently said, in periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Trish.

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 Raleen Tolzmann, National Community Service Committee Chairman, to tell us more about how our members contributed to their communities.

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) I got service with a smile. (Indiscernible) service with a smile. (Indiscernible). I just what I've been feeling and I'm doing it in style.

MS. TOLZMANN: Madam National President, I was Community Service Chairman. Jackie Westover wrote, "Many people wonder why the American Legion Auxiliary has a program for community Service." The community Service program promotes our visibility within our area to commitment, to communities, state and nation. Through our support in our communities, we demonstrate who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Volunteering helps make our communities a better place to live, as it demonstrates our compassion and support for our neighbor, our friends, and especially our veterans and their families.

Unit members promoted themselves and the Auxiliary by wearing t-shirts, hats, blouses, and pins. Unit members promoted events with posters, social media, articles or announcements of local newspapers, all with the American Legion Auxiliary branding. Here's a few examples of what the ALA Unit members have done this past year:

Correctionville Unit 79 of Iowa reflected on 9-11 and the disappearance of a young lady in their state and decided they wanted women and children to know how to keep themselves safe. With that in mind, the unit held a safe defense workshop for women and children to learn how to protect themselves and to be prepared, be aware, and be safe. The workshop was conducted by a self-defense trainer and assisted by a veteran who holds a black belt in Taekwondo and taught self-defense in the Marines. Eighty women and children, many of whom were veterans or were family members of veterans had taken the workshop.

Sometimes community service projects and activities require the help from whole ALA department. Community Service Chairman Denise H. Grants (phonetic) of the Department of Florida wrote, "Unfortunately, on October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael hit the panhandle of our state, causing destruction to a large area, impacting many ALA members. Units came to the aid of the Auxiliary sisters and residents, and their communities. Supplies for people who suffered through the hurricane were gathered by the American Legion family from all over the state, and were sent by the truckloads to those in need. Several units paid it forward by covering the dues of those affected, since dues needed to be current to apply for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund."

Sometimes we think just one person can't make a difference. One unit member did. Nebraska Department Vice President Elizabeth Cause

(phonetic) saw an article on Facebook that said, "Take a purse from the shelf. Fill it with feminine hygiene products, toiletries, and snacks. And when you see a homeless woman, give it to her." She thought of National President Kathy's special emphasis this year on helping women veterans. With that in mind, during a meeting of the Unit 254 of Prague, Elizabeth suggested Purses with a Purpose. The unit agreed. The project was suggested at the county level and all the units agreed it was something all could do. When mentioned, the Department President Beverly Neel, it became a Department project. By the time it was done, they had 1,501 purses filled with all kinds of things for homeless women.

(Applause.)

MS. TOLZMANN: These were distributed to shelters for homeless women and some of whom were veterans. And it just shows what one person's idea can do.

On last year's annual Make a Difference Day, units did all kinds of community service, including Flag retirement ceremonies, supporting their local Legion post, making donations to VA hospitals, serving lunch to the homeless and disabled, volunteering at stand downs and holding fundraisers. Unit members do community service in every city, large or small. Volunteering, donating, or making a difference in some way. And it doesn't matter whether it's a small project or a large one, all that matters to the people who receive the help and kindness shown by the ALA members.

Madam President, this ends my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Raleen.

I would like to say just take a moment, I was there in Nebraska when all of those purses started coming in, and there were mounds of purses just -- that just shows you our grassroots members working the mission. It really warmed my heart. I've never seen so many purses in all my life.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It is my pleasure to introduce the 2019 Convention Corporation President, Past National Commander and my good friend, Jimmy Koutz.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) My Reservation --

MR. KOUTZ: Welcome everybody.

Welcome to Indianapolis, Indiana, where we just changed our National model of our bird to the orange barrel.

(Laughter.)

MR. KOUTZ: And I know, as most of you probably came in to our state, the first thing you saw was orange barrels to greet you, so that is our official bird now.

(Laughter.)

MR. KOUTZ: But welcome to Indianapolis and welcome to Indiana. How could you have asked for a better day than yesterday for a parade?

(Applause.)

MR. KOUTZ: But I want to thank all of you for attending that, as well attended and after parade party, I don't know how many of you were there, but that was a huge success with the bands and all of the entertainment that we had. And I want to thank all of you coming for that.

One thing I'm going to say about this city that some of you probably don't even know and you probably have never been down to the canals, as most of you can see probably out of your hotel rooms windows. As you go down on that canal, you're going to see two things that are probably not even mentioned around here; and that is the USS Indianapolis Memorial and the Medal of Honor wall.

If anybody's ever been there, you'll see why so many people go. You can take it by walking the canal, or you can take it by paddle boats or canoes. So if you get a chance in your break, you want to maybe go to see those, and of course, most of you probably know that Indianapolis has more war memorials honoring veterans than any city in the world, except Washington, D.C.

(Applause.)

MR. KOUTZ: And most of them are right on Legion Mall. So we're very proud of that. So again, I want to say thank you very much for coming to Indianapolis. We hope you have a great time here. I want to say hi to my wife. I don't know where she's at, at in there, but hi baby.

(Applause.)

MR. KOUTZ: So that way I don't get in trouble.

(Laughter.)

MR. KOUTZ: But anyway, thanks a lot for coming to Indiana. Thanks for Indianapolis. And we will -- anything you need, be sure you come and see me. I'll get somebody else to do it.

(Laughter.)

MR. KOUTZ: But thanks for coming and what a great convention this is going to be. Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Jimmy.

I want to tell you that early on, one of the first duties of the corporation is to present the National Commanders and the National President this beautiful, distinguished guest badge. And it is gorgeous and it has a little small diamond in it. But it weighs a ton. And when I put it on, it falls way down and pulls me down. I don't want you upset with me. I love it. It's beautiful. But I struggle wearing it. Is that okay?

MR. KOUTZ: That's okay.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right. Thank you. And I'd like to give (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

MR. KOUTZ: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Joining me next is the leader of the Nation's largest veterans organization, Brett P. Reistad was elected National

Commander of the American Legion on August 30th, 2018, in Minneapolis during the organization's 100th National Convention.

Commander Reistad is a life member of Post 270 in McLean, Virginia, where he helped his Department reach an all-time high in membership while serving as Department Commander from 2005 to 2006. His wife, Jessica, and his family are proud members of the American Legion family. His theme as National Commander is celebrating our legacy with special emphasis on the organization's centennial.

Please welcome our National Commander and my friend, Brett P. Reistad.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: Please be seated. Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. REISTAD: And thank you so very much for the warm welcome. I have had the opportunity to travel the world with this delightful, delightful lady, who you elected last August as your President. I've been very blessed to have a wonderful leadership team, not only Kathy, but Greg "Doc" Gibbs for the Sons of the American Legion.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: Must be the Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: I want to give a shout out to the Department of Virginia --

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: All right. Not to exclude anybody else.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: But we had a wonderful year. We had the opportunity to travel the world together. To see some great things. It gave me the opportunity to get to know Kathy and her lovely husband, William. Yeah, let's get a shout out for William now, right?

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: That is a man with a sense of humor, I can tell you that.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: But we had a great time and it's so hard to come up here realizing that the year is almost over. When you start the year, it seems like it will last forever, but when you end the year, it seems like it went too quickly. But I have some very treasured memories as a result of traveling the country, traveling the world. In fact, Kenny, my aide, and I had the opportunity to travel to 54 of 55 departments.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: And I want to apologize to the Department of Oklahoma, because that is the one Department we were not able to visit, but there was a good reason why. Less than a month ago, maybe just a few weeks ago, we got a call to go to the White House to the Oval Office to visit with the President of the United States, where he was going to sign the Legion Act Legislation into law.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: And that occurred during about a three-day period that we were supposed to be in the Department of Oklahoma. So my apologies. I would have loved to have gone to 55 departments. But we had a very successful year.

I'm glad to say that the Legion Act is also going to have an impact on the whole American Legion family, to include the American Legion Auxiliary, with regard to eligibility of your mothers, grandmothers, I guess, whoever, but it's a great -- I'm not a member, I'm sorry.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: But it was a wonderful year and I would like to take this opportunity to present a couple of things to Kathy, and something to Bill, for you to take to him, because I can't imagine that he is here. Bill are you here?

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: Come on up here. First, this would be for Bill.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right.

MR. REISTAD: You don't have to open it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. REISTAD: But I think Bill --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: He'll like that.

MR. REISTAD: I think he'll like it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Good.

MR. REISTAD: It will give him something to do for a while.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: But this, I can't wait for her to open this.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh, my goodness. Seriously? Whoo, I love it. This is a picture book of our year together. Isn't that awesome? A picture book of our year together. Is this not awesome?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: What memories.

MR. REISTAD: That's not all that's in there.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That's not all?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: He says that's not all.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: (Laughing.)

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: It's a --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: President Kathy. It's a bobble head.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Is that it?

MR. REISTAD: That's it.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. You have to --

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Do you want to introduce your aide --

MR. REISTAD: Yes, I do.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please, (indiscernible).

MR. REISTAD: Okay. I want to first thank all of you for your hospitality as we traveled the country and traveled the world. But I didn't travel alone. I traveled with an aide, as all National Commanders do. And for any of you that may have followed me on Facebook --

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: -- you probably are well familiar with Ken Knight (phonetic). Ken and I have known each other for about 35 years. I was the best man in his wedding. And we served as District Officers together. So the choice was easy. We had a great year. Kenny, thank you for that.

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: This is Ken Knight.

MR. KNIGHT: Hi, hun.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MR. REISTAD: And if you are a Facebook follower, you have to know I've had a little bit of fun with Kenny.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: You know, you got to do something on the road just to kind of break up the monotony, and here we go.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: Now, there's a story behind this, and I'll make it really quick. Kenny can nap anywhere --

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: -- and he can do it in a matter of just a couple of minutes. And I got to taken photographs of him sleeping everywhere.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: And I gave him those glasses so that he could sleep unmolested.

(Laughter.)

MR. REISTAD: So those glasses have, over the last week, taken on a life of their own.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Brett, I'd like to give you a gift to show my appreciation this year. While you open it, I also have one for your wife, Jessica. She's such a sweet person. Would you take it to her?

MR. REISTAD: Absolutely. Oh my.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I know that you've probably taken 20 or 30,000 pictures because I've seen half of them on Facebook.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: But this is one of those electronic video things that will show all of your pictures on a jump drive, so I want you to at last you'll have some on your desk to watch every day.

MR. REISTAD: This is wonderful. And you know I could put it to good use.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I know it, no doubt about it. Now, may I take a personal privilege with your aide and give him a little presentation?

MR. REISTAD: Absolutely.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Kenny, just to show my appreciation to you, I have a little gift for you also. You don't have to open it, but look, he is the National Commander's Aide, but actually he was my aide too. When we traveled, this guy took care of me. Thank you, Kenny, so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Commander Brett, for joining us today and being a part of our National Convention.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Greg Gibbs was elected National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during their 47th National Convention. Doc has served the Sons for over 19 years through the Hamburg Post 527 in Western New York and received an honorary life membership from his squadron and post in 2015. He holds a doctorate degree and was a tenured university professor and now you see why all of his friends all him Doc. With his campaign motto of honoring the past, continuing the legacy, he truly looks forward to helping our National organization move forward in aiding the Legion as they approach their next 100 years of service to veterans, military, and our youth. Please welcome your Sons of the American Legion National Commander, and my friend, Doc Gibbs.

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. GIBBS: President Kathy, members up here at the dais and the stage, American Legion Auxiliary all.

AUDIENCE: What's up, Doc?

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: I'll be telling you what's up in just two seconds.

(Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: I just got done hearing Commander Reistad's words, and I could just say ditto, and walk off the stage, probably. But I've had the pleasure of serving with President Kathy this year, and our paths have crossed often. The strength of our Legion family was truly served as we took the stage together and were seen at so many events and ceremonies depicting the unity of the true Legion family. What a pleasure this year has been.

As we come to a close on the 100th commemoration of the American Legion, we surely can look back and see how our patriotism has been reflected throughout this year. Events and actions that took place, honoring our past truly do help to continue our legacy as Sons of the American Legion, as our motto for this year suggests. The entire Legion family has moved forward, creating yet another year of membership and donation milestones in the Sons of the American Legion. We have raised over \$10 million this year.

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: And as I am on this stage at the moment, I believe we've also reached 100 percent membership.

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: We have supported and passed new veteran friendly Legislation this year, and we pushed the VA to continue to improve taking care of our veterans.

As my own National Commandership fades into history, I hope that each succeeding Sons of the American Legion National Commander, Auxiliary President, and new Legion Commander add to our impressive movement forward, as we establish the next 100 years of the Legion family impact.

The actions of our local posts, units, squadrons, have all taken this 100th year. Honoring it had been exemplary. Parades, dinners, fundraisers, honor ceremonies, all have helped to keep our legacy alive, and aid in helping the younger generation really realize the sacrifice of our American men and women, soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, as they keep the freedom across our globe all these years.

Educating our children in youth in these sacrifices helps to ensure support and care for our veterans for years to come, which is a major part of all of our mission.

May the depth and breadth of our Legion family organization expand to build a stronger tomorrow in America. The lamp of liberty depends upon a fuel of patriotism, a fuel that we may help to embrace through all we do. May God continue to bless our veterans, our American Legion family organization, the American Legion Auxiliary. I thank you for all you've done this year to make that happen.

My new friendship with Kathy and William is a Godsend, and I thank you for allowing us to serve together -- excuse me -- I apologize. I humbly close, honoring the past and continuing the legacy. Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: Sorry.

(Applause.)

MR. GIBBS: And I have a little something just to give Kathy, and this, no offense to the Auxiliary, but this is not for your project.

(Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: This is for Kathy to take William out to get him a sweet tea someplace or whatever, so --

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you so much.

MR. GIBBS: Please enjoy.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Doc.

I would like to say I did have a gift for Doc and his lovely wife, Pam, but I presented it when I get -- I spoke Saturday at the Sons of the American Legion meeting, so --

MR. GIBBS: Yeah, thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: -- thank you.

MR. GIBBS: Thank you again.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. Thank you, Doc.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: During my presidency, I worked to highlight specific challenges facing our women veterans, especially homelessness. I was so lucky to be connected to a wonderful organization, U.S. VETS, which is the nation's largest non-profit provider of comprehensive services to homeless and at-risk veterans.

You met U.S. VET President and CEO, Steve Peck, during our opening this morning, but because he is such a leader in the national movement to eliminate veteran homelessness, I asked him if he would come back and speak on the U.S. VETS organization.

Please welcome US VETS, Steve Peck.

(Applause.)

MR. PECK: Hello again.

AUDIENCE: Hello.

MR. PECK: As Kathy said, our organization, I'm really blessed to be part of this organization for all of these years. We really have accomplished more than I ever could have imagined.

At our Long Beach site in 2001, we started a women veterans' program. One of the first comprehensive women veterans' programs in the country, and have served them for all of these years, but a couple of years ago, we saw some articles that were reporting that the suicide rate among women veterans was 6 to 12 times their civilian counterparts. So as much as we were doing, we realized that we had to do more.

We started a website, a web portal, called Women Vets on Point. There we go. And understanding that because -- we have a pretty large reach, but we had to reach more. Eighty percent of the women who were taking their own lives were not going to the VA. So these were women out there suffering alone, coming back from their deployments. Maybe they were single moms. Maybe they were on unemployed. They just did not know what to do. So at an alarming rate, they were taking their own lives, and we realized there must be some way to reach them, so we established this web portal.

Knowing that our challenge would be to get them to engage. It is always a challenge in the work that we do to get veterans to ask for help. Veterans are proud. They are self-sufficient. They have served proudly. And they do not like to admit that they are in a place where they cannot help themselves. Have to reach out to others.

So we started this site and did a lot of research with a company called EDC. They've done a lot of suicide prevention work for the VA and the others. And wanted to know what language we used to reach out to women. How can we get them to respond? How can we get them to react? How can we get them to engage? So we talked with a company called Frameworks. They did focus groups for women. And we began to design this site using the language that we felt would get women to engage.

The result is that of nearly 16,000 women came to the website. And on that website were tools for self-assessment, were resources. We've started

creating resources in the Los Angeles area. We would love sometime for this to go national, but we're still basically in the Los Angeles/Orange County area. And there were questionnaires for them to do a self-assessment. So that in the privacy of their home or their apartment, they begin to get a handle on the feelings that they are having. And that is really what is so dangerous that men and women begin having these feelings and they can't find a way out of it.

So these tools will allow them to do a self-assessment, without having to go talk to anyone else to determine what it is that is occurring within them. You saw that we had more than 16,000 come to the website. There's a chat feature, and about 600 women did that.

The result is that when we thought that we were going to provide mental health treatment specifically, the reality was that they need many, many more things. What was leading them to this desperate state, could have been military sexual trauma. It could have been PTSD. Could have been lack of financial resources. Lack of support in so many areas, and it was really leading them to depression and anxiety.

And because U.S. VETS has so many resources; we have housing, we have mental health counseling, we have employment assistance; they were coming to us for a whole variety of things. Of the nearly 400 women that were requesting support, only about 136 asked us for mental health services. And they engaged. And that was our whole idea. Just to get them to engage. To get them to come to the chat room and ask for help.

The chat room, we initially asked some information about them when they checked in. They weren't doing that. As I said, it is very difficult for them to admit that they're at their wits end and they need help.

So we changed the opening lines and said, "How can we help you?" It's all we did. They don't have to reveal who they are. And we just want them to begin to speak to us and tell us what their needs are.

Of the 136 women who were asking for mental health support, a lot of them really stayed engaged. So we were -- some of them, as many as 15 sessions. So were really giving comprehensive mental health assistance to them.

And knowing that we couldn't do this all ourselves, we talked with a variety of community partners, who also could provide mental health. So on the website, they can not only use these tools, they can listen to stories from other women. They can come directly to our site. We're at Patriotic Hall in downtown Los Angeles. But they can also go to any of these other community providers to get that mental health. Not just a -- that's the concept: to make it easy for them to get mental health. To let them know that mental health is available, not only at the VA. A number of people don't want to go to the VA. They don't have to go to there to get the help that they need. They can go out to any of these other providers.

We wanted to get the word out to women in any way that we could. So we talked to a lot of community partners in the Los Angeles area. Created events, networking events, community events, and went everywhere that we felt that a woman might go to seek help of any kind, but knowing that if we connect all of these

dots, then it will lead them eventually back to the resource that they need, whether that's mental health, or housing, or employment.

We did other community engagement. The National Veterans Foundation is a hotline for veterans who need help of some sort. The L.A. HOPE TEAM is addressing homeless people out in the community.

The police departments have gotten a lot better about not just taking homeless people and putting them in jail. They understand that they're on the street for a reason. A number of really terrible and tragic things have happened to end them up on the street alone without support and the HOPE Teams now are connecting them with other resources.

Our Congresswoman Napolitano came. She has a real concern about women veterans. And there's a family wellness clinic that UCLA has established at the VA in West Los Angeles. We connected on social media; on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat. I hardly know what Snapchat is, but some women do. So they're connecting that way. We did establish First Fridays, a Friday gathering where anywhere from 15 to 20 women are coming just for support. They don't have to ask for anything, they're just there talking to other women. We hope again, through that process, they'll find other women who have common issues and common solutions, and they'll avail themselves of that.

I came here last year and spoke to Kathy about this program, and she really adopted us. She came out to Los Angeles and to several other of our facilities. I know you were in Houston, maybe a couple of others, to talk to the veterans and talk to the women that we were trying to reach out to.

We know that providing a key service, if you heard the group of founders this morning in NCHV. If you are on the street listening, and in the communities listening to the needs of veterans and providing those needs, people will come. And we're hoping that we can enlist all of you and all of your posts to engage with veterans in the community and connect them with services. Obviously, we connected with the VA.

We've learned a couple things along the way. This still is a work in progress. As I said, it's in the Los Angeles area. We hope to spread it nationwide. They needed those other services. Not just mental health services, they need the whole range of services.

If a woman is homeless and without support, first of all, we need to find her a place to get that support before she's going to even begin to address her mental health issues.

We wanted to know that -- wanted them to know that they were speaking to other women veterans. So when they go to that site and look around, they see that there are women veterans that they're going to speak to. Some of them who have been in the same position that they have. So we're trying to gain their trust that way.

And we have to respond in real time. A lot of those calls are coming at night, not during regular working hours. Between, I think between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. most of the calls came. So the women who are answering the phone, and there's an app on your phone. If you look at womensvetspoint.org, you're going to find the app, and women can connect

to the chat room that way. So we knew that we had to have people who were responsive all day and night.

We want to continue to develop the web portal. As I said, we've got multiple resources in the Los Angeles area. We would love to spread this community by community. We want to connect with other networks that are providing help for veterans and for women veterans.

We are still working to spread the word about suicide prevention. We were involved in a summit in Sacramento last week and in another three weeks are going to be doing another suicide summit in Los Angeles with the Mayor, so we are getting the word out that this issue is out there. It is impacting many, many of our veterans, and we have to teach people that it is okay to talk about this, and that there is help available.

We want to expand our resources and create a toolkit, so if any of your posts are wanting to begin to create such a network, we'll have a toolkit that will be available to you, to kind of walk you through step by step and our staff will work with you.

So as I said, it's a work in progress. We will continue this work and we hope that you will continue to join us. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Steve.

I'm going to take a personal moment of privilege, because I think I see her out in the audience.

Is Jean Mahoney out there? I've been asked to recognize a special lady from Florida. She is a 96-year-old member of the Auxiliary. Now that in itself is awesome. But what is more awesome is that she has attended 56 national conventions, 56.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Hat's off to you, Jean.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Public relations. Public relations strengthen our identity and attract potential members.

To share the accomplishments of this past year, please welcome National Public Relations Committee Chairman Martha Corriher.

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) (Indiscernible).

MS. CORRIHER: Breaking news. Did you know that the American Legion Auxiliary and Public Relations were born in the same year? 1919. We have a joint celebration this year.

While the American Legion Auxiliary's missions remain the same, Public Relations did not start out that way. They started out as a counseling office to assist companies on how to distribute news about their company's accidents before the press could share their views of the accident.

For the American Legion Auxiliary, written accounts of what the organization plan to do were published and distributed by the U.S. Postal

System and still is today, and members receive information on how the program's action plans, with a few new ways to deliver the message.

Today, I'd like to share those most popular social media sites. There are available, there are many, but here are the top three: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

With the wide use of Facebook, units and departments like North Carolina and New York, have started their own Facebook pages for all of their programs to share what they are doing.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: Yeah. Give yourselves a round of applause.

Auxiliary programs are being shared in real time, so that people that are looking can feel like they're there, and they can see them and try something new. As you can see, our junior members in Washington Unit 7 are helping to lead the way, promoting PR with their own banners and branding, making sure everyone knows who the juniors of the American Legion Auxiliary are.

In Peoria, Arizona, units continue to treat our military kids to Fun Day events and get covered by the media and their newspapers, and they post pictures to their Facebook page. This is great work done by all. Departments and units use as much branding in their events as possible. Kentucky made sure the public --

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: -- knew who they were during a recent honor flight. California makes sure the community knows --

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: -- who they are when their honor guard shows up in full dress to assist and service our members.

Members in North Carolina show their ALA pride with branding during poppy distributions and when presented with ALA proclamations.

The use of Facebook Live is probably the fastest growing way we share our information today. It's a fun way to share in real time, like I said, and everyone feels like they're there. And just think, you don't have to be a professional to do it. Just be knowledgeable, be excited, and be willing to be proud and share the work that you are doing.

So what's left to come in the Public Relations? There's always things to do in PR. So during the next 100 years, I'm sure more technology will be available to make PR faster and easier.

But one area that we really need to work on as Auxiliary members. We need to concentrate on the public relations between our members, between each other. I've heard it over and over again this year. Our Department Chairman aren't sending us the information. We don't know what to do.

So I remind them. There's a simple way. Go to the program action plan on the website. Click under the portal of whatever you're looking for. And find that information. It's easy. If you haven't done it yet, go in, click on -- establish, put your name, establish a password, and start browsing. You'll have all the information first-hand.

However, when it comes to special department information, it's important for the departments to have that information readily available on your Facebook page, your websites, or to include it in your mailings, your newsletters, or bulletins, or ever how you get it out there. Remember, we aren't children who don't know how to share, are we?

(Laughter.)

MS. CORRIHER: We are adults who should further the ALA's mission by helping our veterans, our active duty military and their families. We have the knowledge. It does no one any good if we keep it here. We have to share it. As a little children's song go, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." What better way to get your message out there? To get your image out there, then to shine on your own medias, in the newspapers, Facebook. Be proud of what you do. Please don't hide your light under a basket, and extinguish the flame that has been built for the first 100 years. We need to keep this flame burning for another 100.

Share what you know, be proud of your membership, be excited for where we can go. And most of all, just think of what we can do if we work together, share, and give everything we have for the American Legion Auxiliary. You have to do it with a servant's heart. And do it with a smile and the life of this organization of veterans, and our active duty military.

Madam President, that concludes my report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you Martha.

Our units and department fully embraced our mission for education this year. To share with us their great accomplishments, please welcome National Education Committee Chairman Lisa Williamson.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) Education. Education. Education.

MS. WILLIAMSON: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. WILLIAMSON: Thank you, Madam President.

The American Legion Auxiliary's Education Program is multi-faceted, but not solely about providing scholarships, but it is a huge part of what we do. So let's start with those national scholarships. These 25 recipients were selected based on their involvement in school and community activities, and of course their academic record, for one of three grants: our Children of Warriors' National President's Scholarship; the Children of Youth Scholarship; and the Non-Traditional Scholarship.

Although time precludes me from telling you each of their stories, I'd like to touch on just a few. First, John Clyde Ready from the Department of Mississippi. Mississippi, are you in the house?

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Working with John's school and family, Post 27 member, Tim Lee (phonetic) was able to surprise John by announcing he was a recipient of the Children of Warriors National President Scholarship during

the Lawrence County High School Awards School Night. Christine Swanson, another National --

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- President's Award Scholarship, submitted by the Department of New York, wrote to thank the ALA for this opportunity. She stated that she had the honor to apply, due to the heroic service of her great grandfather Edward Anthony Kelly. He instilled in her that there is no greater service or sacrifice than that to your country. She went on to say that education is a powerful tool and a motivator for people to succeed. And I truly believe she will do just that; succeed. Submitted by the Department of Kansas.

Anneliese Holland was also selected as the National President Scholarship Award recipient. Her story also all started at ALA Kansas Sunflower Girls State. She had such a wonderful experience there that she joined the Auxiliary last fall.

And finally, Kara Ohler, also received the National President Scholarship. Her story's a bit different, however, as her application was submitted through the Department of Pennsylvania, although she lives in Korea. As a military dependent living overseas, her scholarship application was submitted directly to their home of record in Pennsylvania. She plans to go into the medical field and receive a commission as a U.S. Air Force officer. Go Air Force.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Only time will tell if she's one of our servicewomen of the year in the future.

In a nutshell, the future is in good hands. Don't you think so?

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: It was reported that units and departments also offer their own scholarships to the tune of \$607,740. Yes, applause, please.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Add that to the \$110,000 that is provided by the three national scholarships, we are pushing nearly three-quarters of a million dollars all in one year. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: We know that National President Kathy Dungan's focus is on female veterans and the specific issues they face, particularly that of homelessness. And many departments and units try to incorporate that focus into the education program. The Department of Ohio reported developing --

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- reported developing a scholarship for female veterans as a part of their Department President's Special Project this year.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Not for lack of trying, Department Education Chairman Deb Meyer, indicated that they unfortunately did not get any applicants for this scholarship. One hurdle is that distributing this is different than in the traditional way. We cannot rely on school counselors, as most of

these applicants are not high school students. Legion family members must step up to get the word out. However, Deb concludes in an email the scholarship is not going away.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Keep up the great work.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: I'm sure you'll be flooded with applications in no time, as you serve our heroes.

The Departments of Michigan and Alabama also indicated that they offer scholarships to help female veterans largely with the help of the entire Legion family. At the unit level, Tyler County Unit 48 in West Virginia --

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- offered a first-time scholarship. Two awards were given for a total of \$500. Don't all of these align perfectly with National President Kathy's focus?

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Yes, please.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Madam National President, this concludes the platform remarks for the Education Committee.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Lisa. Awesome report.

Okay. Now is that special time -- okay. Now it's that special time when we get -- third time -- when we get to celebrate our grassroots members for all the hard work they have done delivering our mission in their communities. Remember, there will be a winning unit from every mission delivery program that reported today, and I am so excited about this.

Would Past National President and my friend, Mary Davis, come to the podium to help me out?

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: It is my pleasure to introduce today's National President's Award winners. In the Legislative category, Colonial Heights, Unit 284, from the Department of Virginia.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: She's on her way. This is good, you know, it's good exercise for us when we sit for a while.

President Kathy was so impressed with your honor flight work and your participation in the Day on the Hill event, excellent work.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Junior category, Charles A. Conklin, Unit 28, from the Department of Michigan.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Your work during the Grand River Clean-up Day, the 9/11 Remembered Ceremony, and your Fold the Flag Project really makes you a stand out. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Poppy category, Las Cruces Unit 10 from the Department of New Mexico.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you for your veteran's parade featuring women veterans. It really showcased the National President's focus for the year. Fantastic work.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Another personal moment of privilege. I was given a rendition of the poppy poster with their theme, "Salute to Women Veterans This Year." Isn't that beautiful?

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Leadership category, Northeastern Unit 459 from the Department of Michigan.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: President Kathy loved your "We'll Make It Work" theme for the year, and how you tied it into her theme of serving our heroes. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Community Service category, Liberty Unit 289 from the Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you for all the work you did for our veterans during the holiday season. Your Christmas Bag Project for Homebound Veterans is a great project for any unit, big or small. What a wonderful idea.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Public Relations winning unit is Unit 230 from the Department of Indiana.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Wow. Your seven published newspaper articles and two spots on a local radio show with WCBK gained you 23 new members. Now, that's some good PR. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Education category, from Fredonwarell, Unit 17, from the Department of New Hampshire.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: President Kathy was so impressed with your scholarship program and your Bus Driver's Appreciation Day, great work.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: How about one more round of applause for all of today's National President's Award for Excellence winners.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Mary. And thank you all winners, the recipients, that is just awesome work.

Before we adjourn for the day, the Chair asked the National Secretary, Linda Boone, to announce any convention updates. Linda?

(Music.)

VOICE: (Singing.) You gotta listen up. You gotta listen up.

SECRETARY BOONE: Good morning. Okay. The bags are overflowing in the mailroom, so pages, make a track. Also, we're looking for a seated walker that was taken from the C&B meeting Saturday. Somebody took it by mistake, maybe? Or you just got tired of walking. I guess I don't -- I'm not sure.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY BOONE: And a reminder that immediately following this recess, we will be practicing for the installation. So those of you involved in the installation, will need to hang out.

Remember the breakout sessions. The three breakout sessions are this afternoon at 2:30, so look in your program.

And tomorrow morning, the Unit Member of the Year breakfast with the National President has been moved to the Weston Hotel Cameral, C-A-M-E-R-A-L room, on the first floor of the Weston at 7 a.m.

Okay. Then some exciting news about the giving Tuesday American Legion Auxiliary Foundation booth. We have a donor that said if in the next, I think it is, in the next, like, in the next hour, we need \$1,000, they will match it. So we need -- so go give your 20 bucks and you'll get -- we'll get 20 bucks more. So go do that. So we have a donor. So you got about an hour to make that happen.

So that's it, Madam President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Linda.

And I want to thank all of the National Chairman for the presentations today. They were wonderful. And of course, yes, they were.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And of course, big thank yous to our special guest, including those from the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion.

This concludes the opening session of the 2019 National Convention. We are now adjourned.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m. on Monday, August 26, 2019, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2019**

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to Day Two of ALA Proud, the 99th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here to begin our session is your National President Kathy Dungan.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The 99th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will come to order. Reminder, please take a moment to ensure your electronic devices are in silent mode. Thank you. Chaplain Dr. Deborah Blanch will lead us in our invocation.

DR. BLANCH: Good morning, ladies. How are you this morning? Amen. Everyone that is able to stand, please stand. If you cannot, God knows your heart.

Before we start this prayer this morning, let us take a moment of silence for all unspoken prayers. Amen.

May we bow our heads and accept the Invocation. Father God, as we gather for this meeting, give us the use of your gift of peace and understanding that we may approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just hearts. May you watch over and guide us so the information our leaders give us today is received and understood, and that we will follow those guidelines. Keep us always true to the principles on which the American Legion was founded. We are prepared to go together into the next 100 years and we thank you for the guidance to achieve this. We ask this in your name as we say together three times, Amen. Amen. And Amen. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please be seated.

(Gavel.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Deborah. Good morning, everyone. We began yesterday's session with some very special guests so I thought it would be fun to do the same thing this morning. Yesterday, I talked about influencers and the profound effect they have on our organization and the lives of those we serve. This morning, I present a group of ladies who have spent a lifetime influencing the influencers to accomplish the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary -- our Past National Presidents.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes. By decade, please welcome the attending Past National Presidents of the American Legion Auxiliary. From the 1990s.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Linda Boone from the Department of Oregon, our 1992 - 1993 National President.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Linda Newsome from the Department of Maryland, our 1995 - '96 National President. And Virginia Hobbs from the Department of Kentucky --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 1998 - '99 National President. Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: From the 2000s.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Kristine West from the Department of New Hampshire.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2000 - 2001 National President. Our 2004 - 2005 National President, Sandi Dutton from the Department of Maryland.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2007 - 2008 National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Miriam Junge from the Department of Ohio.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: She earned the title of Honorary National President in 2009. We have Desiree Stoy from the Department of Ohio.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: She was our 2008 - 2009 National President. And 2009 - 2010 National President from the Department of New Mexico Rita Navarrete.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: From the 2010 decade. Our 2010 - 2011 National President, Carlene Ashworth from the Department of Texas.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2012 - 2013 National President, Peggy Thomas from the Department of Virginia.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2013 - 2014 National President, Nancy Brown-Park from the Department of California.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2014 - 2015 National President, Janet Jefford from the Department of Connecticut.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2015 - 2016 National President, Sharon Conatser from the Department of Illinois.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our 2016 - 2017 National President Mary Davis from the Department of Washington.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And our immediate Past President, 2016 - 2017, Diane Duscheck from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies. Let's give all our attending Past National Presidents another round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: In keeping with my theme, Serving our Heroes, yesterday we met our first of three Woman of the Year honorees. This morning I present to you Leslie Lightfoot. Please watch the screen.

(Music.)

THE ANNOUNCER: The American Legion Auxiliary proudly honors Leslie Lightfoot as their 2019 Woman of the Year in recognition of our lifetime commitment to men and women veterans in need.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: I became interested in the service I think when I was nine years old, probably, and my dad had given me his Purple Heart. And even though I didn't know exactly what it was, I knew it was extremely special to him and I think that probably set the stage for my future.

My childhood friend was killed in Vietnam and I was going to go avenge his death and save the world, and so I became an Army Medic.

THE ANNOUNCER: Leslie served in emergency rooms at Fort Dix and in intensive care at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center during the Vietnam War. Her experiences prepared her for a lifetime of service for America's veterans.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: As an Army Medic, I worked emergency room on Fort Dix and then intensive care in Landstuhl, and when I got out of the Army as a Medic I don't think you ever feel like you've done enough. So it was just the natural path to keep trying to do for vets.

After I got out of the Army, I went back to school. I used my benefit. I got a couple of psychology degrees and became board certified as an expert in Traumatic Stress. So I've done counseling for 40-some years with veterans who have experienced trauma and I also set up some programs for veterans.

THE ANNOUNCER: Those programs founded by Leslie are under the umbrella of Veteran Homestead, a not for profit agency geared to helping men and women veterans in need.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: There are six programs in the Veteran Homestead. The first one was the hospice. Each program is geared to a different problem that a veteran might have. The hospice was designed basically for veterans who were too sick to take care of themselves and didn't have a family and didn't have anybody to change the sheets or care about them. And then as it progressed, we took in the Hero Homestead, which was mostly for elderly vets, but all the programs combined drug and alcohol treatment as well as homelessness and sometimes just guidance, is all they needed.

The Armistice Homestead was basically drug and alcohol rehabilitation. We have a program in Puerto Rico, the only program for veterans specifically in Puerto Rico, that was for drug and alcohol, but it kind of encompassed everything, homeless veterans as well. Then we started the program in Gardner, which was for veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, who really didn't know how to integrate back into society. We even had active duty veterans come there because they didn't have enough money to live on their own.

THE ANNOUNCER: NVTRC features beautiful, modern, community-based housing that offers counseling for PTSD, recreation area with a lap pool, workout area, and a physical therapy center available to residents facilitated by volunteer clinicians.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: And we had the Veterans Victory Farm in New Hampshire, which taught them, it was really animal therapy. Because animals are so good for people who really can't relate to another person. But you can tell that donkey anything and he will never repeat it. So that worked out very well. They grew vegetables and sold them. It was a working farm.

THE ANNOUNCER: Leslie's children have followed in her footsteps of military service.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: I have three children who are military. I have a daughter who is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army right now. I have an Air Force daughter, who teaches (indiscernible). And I have a son who is an Iraq-Afghanistan veteran, who has come home with a minor head injury.

I'm retired now. I spend my time living in the Bahamas and fishing and spearing lobsters. So that's all good. And the DAV is taking over the programs. They are going to run them the way they were intended, to help veterans. It's so exciting. I could not be more thrilled that they are doing it.

THE ANNOUNCER: Leslie has a message to all ALA members.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: Just remember this, if I can do this, anybody can do it. And the bottom line is, just get out there and help a vet. No matter what it is, just go do it.

THE ANNOUNCER: Thank you, Leslie Lightfoot, for your lifetime of dedicated service to our men and women veterans.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please give a warm American Legion Auxiliary welcome to Leslie Lightfoot.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You will get to hear Leslie at the luncheon today. Thank you, Leslie.

MS. LIGHTFOOT: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This year the focus of Past Presidents Parley was Mentorship and Camaraderie: Showing the Next Generation What Positive Leadership Can Do. Here to share her report, please welcome National Past Presidents Parley Committee Chairman, Past National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan. Jan?

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: President Kathy and members, Past Presidents, what comes to mind? A group of little old ladies knitting or crocheting at meetings? Or a group of energized and engaging women who stay involved in camaraderie with each other? Who serve as a source of knowledge and support to members at every level of our organization?

Past Presidents should be the backbone and the front line, energizing other members to accept responsibility as officers and chairmen to continue our work for the military, our veterans, and our communities.

Past Presidents mentor, advise, and support and that should be the role of all of us as Past Presidents. We need to be available to willingly offer our assistance when asked. We need to utilize the experience and expertise of our Past Presidents to ensure a strong leadership for the future of our organization. Past Presidents are a goldmine of knowledge. We should as Past Presidents continue to pay back to an organization that gives us so much. Among those gifts are the many friendships we formed with members in the organization.

The reports I received this year emphasized many specialty programs for our female veterans, gifts for our unsung heroes, including assistance with housing and comfort items, stand downs reaching out with birthday cards, Veterans Day cards, and other holidays. Many shared stories of visiting with shut-ins at home and in VA hospitals, driving them to medical appointments, shopping for groceries, household duties, and caring for children.

Training for future leaders was provided in many departments to safeguard the future of the ALA. Numerous departments reported units with Past Presidents serving on every committee to assure the guidance necessary to implement each program and develop leadership within their units.

One district leadership chairman held a number of successful leadership round tables engaging Past Presidents at every level, from units,

counties, districts, department, and national, with future potential leadership possibilities, invited to listen and learn from these members who had served in Presidential roles, and then shared their expertise with these members attending the round table to encourage them to accept the challenge of serving in a Presidential capacity.

The training and experience of Past Presidents can be extremely useful in any activity needing special support or emphasis. Past Presidents are willing and able to share their experience and knowledge. You simply need to ask.

Units are encouraged to start Past Presidents Parleys that can support unit activities and utilize their personal skills. They provide training and encouragement to members by providing them with the tools to fulfill the duties of their position.

It is encouraging to note that departments continue to support scholarships for nurses, many with significant dollar amounts and the numbers awarded. Illinois again founded an incredible 28 --

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: -- \$1,000 scholarships. Way to go, Illinois!

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Units invited female members of the American Legion to their parley luncheon. Some units encourage members to take advantage of websites to help build future leaders. It was fun, they stated, watching the light bulb on when these new members learned something new. Many departments reported honoring a living Past Department President at their annual convention with a reception, luncheon, or dinner.

As we all know, the purpose of the Past Presidents Parley is to utilize the experience and knowledge of past Auxiliary leaders for training and encouraging future Auxiliary leaders. Through this committee, women who have served as Presidents have an opportunity to continue in active service and are not relegated to sitting on the shelf gathering dust. These women help to ensure strong leaders for the future of the ALA.

Serving with me on this committee is Past National President Carlene Ashworth. She followed up with departments for the important work of honoring the Unit Member of the Year. I'm pleased to report that we'll be honoring 49 very special Women of the Year awardees at our luncheon after this session.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Past National President Nancy Brown-Park was involved with the mentoring opportunity for all departments. Now, let's turn our attention to the honor of saluting our great active duty women.

Every branch of service is being recognized today. Choosing winners this year was challenging, as there were so many nominated. Thank you to each department who submitted great nominations. Every servicemember

accomplished so much in her career, as you will learn, as well as she has given back to the 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 on behalf of a grateful nation, presented August 2019.”

Our first two presentations will be read by Past National President Carlene Ashworth.

(Applause.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Thank you, Jan. Representing the Air Force, it is my pleasure to introduce Lieutenant Colonel Rachelle Hartzel. Colonel Hartzel began military service as an Army ROTC cadet in 1986. She enlisted in the Air Force December 29, 1988 and has won numerous awards. Rachelle has been a registered nurse and South Dakota’s Nurses Association member since 1994. She has a Master of Science in Nursing for Community Health and also holds American Nurses Credentialing Certification in Medical Surgical Nursing. She has worked in civilian, federal, and military healthcare settings caring for patients from birth to death. From 2007 to 2008, Rachelle deployed to Balad Air Force Theater Hospital in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. And from 2011 to 2012, she deployed again to Ahmed al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait in support of Operation New Dawn.

In Iraq, she was the Assistant Nurse Manager on the intermediate care ward, a 28-bed inpatient medical surgical unit. The nursing team cared for 2,800 patients, assisted 20 critical care aeromedical transport teams, and supported 1,200 aerovac missions, earning the reputation as the busiest ward in the AOR.

During her deployment to Ahmed al Jaber Air Base in Kuwait, Rachelle directly supported four doctors and two independent duty medical technicians as the sole clinical nurse at a minimal capability ambulatory clinic, serving a base population of nearly 1,000 active duty members, resulting in 3,600 patient visits. She coordinated all patient care for higher echelon services, over 200 referrals for special consultations, 17 ambulance transfers, and seven aerovac missions out of the theater of operations. She provided direct critical nursing care for two medical and three cardiac patients during ambulance transports, safely delivering the patients to the emergency care facility over an hour away.

From June 2014 to June 2017, Rachelle was stationed at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, a 100-bed trauma center. She was the Deputy Chief Nurse and Flight Commander for inpatient services, leading 328 personnel on the medical, surgical, pediatric, intensive care, inpatient behavioral health, and contingency operation units.

In June 2017, Rachelle took command of the 5th Medical Operations Squadron, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, and was selected for promotion to Colonel.

Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Lieutenant Colonel Rachelle Hartzel.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARTZE: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARTZE: Thank you for inviting us here today, and Carlene, thank you for that lovely introduction.

I'm deeply honored to stand with you and my fellow servicewomen in recognition of service to veterans and to our country. So I would like to express my appreciation to Barb Vetter and Jodi Moritz (phonetic) of the Faulkton American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 102, in South Dakota, for nominating me today.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARTZE: Faulkton is a small town and when I was growing up I delivered the Grit Newspaper. I remember passing a Legion hall and reading the many names on the stone out front, wondering about these men, their lives, and how they died. I've been involved with my hometown American Legion Auxiliary for many years. I come from a family of veterans. My dad, my mom, many uncles, my sister, and our husbands have all served. My dad and uncles --

(Applause.)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARTZE: My dad and uncles served in Vietnam and my sister and I serve in the ongoing War on Terror. And my children are preparing for their own careers in the military now.

Many of you, like me, have children or grandchildren who do not remember or have not experienced a time in their lives when we as a nation were not at war. It has been 18 years since September 11, 2001. Many young men and women entering the military now were not even born when 19 terrorists attacked our nation, hijacking four planes, and killing almost 3,000 victims in the Pentagon, the World Trade Centers, and the plane that crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

It is a direct result of the events on September 11th that continue to drive my service. We still have young men and women serving. And as a nurse, it is often on their worst day when I interact with them or, worse yet, their remaining family members.

This last year marked the 100 years anniversary of the end of World War I in Europe. Although at the time it was called the Great War, or the War to End All Wars because it was so horrible, no one thought any nation that had experienced those great losses would ever enter conflict again. More than 4 million American military personnel served in World War I. More than 100,000 of them never returned from conflict, although our involvement was not as great as the Europeans. All total, at the end of the War, there were 9 million dead, 21 million wounded, and we now recognize it did not end all wars.

The people of Europe are to this day so grateful for the sacrifice of the Allies during World War I and World War II that they hold ceremonies to commemorate our American military servicemembers who fought and died to free their country. So it is with great appreciation that I thank you, the

American Legion Auxiliary, for continuing to honor our men and women who serve in the military.

(Applause.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Colonel Hartz, the American Legion Auxiliary would like to recognize you for your outstanding contribution both to the U.S. Air Force and in your community. Please remain on the stage as we honor the four other branches of service.

(Music.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Representing the Army, it is my pleasure to introduce Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kaylan G. Harrington. She initially enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in September 2001 and then completed an interservice transfer to the U.S. Army in 2009 with the honor of receiving the above-named officer appointment. She now is active in the Maryland Army National Guard.

(Cheering.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Harrington currently serves as the Senior Training Advising and Counseling Officer for the Maryland Army National Guard Warrant Officer Candidate School, 1st Battalion, 70th Regimental Training Institute. She is an active member of the American Legion Riders Post 18 and supports numerous veteran organizations in the community. She is a full-time student, pursuing her bachelor's of science nursing degree and works at University of Maryland Shore Health Emergency Room. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Harrington has completed six combat deployments with assignments including Military Intelligence Mentor; Afghan National Army Special Operations Command in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel; Deputy J2 2nd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment Fort Lewis in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Female Engagement Team, Special Forces Group, Special Operations Task Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; All Source Production Chief, S2A 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in support of Operation New Dawn; Interrogator, 201st Military Intelligence Battalion deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom; Intelligence Analyst, Joint Special Forces Task Force with deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During one of her six deployments, Chief Harrington lived among the civilians in the Afghan village. Her assignment was to build relationships, get a sense of the local concerns, and try to persuade them it was in their best interest to resist the Taliban. During that year-long stay in the Afghanistan district of Mohammad Agha, she watched as Afghan girls walked for miles to get to their schools, even though conditions in those schools were deplorable. Harrington, along with other members of the unit, led a campaign of humanitarian work which helped thousands of girls get educated, delivered food and supplies to abused women and orphans, provided safe play areas for children, and improved conditions for young mothers. She and fellow soldiers led the construction of a building, ten bathrooms, and a water storage tower at Grish Kavor Girls School, attended by 2,700 girls, age six to 16. They improved security around the school and raised enough money from non-military sources to provide about 500 desks and chairs, thousands of

books, and more than a ton of school supplies, including notebooks, crayons, and backpacks.

It would be folly to believe the team's work will end centuries of gender inequality or resolve any of Afghanistan's other complicated problems. But she knows a small but well-placed effort can lead to larger than expected results. All you have to do is touch one or two people, and that one or two people can start a ripple effect. Harrington says we'll never know how many people we've touched or how many lives we've saved.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Harrington is an exemplary citizen and soldier, whether assisting in motorcycle classes at Fort Meade or playing with children at the hospitals in Kabul. Chief Harrington is the face of women in the military. Her incredible service is probably one of the reasons there were so many service awards and decorations listed on her entry.

Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kaylan G. Harrington.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: Thank you so much for having me here today. And yes, the foot cast is from a motorcycle, just not my husband, as many people have asked me. So my husband and I are both Legionnaires and American Legion Riders at Post 18. Whew!

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: In Centreville, Maryland -- I heard some Maryland out here.

(Cheering.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: So I'm going to use my time to tell you a quick story and I promise I'll tie it back to this incredible award and how much it means to me.

So the last few years I have been honored to be part of a program called Veterans Charity Ride. And this nonprofit takes able-bodied combat motorcycle riding veterans, like myself, and pairs them with severely catastrophically wounded veterans. So amputations, PTSD, brain injury. And what we do is we put the veterans in side cars or on specially modified motorcycles and we pair up and we head across country to the famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota. (Cheering.)

(Applause.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: And the founder of this program is a veteran himself, and he often says that his goal for that program is to get these wounded veterans out on the road, to really see the incredible country that they have sacrificed so much for. And where else can you get closer to God than on a motorcycle? As evident --

(Applause.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: So this year we had Matt, a double amputee who lost both of his legs and part of his arm in Iraq. And up until a few months ago he was completely homeless and living on the street. We had Sarah, a combat veteran herself, whose significant other had

recently taken his own life after returning from a tough deployment. We had Paul, an Infantry Airborne Ranger from Iraq now fighting Stage 4 prostate cancer due to burn pit exposure. And we had Eric, a Marine who lost half of his platoon and his own right leg when the bridge he was guarding in Fallujah was blown. Pretty ragtag group of veterans, right?

So along the way of this 3,000-mile motorcycle journey to Sturgis, we stop at the same towns and cities every single year to fuel up, grab some food, and spend some time, maybe spend the night at a hotel. And in the five years since this program has started, something incredible has begun to happen. These towns have essentially started to shut down to welcome us, regardless of weather, time of day, or obligations, they line the roads with giant American flags. They wear red, white, and blue. They pull their children out of school. And in a town with a population of just 100, somehow 250 people suddenly appear.

(Applause.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: American Legion Riders and other local motorcycle groups escort us in. The police close the roads, and fire trucks line the overpass. And when we finally stop, people literally run to us to wrap us in hugs or quilts that they have made for us. Grandmas have packed Ziploc bags full of cookies that they shove in our saddlebags when we aren't looking. And in Colorado, Legion Riders slept on the front lawn of their Legion to ensure they would have breakfast ready for us at our 5:00 a.m. departure.

(Cheering.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: And this scene plays out over and over again, through Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Colorado. And something amazing starts to happen. You see the wounded veterans' walls start to come down. Veterans who flinched when you touched them, now open their arms wider for hugs. Guys or gals cry tears for the first time in years, and others stay off to the side simply in shock that strangers could love them so much.

In Utah, I watched a Marine Vietnam veteran who had come to welcome us into his town break down into tears, and I watched Eric, the one-legged Marine, dismount his bike just as quickly and wrap him in a hug with the words, "Welcome home, brother."

And at the end of the three weeks, we always ask the veterans, what was your favorite part of the ride? We fully expect it to be the Sturgis Rally or four-wheeling in Moab, or zip lining in Colorado. But every year the answer is exactly the same: the people. The people in the towns and the complete strangers who hugged them, wrapped them in love, and showed them appreciation. Except they are not strangers anymore. The vets know them by name. There's Frank and Kim in Colorado. Ms. Kay in Utah. ALR in Wyoming. They have now become Facebook friends, text buddies, or modern penpals. And the veterans know that without a doubt, if they ever needed anything on this planet, those strangers would now drop whatever they are doing and come to help them in a heartbeat. And every veteran always

says the same thing. “They gave me hope. I had hope for the first time in many, many years.”

So I tell you this story because somewhere a veteran, a Gold Star mother, or a disadvantaged child is saying your name. You have changed the life of someone, whether you realize it or not, or you would not be here today. You have given somebody hope. And you have given me hope through this very award. To make a difference in the world of veterans, you don’t need bottomless funds, you don’t need astronomical feats of strength. My dad used to say 90 percent is just showing up. Just be there for a cup of coffee or a lawn mowed or a ride to a doctor’s appointment. It probably means more than most of you realize.

This last week we lost two American Special Forces heroes in Afghanistan. They were both younger than me, both had completed multiple combat tours, and both had families. And out of all the kind thoughts and prayers that were said for them, one statement truly stood out to me. It is now up to us, the living, to understand why they fought and to never forget the valor in which they died.

Thank you for everything that you do. Thank you to my husband, who is in heaven right now with all of these beautiful women.

(Laughter.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: Where’s Ms. Ruth from Michigan? She said if you get nervous up there, picture everybody naked. So --

(Laughter.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: And then my husband almost passed out, so.

(Laughter.)

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HARRINGTON: So, no, thank you truly for this. Thank you to the incredible servicewomen that I’ve been able to meet through this. I feel like we’re the closest of friends already. Thank you to the Post that nominated me out in Maryland, and thank you for everything.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Chief Warrant Officer 3, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Army and in your community. Please remain on the stage while we honor members of the remaining branches of service.

The next two awards will be read by Past National President Nancy Brown-Park.

MS. BROWN-PARK: Thank you, Carlene. That was amazing. Representing the Coast Guard, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Petty Officer Elizabeth “Beth” Haworth.

Petty Officer Elizabeth “Beth” Haworth, originally from Savannah, Georgia, currently serves aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Northland, a medium endurance cutter which is home ported in Portsmouth, Virginia. She serves as the Auxiliary Engineer Department and Main Prop Department,

where she is instrumental in many repair projects aboard the ship, both in port and emergency duty while the ship is underway. Her ship has been deployed to assist with drug enforcement in the Caribbean, as well as recently serving as the command control ship during Hurricane Maria. Additional duties on the ship include transferring over 20,000 kilograms of contraband to and from the cutter. She is also one of two barbers on the cutter, where she ensures during the long patrols that all personnel's hair is cut and adheres to proper United States Coast Guard uniform standards, which totals over 400 haircuts a patrol.

Prior to her service on the Northland, she was a member of the Aids to Navigation Team in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and the Naval Engineering Department in Miami, Florida, where she was instrumental in developing the United States Coast Guard's new fast response cutters maintenance procedure manual. She also partnered with the commercial contractors to develop the maintenance procedures to complete overall instructions for the new vessels. As of June 1, she was transferred to Yorktown, Virginia to become an instructor to the MKA School.

During her career, she has volunteered for several organizations, including constructing dog houses for the Norfolk K-9 police dogs, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals events, and volunteered to make props for the Virginia Beach Civic League Halloween for children. She also volunteers for Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, and Toys for Tots. She has volunteered at a local children's hospice doing yard work and maintenance.

Petty Officer Haworth serves as an applied suicide intervention skills team member and a sexual assault victims advocate for the United States Coast Guard, and Diversity Council Board member, and helped organize several events, such as rapping day and speed mentoring, along with facilitating diversity and cultural awareness events.

Petty Officer Haworth's individual military awards include numerous achievement awards, meritorious accommodation ribbons, humanitarian service medals, and Sailor of the Year in 2017, just to name a few. Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Petty Officer Elizabeth Haworth to the stage.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: Wow, this is amazing. Thank you so much, everyone. I'd like to thank the American Legion Auxiliary for this wonderful recognition and Ms. Eva Wallace for all her hard work in nominating me.

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: Thank you. My name is Petty Officer First Class Machinery Technician Elizabeth Haworth. I just made E-6 last month and --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: Thank you. And just hit my eight-year mark last week. So I'm moving up in the ranks nicely and I love being in charge.

(Laughter.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: So my rate is a machinery technician, which basically is a marine diesel mechanic, the second biggest rate in the Coast Guard. I repair everything from main diesel engines to generators to water making systems to hydraulic steering and all in between. If it's broken, I fix it.

Even though we have the second biggest rate in the Coast Guard, there is less than ten percent of female machinery technicians so we're kind of a unicorn in a big crowd. I've been stationed at four units in my career and I've been the only female engineer at three out of four of them, and currently right now I'm the only female engineer. And in charge, I love it.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: That might discourage many, but it drives me, actually, no matter what I'm faced with. I'm great at what I do and I'm often the go-to for problem solving repairs. If we're on the boat, I'll get woken up at 2:00 in the morning, "Hey, MK-1, the water making machine is broken. There's water spraying everywhere. We need you to fix it." "Okay." And I get up out of my rack. Or if it's 22:00, just hit the rack, (indiscernible) alarm goes off. "Hey, we're bringing a bunch of drugs on board. We need you to operate the crane." And I'm bringing bales and bales and bales of cocaine contraband, marijuana, whatever you think, on deck safely. No problem. I'm there to rise to the challenge.

Coast Guard has offered me many opportunities to succeed and I've been lucky in my career. I've had amazing superiors that have guided me on how to grow my rate and how to be a great teacher and a great leader. I can't say that I haven't been discriminated as a female engineer, but I've learned to brush it off and just continue to push through the pack and learn as much as I can on the way. You know --

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: Thank you. You can't change the way people feel, but I feel that to overcome this discrimination I have to be more knowledgeable, faster, stronger, smarter than all the males. And I have been.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: Because I'm a firm believer that the only person that can stop me is me, and I don't intend to do that anytime soon.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PETTY OFFICER HAWORTH: There has been many brave females before me that paved the way in the Coast Guard. In World War I, we had the first female uniform members to enlist to the SPARS in World War II, which grew to over 11,000 women serving their country in reserves. In 1977, the first woman allowed to serve at sea aboard the cutters, and as of right now, all

cutters, every unit is open to all female rates. And in 1978, the Coast Guard opened all the rates to females, thus letting me become a female engineer and doing what I love. In 1979, the first female commanding afloat officer was able to take a cutter underway and be in charge.

These women were not only brave for going above and beyond to serve their country. They also paved the way for me and other future female engineers, and other female rates in the Coast Guard. So I dedicate this recognition to those who came before me, because without the paving the way I wouldn't be covered in oil, fuel, and grease, and anything else the engine can throw at me. And I love doing it everyday.

So I thank you and thank you for the honor and privilege of this recognition. Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BROWN-PARK: Petty Officer Elizabeth Haworth, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the U.S. Coast Guard and in your community. Please remain on stage while we honor members of the remaining branches of the service.

Representing the United States Marine Corps is Colonel Jennifer E. Shaar. She is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana.

(Cheering.)

MS. BROWN-PARK: She is a graduate of the United States Academy and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1992.

Colonel Shaar has served as Financial Management Officer in both operational and support commands. Her billets include Battalion Physical Officer for HQSVCBM -- maybe she'll tell us what that is. U.S. Marine Corps Forces Atlantic Contingency Management Officer and Military Policy Officer; Headquarters Defense Finance and Accounting Services, Deputy Controller, Marine Corps Base, (indiscernible); Comptroller 3rd Marine Division; Civil Military Affairs Officer in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 1st Marine Division; Program Objectives Memorandum POM Branch Head P8 U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command. She has served at Headquarters Marine Corps and Department of the Navy.

Colonel Shaar reviews and recommends selections of candidates to Annapolis for Representative Duncan Hunter, California. Colonel Shaar is a graduate of the Naval Post Graduate School, where she earned an M.S. in Management and U.S. Army War College where she earned an M.A. in Strategic Studies. She also served as a congressional fellow representing the Marine Corps in Capitol Hill.

Please help me thank her for her service as we welcome Colonel Shaar.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

COLONEL SHAAR: Oh gosh. Wow. Oh my gosh. Has anybody ever been like kind of at edge of the world, whether it was in the ocean or on

top of a mountain? That's what this kind of feels like and I feel like I'm staring out at a whole lot of stars.

(Laughter.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

COLONEL SHAAR: Wow. I'm actually in total awe right now. You all are the definition of selfless service and it's an honor just to be in your presence. So thank you so much for letting me be here today.

Last night I had the opportunity to have dinner with three of your former Presidents and some incredible women who are currently serving which you've all just met. And it was a humbling experience. And I got to listen to your Presidents talk about the stories that they had in the American Legion Auxiliary. And each one of them has over 50 years of service this organization. And I mean, wow. How do you top that? I mean, that's amazing, right? I mean, oh my God, please. Everyone.

(Applause.)

COLONEL SHAAR: And what I found out is that, you know, obviously some of you have served in uniform. All of you have served with someone in uniform. And all of you it seems have influenced younger generations to join the military or some sort of service. You know, in talking to them they had sons and daughters that served, and grandchildren that served. And in a world where a very small part of the population is even eligible to serve, and an even smaller population raise their hand, the very fact that that is very much a part of this organization is absolutely incredible. So I thank you for everything that you all do to influence young individuals to go into a life of service. It really makes a difference, so thank you.

(Applause.)

COLONEL SHAAR: Everyone has a story for why they joined, right? You know. Some people join because they need to find a way to pay for college. Some join because of their legacy, they are the third and fourth generation. Some joined for the challenge. And some just join to escape and to find something better in life. And my story is no different. I don't think I could talk to any of the ladies you just recognized and their story would be any different. Everybody has a little bit of spin on it. But what fascinates me is why we continue to serve. Why do you keep coming back for more? Why, what is it about the military and service and selfless service? And it all comes down to two things, and we talked about this last night. There is something about serving for a cause that's greater than yourself.

(Applause.)

COLONEL SHAAR: And the second thing I'll throw out there is it's all about the people. And you wouldn't stay somewhere if you didn't love what you were doing and you didn't love the people you were working with. And that's what military service, that's what organizations like you, bring out in people. They bring out the best of people that truly make a difference everywhere they go.

And while, you know, we all have those defining moments that keep us coming back, I wanted to share one in particular. I'm hoping it resonates

with this particular audience. About ten or 12 years ago, I got orders to Norfolk, Virginia and I was lucky enough to spend basically the last eight months of my mother's life with her because they put me in a duty station to where she was located. And quite frankly, some people might call that happenstance, because I didn't tell anybody. Some people might think that was divine intervention. I don't care why I was there. I got to spend the last eight months with my mother.

And when she died, she hadn't been in that town very long so she didn't really have a good base of family and friends. And quite frankly, I had been there even less time, which means I didn't have a whole lot of friends and family either. And so my brother and I put together a funeral that she would want. And we went to the church and the priest comes up the aisle, and when the song is over, the book closes, and there's this thunderous roar.

Now my brother and I had never turned around in the church because we figured there were about ten people and when we heard the noise, we turned around and realized the entire church was full. And it wasn't full of people that knew my mother. It was full of people that knew me because my entire command showed up to pay respects and celebrate the life of a woman they had never met and support an individual they really didn't know very well. And that speaks volumes. And my brother and I were left in that moment in total humbled silence. There were no words that we could express that would capture the essence of how we felt. And that's kind of how I feel today.

I don't know how the words to express how important what you do for our veterans and our servicemembers every single day. I don't know how to express how much that means to those individuals, those families, and to this nation. All I can tell you is that it matters. It matters greatly. And I thank you. Semper Fi.

(Applause.)

MS. BROWN-PARK: Colonel Shaar, the American Legion Auxiliary is honored to recognize you for your outstanding contribution to both the United States Marine Corps and in your community. Please remain on stage while we honor our final servicemember. Chairman Jan will return to present the last award.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Representing the United States Navy, it's my pleasure to introduce Corpsman 2nd Class Diana Mendoza de Saenz. Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Diana Mendoza de Saenz was born in Mexico and is a Texas resident.

(Cheering.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: She enlisted in the Navy in 2012, completing recruit training command at Great Lakes, Illinois the same year. She then went to Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston where she attended hospital corpsman A and graduated in May 2013 with distinction. Her first duty assignment was at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

During her tenure, she performed as executive assistant for the department head, held the position of Patient Support Leading Petty Officer, where she managed three sections. She led four younger sailors in the process

of 2,500 remains to be buried at sea. She volunteered for on-the-job training with the x-ray department, sick call, and emergency room departments. As a Master Training Specialist, Mendoza continued to deliver the highest quality of instruction, which reflected her popularity with students' scores. She has recently been accepted to the Medical Service Corps as a physician's assistant. She has a Bachelor's in Public Health from National University and has obtained her licensure as Registered Medical Assistant, Medical Secretary, and Allied Health Instructor.

Her military decorations include Navy Achievement Medal 2, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Global War on Terrorism, Expert Marksmanship Medal.

She is raising three children, two boys and a girl. She serves as a role model for them by volunteering to help other women and promote awareness of sexual assault.

In August, she will be starting the P.A. Program at UT Health Science University, thus extending her enlistment officer training for another ten years.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Diana totally stands for promoting family and Americanism. Unfortunately, because she was just recently promoted, she started her new duty yesterday and is unable to be with us today. But we certainly offer our congratulations to her and we will send her her award. So --

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you. I was just going to ask you to join in saluting them again, and you have done that. Thank you so much. Madam President Kathy, this concludes my report and presentation. And they will be at the luncheon today as well, so you can see them there also.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I have cried. Ladies, please stay just a second. I have cried, I have laughed with them. But I have been so inspired by your stories. Aren't they amazing?

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I want to thank you so much for your service and allowing us --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you for letting us honor you today. You are true heroes. Let's give another round of applause too all the servicewomen.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And thank you, Jan, for a wonderful report and for allowing us to honor our Servicewomen of the Year.

Now please welcome from the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China, Deputy Minister Lee.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MINISTER LEE: (Spoke in Mandarin.) Welcome to Taiwan and good day.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now we have a little bit of interpretation.

THE TRANSLATOR: I will just translate. National President Ms. Dungan, distinguished guests, and most of all the outstanding members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Thank you for your warm welcome. It's my great honor to be here with the privilege of being able to address all of you. On behalf of the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China, I hereby express our sincerest respect and regards to all of you. It's undeniable that the role of the American Legion Auxiliary is exceptional and irreplaceable. Your hard work and selfless service has supported millions of veterans, servicemembers, and their families and communities, both at home and abroad. It's because of the mission you embrace and the mission you carry out that has brought substantial benefits to their lives. It's because of your constant support and care that has honored their sacrifice and contributions. Your dedication to the nation is truly beyond words. The spirit of service you hold, not for self but for veterans and country, has stabilized society and brought a brighter future. Our two organizations have shared one common sacred mission, which is to take care of our veterans and their families in many ways. We are convinced that the veterans with appropriate assistance will continue to perform their best to contribute to society. Finally, let me close by showing my appreciation to the American Legion Auxiliary for the constant support to Taiwan and I send my sincere welcome to you to visit for Formosa, Taiwan, where I live, that you will appreciate the beautiful scenery, the diverse cuisine, and also the hospitality of the Taiwanese people. Thank you so much for having me here. I wish you a very successful convention and also wish you all personal health and happiness. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Minister Lee, thank you for joining us today and I'd like to give you a token of our appreciation.

MINISTER LEE: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. We appreciate it.

MINISTER LEE: That's (indiscernible) in Taiwan.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I've heard about this. Thank you.

MINISTER LEE: Yes, okay.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I appreciate it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MINISTER LEE: Thank you and welcome to Taiwan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Minister Lee. As many of you know, the American Legion Auxiliary has partnered with USAA since 2011. Here with a special message, please welcome USAA's Military Affinity Relationship Manager Janice Abadilla.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. ABADILLA: Good morning, ladies. My name is --

ALL: Good morning.

MS. ABADILLA: My name is Janice Abadilla and I'm one of the faces of USAA down in San Antonio, Texas.

(Cheering.)

MS. ABADILLA: Where is my Texas Department at?

(Cheering.)

MS. ABADILLA: Hi to y'all.

(Laughter.)

MS. ABADILLA: I started at USAA 12 years ago. I was on the front lines, on the phones, speaking to members just like you. And now I have the privilege of speaking to you from this stage.

When I was on the phones, I heard our members talk about the challenges of military family life and today I'm honored to continue to hear your stories. This is my first American Legion Auxiliary Convention, and what an honor it is for me to now serve your wonderful organization.

(Applause.)

MS. ABADILLA: I absolutely love meeting you and learning more about how you support the military community.

USAA, like the Auxiliary, supports the military community as well, and we seek to be the provider of choice so that we too can be there for military families when they need us the most.

As the mother of a blended family with five children, I understand what value an organization like USAA has when helping military families navigate through all of life's events. I have called USAA for anything from pet insurance to life insurance, and they have stood by my family for over 15 years.

I know that as members of the military community, there are many of you who can attest to the challenges of military life, either experiences within your own family or possibly by observing while volunteering.

The mission of the Auxiliary truly speaks to my heart. It's such an important mission to support and serve the entire military community. I am so grateful to work for a company that does the same, helps provide the support you need.

So thank you for your great partnership with USAA. If you aren't a member of USAA, or you haven't called us for several years, stop by our booth today and we can chat about membership. By the way, did you know our military eligibility guidelines have changed? Now, all a military sponsor needs to do is establish a member number with USAA and then their family members become eligible. Come by and check with us. We can give you more information, or just come by and say hello. Theresa and I would love to meet you and hear about what your membership means to you.

Okay. So here's a little incentive. We will be handing out the red poppy bags to the first 100 visitors at the booth today. Okay.

(Laughter.)

MS. ABADILLA: You'll be there? Okay. Just one per the first 100. Thank you for your time today, and more so thank you for your service next to your Legionnaire. We all know you serve the military community as much as they do. Our sincerest wishes for a great Convention, and thank you again for inviting us.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Janice. Please don't leave the Convention to go get those bags right now.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: An organization that has been a part of our lives for so many years needs dedicated, sound financial support and future planning. We've tasked our National Finance Committee with these responsibilities and they continuously work to ensure the longevity of our organization. Please welcome our National Finance Committee Chairman, Past National President Peggy Thomas.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. THOMAS: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee has faced several challenges this year, but continues 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, a retired corporation vice president, a retired federal bank examiner auditor, and a retired certified public accountant, who is also a dual member. Each member has a broad financial background.

The committee collaborates with the staff on the draft budget and recommends the budget to the National Executive Committee for its adoption. This requires many open discussions and negotiations to ensure the budget aligns with the goals and priorities of this organization.

In carrying out its role as fiduciary stewards, the ALA National Finance Committee is responsible for both ALA and ALA Foundation financial oversight, which includes investment planning, financial statements, member benefits, fundraising campaigns, and financial policies of the organization.

To ensure the ALA National Organization is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and government requirements and keeping with best practices, the committee makes fiscal policy recommendations for the NEC. The National Finance Committee designates one committee member as the liaison member to the ALA Foundation Board, and another as liaison member to the ALA National Audit Committee. Their responsibilities are to provide information between the two that might impact decision making on practices, joint training opportunities, and they are often used to bridge common areas of oversight.

The fiscal performance of the National Organization for the 2018 - 2019 fiscal year has been positive, even with the challenges, with the decline in membership, which is our main source of revenue. Due to fiscal oversight,

we were again able to continue to fund visits to departments by our five National Division Vice Presidents, and continue the department organizational effective training at National Headquarters. Training this year was focused on financial polity and practices, and many departments sent their department treasurers and secretaries. Your Finance Committee believes strongly in the value to grassroots members of ALA mission training and National Junior meetings.

In fiscal year 2019, 516 members attended the six mission training sessions. The six National Junior Meetings had 128 attending. This was a slight decrease over last year.

The successful fundraising efforts by our development staff have resulted in donations for Giving Tuesday of \$21,000. Direct mail, over \$500,000. And the bricks at National Headquarters, \$117,000 for the ALA and the ALA Foundation.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Our members continue to use their Auxiliary USAA credit cards. Since inception, through December 2018, \$45 million has been charged by cardholders, responsibly I'm sure.

(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, 90 percent of the annual proceeds are shared with departments each year. Previously, 50 percent was shared with departments. Starting fiscal 2017, that amount was raised to 90 percent to provide more help to our departments.

Due to many years of sound, diversified investment strategies overseen by the Finance Committee, the organization was able to purchase the beautiful new Headquarters building at 3450 Founders Road here in Indianapolis.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee sincerely thanks our membership for adopting a national dues increase which took effect with the 2019 membership year. Deciding to increase national dues has helped us fulfill our duty of fiduciary stewardship and allowed us to continue serving our mission and helping veterans. We urge each Auxiliary member to continually recognize their duty of fiduciary stewardship so that the ALA will be able to be here for another generation ensuring our mission of service continues.

Thank you. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Peggy.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: 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, Past National President Linda Newsome.

(Music.)

MS. NEWSOME: Thank you, J.P. and Madam President. Without writing an actual history of your department's activities for the current year, which is written by the department historian, what is a history committee report? History is not just one year of activities, but a year of learning more about our organization. What can be learned from delving into the history of our units and departments?

In Ohio, Junior members are interviewing senior members via video and placing the videos on YouTube, Facebook, and other media. This has proven to be a wonderful project, with responses that are amazing and memorable. One particularly priceless, and at times ha-ha moment, was the interaction between the Junior granddaughter and the senior grandmother. This program also acquainted the Juniors how to use the cell phone camera to review and interview, giving them a sense of responsibility and maturity.

Ohio is also making its own history with an all women Legion Post. And while they are Legionnaires and officers of their Post, they are also Auxiliary members and are very active in their community. At the last Christmas season, the Legion family gave 66 local families a wonderful holiday present.

Honoring the past and making history was the theme in the Nebraska. Members dressed in 1920s style to the present show a style show twice. Even National President Kathy in her visit addressed as Rosie the Riveter. At the same midyear conference, the chairman included a question and answer show. She wore her Doughboy helmet and explained its significance.

While Nebraska had the National President as Rosie, Maryland's member, Ruth Staples, was an original Rosie the Riveter.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: She started working on the railroad and remembers tamping down railroad ties and cleaning the grounds. But she also ascended a four-story mountain of coal to insert a thermometer to make sure the coal would not spontaneously combust. I would never have thought of it.

One Indiana unit history, Cindy Kelly, and member Julie Short, traveled to IndyWest Harley Davidson to interview World War II veteran Ray Kerr. A Naval fighter pilot in World War II, 95-year-old Mr. Kerr flew Hellcats and one especially dangerous mission was to fly over Iwo Jima where he protected the Marines who were landing on the beaches. After every mission, Mr. Kerr would say, and I quote, "It's a great day to be alive."

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: We cannot afford to lose these memories. Talk to the veterans, particularly the women veterans, in your own Post, and then maintain those interviews and memories for the next generations.

Madam President, that concludes my platform remarks.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Linda. 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 reconnect with our organization's rich past. Here to tell us more is National Historian Brenda Collins.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: Madam National President Kathy, it's been a wonderful journey serving as your National Historian this year. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have served as the 99th Historian for the ALA.

Winston Churchill wrote, "History will be good to me, for I intend to write it." It was his way of saying I'm going to be a winner. I pray that history will always reflect good on National President Kathy because I've only found good to write.

This year the American Legion Family participated in the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California on New Year's Day. Our President Kathy, Vice President Nicole, National Commander Reistad, National Commander Gibbs of the Sons of the American Legion, and the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation and Boys National President were honored to ride on the float with active duty servicemembers. Such a beautiful float, honoring our veterans and our 100 years of history looking to the future.

Many units in New Hampstead held Old Home Days Parades and set up displays in public to make people aware of what they did and our goals and how they accomplish them. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and other forms of social media, were used to promote our history of the American Legion Auxiliary. There were projects spotlighting members, posts about National Presidents, and there were numerous special projects in many departments.

Anita Wells of Poplar Bluff, Missouri wrote, "History is not just remembering what we used to do, but learning from our past to make a better future." History is to be proud of, because it makes us who we are today.

National President Kathy was in attendance at the American Legion Centennial Conference in St. Louis. They were there to celebrate the St. Louis Caucus on May 8, 1919. By the end of that caucus, the American Legion Constitution and Preamble were approved.

The Department of Mississippi, headed by Historian Diane Belue, requested members bring small items representing the first 100 years to be placed in a time capsule. Mississippi has their first National President this year and will be celebrating their 100th year of service, so what better time to preserve their memories? The time capsule will be opened on our 150th anniversary. What a way to preserve our history.

The American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Committee, headed by Past National President Linda Newsome, has been working on ideas for the ALA celebrations of our 100th anniversary.

Barbie Meyer, of the Department of Nebraska, says her theme, "Honoring the past, making history." They honored the past while celebrating the American Legion's 100th birthday. It was an honor to review the histories that were sent to be judged. This year historians across our great nation have written the history of our organization and written it well.

Unit 132 in Oro Valley, Arizona established a technical education scholarship for local seniors in high school that were related to a veteran.

I truly appreciate the hard work of the National Divisional Vice Presidents in helping select the coveted Toomey Award for the best

department history. It was not an easy task, but they did it with grace and poise and I thank you, ladies.

Madam President Kathy, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Brenda. 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 Dr. Deborah Blanch.

(Music.)

DR. BLANCH: Good morning again. This year started with a wonderful visit to Mississippi for Madam Kathy Dungan's homecoming. The fellowship and a rich heritage was truly amazing and I completed all visits to the various departments and units throughout the year. It was an honor to witness the Knights of Columbus flag raising ceremony on July 4, 2019. This even showcased the heroic history of our veterans' past, present, and future.

My travels also included being a guest speaker to provide the history of the American Legion Post 166 for the Veteran's Day prayer ceremony. The courage and heroic information was accepted and wonderful.

It was an honor to be on the radio show, "They Sacrificed For Us," in Cleveland, Ohio.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

DR. BLANCH: This was a radio show managed by American Legion Family members Bob Fratino and Susan Schofield Fratino. They provide a radio series that educates the community about what is our why. This show highlights how we, as everyday people, work together to help our veterans to obtain an enjoy a better quality of life.

Prayers avail much and we pray every morning for the last year on our American Legion Auxiliary Chaplain's Facebook page. Every Thursday prayer was dedicated to our women veterans, and Friday's prayers were dedicated to show respect to Freedom Red Friday, and to honor the service and sacrifices of all of our veterans.

The spiritual unity continued with two successful chaplain telephone conferences every month. we fellowshiped and discussed how to help our servicemembers, their families, and each other, and it was a blessing.

In closing, as we walk into the next 100 years, let us continue to educate, work together, and follow the journey God has set just for you. Let this scripture be our guide. "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up." Taken from James 4, verse 10. Thank you.

Madam Kathy, that concludes my report and I do have a presentation.

(Applause.)

DR. BLANCH: Mama's hat, getting in the way. She's saying hello, you all. The ambassadors and many members of this wonderful organization love you. We have a book we put together with your favorite color of scriptures, your travel, for you to enjoy, and sit back and read as you have your quiet time, because you have well deserved it.

This bag is yours, and inside the bag we have something for you to wrap yourself in to remember all of your wonderful members of the ALA.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh, thank you. Thank you. Let's take a picture.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: If you read Deborah's posts every day on Facebook, they were truly inspirational. And thank you so much for doing that. You inspired me every day. Thank you, Deborah.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would Past National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan please come to the podium for a special presentation?

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Madam President, Pearl Behrend was a native New Yorker and joined Automotive Unit 179 in New York in 1946, eligible for the World War II Air Force Service of her husband Bing. Additional eligibility was established through Bing's service in Korea, and the Vietnam service of her son, Bill. She transferred her membership to the Harvey R. Hansen Unit 310 in Racine, Wisconsin, where she was honored with a life membership. She served as President three times, chaired all county committees, as well as serving as County President in 1963. She went on to hold district offices and serves as District President from 1964 to 1966.

Her capabilities were soon recognized on the department level, and she was elected Department President in 1970. Her compassion, concern, and interest in others has been evidenced by her long time interest in the handicapped and unfortunate, and has been proven with more than 25 years of involvement in the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. She was a county mental health volunteer and member of the Wisconsin Mental Health Association, and was acknowledged with the Woman of the Year Award for her work in this organization, and was a bell ringer many times for them. She worked with the Racine County Probation Department, worked at a Veterans Rehabilitation Center, and volunteered at Wood VA Center. Pearl was emphatic that service, not self, should be the main concern of the Auxiliary, proving this by driving to and from Milwaukee as a volunteer at the VA medical center there for five years.

Pearl's theme for her year as National President was "Unity With Purpose." She promoted a Smithsonian Institute study of the American Indian veteran by providing a funding source through the Auxiliary. Other special projects included encouraging units to establish hospices at Veterans Administration medical centers throughout the country to provide a place of solace and comfort designed to care for the terminally ill where they could be cared for and spend their remaining time together with their loved ones in dignity, and the establishment of the Woman Resource Centers on the community level to aid troubled teens where runaways, abused, and neglected children, and pregnant teens could receive aid and the information they needed to escape their circumstances.

In addition, she chose to assist the youth of the nation by providing additional scholarship funds for deserving students. At that time, the Auxiliary contributed nearly \$1 million each year towards scholarships.

Our national news suggested the name Pearl was the perfect name for her as National President. Just as there is a luster and sheen to the gem, there is a luster and a glow which emanates from this remarkable lady. She brings sunlight to the darkest corner and has a smile for everyone she meets. She asked that there be fun and laughter as well as work in her administrative year. That was easy, as Pearl always brought a spirit of fun to every meeting in which she was involved. Yet she was extremely serious when it came to the Auxiliary and its needs and the issues we faced.

Patriotism was also a large part of Pearl's character and was one reason among many for joining the Auxiliary. It was a means to claiming this patriotic fervor and to show her support for those men and women who fought and died to keep freedom free. This patriotism and her gregarious spirit found a true home in the Auxiliary and her community in Racine. She truly reflected the volunteer spirit which is the backbone of the Auxiliary. Her enthusiasm was endless and she had a tireless drive to accomplish what she set her heart on.

Those of us privileged to call her friend knew her to be larger than life and a voice to be reckoned with. There was never a dull moment with Pearl around. She thoroughly enjoyed life and it showed in every aspect of her life. She was a very close friend of Loretta Shulman (phonetic), a Past Department President in Wisconsin, who also served as National Historian. They traveled together often, always shared a room at Convention, and we all wanted to be a mouse in the room as we all wondered how they managed to fit their electric carts, luggage, and clothes in their hotel room. I suggest that we all would have enjoyed the laughter in that room as they tried to navigate their enclosure, bumped into each other or their carts, and shared their life stories.

Pearl was also in a league by herself. Rules were made to be broken when good could be accomplished. When she served as the National President, she broke with precedent and appointed another Wisconsin Auxiliary member as her National Parliamentarian. Barbara Kranig served in that capacity during her term in office and Barb went on to serve as National President herself ten years later. Prior to this unusual appointment, the National Parliamentarian had always been a Past National President.

So Pearl, in her wisdom, set some precedents that we've all learned from. Changes can be made if they are done for the right reason, the greater good, rather than necessarily sticking to the old habits or previously outdated rules without investigating the possibility of something new and exciting and better suited to the organization.

The stars have aligned once more as we will soon witness a young lady installed as our National President at this very Convention, Nicole Clapp, who served with President Pearl and Commander Jake Comer as the Junior President in 1987 - '88, then Nicole Paustian.

Pearl was generous with praise, filled with passion for her family and friends, and the American Legion, and the American Legion Auxiliary. It was truly the love of her life, next to her wonderful family. She was indeed larger than life, a good friend, a mentor, a joy to be around.

So for you, dear Pearl, I hope every day you have a great joke to enjoy and laugh at, a snifter of Scotch, and a wonderful piece of chocolate to share it with. Happy trails.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Jan, for a lovely celebration of life to honor the life of Past National President Pearl Behrend.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation positively impacts the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by funding American Legion Auxiliary programs today and for future generations. Applying and receiving a Veterans Project Fund Grant is 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 I was lucky enough to witness it firsthand during my term as National President. Let's take a look.

(Music.)

THE ANNOUNCER: Creative arts have long been recognized by the American Legion Auxiliary as a healing agent for our veterans in need. We've sponsored and provided volunteer workers for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for years. But until now, there hasn't been an ALA art therapy effort that specifically reaches out to female veterans, who often face issues different from their male counterparts. With help from a number of their members, Unit 62 in Peoria, Arizona is addressing the psychological and social needs of local women veterans through their Heal Her Art Program.

This series of professionally led painting sessions is open to women veterans at no cost. Each veteran is encouraged to bring their children or a woman who they are thankful for to create side by side, sharable art. Artist, Army veteran, and ALA Unit 62 member Dana Ramsey leads the group instruction.

MS. RAMSEY: I got involved in this program because I enjoy art. I use art as a way to deal with problems or issues that I may be having in life, but then also to celebrate some of the joys. As a woman veteran, I know how therapeutic a program like this can be.

THE ANNOUNCER: The women are led step by step, so previous art training isn't required. Participants are told they can paint their canvases just like the example finished piece, or they may simply use it as an inspiration to create whatever they imagine.

Coordinating and partnering with outside agencies has been vital.

VOICE: Here at the VA Medical Center we're very excited to host these kinds of events, because this is in line with our concept of whole health and healing. It's healing of the mind, the body, and the soul. And we look forward to continuing to host these events for our veterans here at the VA Medical Center.

VOICE: Veterans First is proud to partner with the American Legion Auxiliary on this program. Our focus is on women veterans and we see women veterans on a daily basis that have Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury. And this program calms the soul and soothes them. They come in anxious and uptight, and when they leave they are calm and

they are proud of what they do, the paintings that they do and the work that they've done in the session.

THE ANNOUNCER: And the community is involved, too. Chick-fil-A donates snacks for the participants.

VOICE: I'm multifaceted. And what this program has allowed me to do is explore talents that I never knew I had. I can't draw, but I found painting is very soothing. I feel very content and I feel that I am creating something that will not only soothe me, inspire me, put me in remembrance, and be enjoyable for other people.

VOICE: I get to participate as a veteran woman and also as an organizer of this event. I have seen how important this is and what it does for our veteran women, and what it's done for me. It's really given me a sense of piece when I'm done completing a painting.

VOICE: I enjoy painting with my fellow veterans. But the most rewarding part for me is seeing the transformation of their demeanor and attitude. The smiles at the end of the event is what really warms my heart and gives me a sense of purpose in this program.

VOICE: These programs have helped tremendously for a retired professional like myself from the military to meet other women, other female veterans.

VOICE: So we had a great time. These are my daughters and we had a blast.

THE ANNOUNCER: And you'd better believe Unit 62 makes sure the Auxiliary brand was front and center.

VOICE: We had a lot of fun branding all of our materials with the Auxiliary brand, our aprons, our tote boxes, our signs. Everybody knew who was sponsoring this program.

THE ANNOUNCER: This fantastic women veterans series of events is made possible with a Veteran Project Fund Grant from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

VOICE: Unit 62 is real honored to have a grant provided to our unit. We sure couldn't do it without our American Legion Auxiliary donation.

VOICE: The grant process was so simple and actually was fun to do, because the Auxiliary Foundation is so encouraging.

THE ANNOUNCER: Obtaining a Veteran Projects Fund Grant couldn't be easier. For more information on how your ALA unit or department can apply for a Veteran Projects Fund Grant, visit ALAFoundation.org. Find a need. Come up with an idea. Apply for a grant. And witness something great.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Now I would like to recognize some of those wonderful ladies from Arizona Unit 62.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Dana Ramsey, Doris Theiss, Tammy Early, Nicki Cruz, and Marge Christianson.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies, for the awesome work that you do.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Wow, talk about mission in action. That video was awesome. Here today to tell us more about how our generous donors and supporters were able to make a positive impact on women veterans and their families is American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board President Doris Hammeke.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. HAMMEKE: Good morning, everyone. Wasn't that just an amazing video? You know, the best part was being backstage and watching those women watch themselves on the video. That was pretty cool. But I just love that project. And I'm so thankful that you're here today and for the great impact that you've had this past year on the American Legion Auxiliary's Foundation.

This year the Foundation has much to celebrate. Through generous donations, our Mission Endowment Fund has grown to over \$1.3 million. Whew!

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: And as you heard earlier, much of that growth, over \$116,000, came from our legacy brick campaign. And many of those who donated to this campaign are here in this room today. The bricks have been installed at National Headquarters. So if you have some time before you leave, stop by and be sure to find our brick. The more importantly, the money raised goes to serve the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. Thank you to all who ordered a brick or donated to the Mission Endowment Fund.

This year the Foundation provided the National Organization with \$62,000 to support mission centric programs and we gave out over \$90,000 in grants to our units and departments to support various projects across the country, just like the video that you watched.

Our Veteran Project Fund Grants supported ALA entities this year. Ohio Unit 214 -- I'm expecting to hear that, Ohio --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: -- was awarded \$4,800 to replace outdated furniture in the common area for veterans staying in a resource center. Pictured here is Michael, a veteran and Assistant Program Director at the resource center. Before landing this job, Michael was a homeless veteran who used this facility to help get back on his feet. And I think it's just incredible to see that these grants supporting programs that really do change the lives of veterans. And Michael and this transitional housing center is proof of that.

Kentucky Unit 193 was awarded \$8,000 to help renovate showers at a female veterans transitional house.

Kentucky Unit 113 was awarded \$8,000 for safety and security features at the same facility, and the unit contributed another \$2,000.

These two grants are really impactful because they show what the ALA can do when we work together. The members of the Department of Kentucky are to be commended for all they've done to help turn a former elementary school into transitional housing for female veterans.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. HAMMEKE: The Foundation awarded three local Veteran Creative Arts Festival Grants this year to the Department of Missouri, Department of Vermont, and Texas Unit 320.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: Unit 320 was awarded \$2,300 for crafting supplies, recognition, and awards for a veterans art therapy class which is put on each month by a female Air Force veteran, Mia Wells. Wells began keeping a journal when she returned home and began dealing with her struggles as both a combat and sexual assault survivor. She realized that writing really helped her and that art in virtually every form could help other veterans heal. From there, she studies psychology and began leading these art therapy classes to encourage veterans to express themselves through art in a safe and understanding community of fellow veterans.

Our Mission in Action Grants really took off this year and we were able to grant four departments with funds to assist with ALA branding. Congratulations to the Departments of Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, and Kansas.

(Cheering.)

MS. HAMMEKE: The Department of Colorado was awarded over \$700 for banners, logos, and emblems for their ALA Girls State Program. They were excited to receive this grant because the branding materials are a reminder that the ALA is the reason for all the wonderful opportunities young girls have through this program. These Mission in Action Grants are important in helping the American Legion Auxiliary become more recognizable in local communities for the good work that it does.

And finally, because of the Foundation's nonprofit status, we were able to help ten different units and departments with subgrants to support the mission. What a year. Think about how many hours went into each of these projects and how many veteran lives were touched because of the hard work of ALA members. It really reminds me what this is all about.

I'm humbled and so thankful that the Foundation is able to play a part in each of these wonderful stories. All of us at the Foundation are so grateful for all the donors and members who give, whether that's financially or through their time spent on these projects.

As many of us begin celebrating the 100th birthday of the ALA, we've started to make plans for a stronger, mission centric future. One way you can help secure the future of the American Legion Auxiliary is to make your own plan to support our mission through the new Legacy Society. The Legacy

Society is a group of people dedicated to the mission of service, not self. And they have chosen to include a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation in their will or estate plans. These gifts, no matter the size, will provide future financial support to the Auxiliary. Thank you to the individuals listed on this screen who have already committed a planned gift to the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: Another way that you can kick start the future of the Foundation today is through our annual Giving Tuesday Campaign. This is the Foundation's largest annual campaign and we need your help to make it a success. So please, stop by our booth, get your photo taken, and help us beat last year's total of over \$21,000 raised for veterans, military, and their families.

Thank you to all of our donors who make this possible. And thank you to the Foundation Board of Directors, who work together to make sure we're serving veterans to the best of our ability. This year we're thrilled to welcome Carrie Davenport, Nancy Brown-Park, and Kathy Daudistel to our team. We're excited to learn from and work with you to better the Foundation and the lives of our heroes.

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: At the same time, we say goodbye and thank you to Shirl Hendley, Sharon Conatser, and National President Kathy Dungan, who have each made great strides in helping the Foundation grow.

(Applause.)

MS. HAMMEKE: Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our mission. And finally, thank you all for giving back to veterans, active military, and their families, who have given so much to us. Madam President, this concludes our report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Dori. It was an easy decision to name the Foundation's Veterans Project Fund as this year's National President's Project because I strongly believe that we are all trustees of this organization, and if we are not fulfilling this responsibility we are failing as members and leaders. Let's welcome to the stage some very special people who take this responsibility as seriously as I do.

Every donor that is about to be announced donated over \$2,000 to the Veterans Project Fund and that is phenomenal. We even have six donors at the \$3,000 plus level, can you believe it? Wonderful. Please welcome our National President's Project top donors.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Arizona.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of California.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Connecticut.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Delaware.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Florida.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Iowa.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Minnesota.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Nebraska.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of New York.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Department of Texas.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you all for investing in this organization's financial future.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Our next report comes from a member who, for the last 50 years, has worked tirelessly for the good of the American Legion Auxiliary. More recently, this person has taken on the role of National Secretary and I am forever grateful. Again, she worked tirelessly working for the good of the organization. We agreed she would probably only have to serve as National Secretary a few weeks. Well, please welcome in her 54th week our National Secretary, Past National President Linda Boone.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. You've got more to say. You've got more to say about me.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes. Linda, thank you for giving up a year of your retirement life to lead this great organization. She had to turn her flip flops in for high heels.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You have done a phenomenal job. I have said this more than one time. I could not have done this without you. Everyone, let's give Linda a round of applause, and thank you.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: Introduce the staff first.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh. Linda, I feel it is important that our members be able to put a face to the name of our staff. So before you give your official report, would you please introduce to our audience the wonderful National Headquarters team so that they can be recognized for all of their hard work?

MS. BOONE: I'd love to. Okay. The Executive Team, Director Tamara Shumate, with Angie Graham, Anita McCoy, Cathi Taylor, who many of you know, our archivist, is on her way to watch her grandson graduate from boot camp. A new addition, Harley Mannix; Shannon Hitchcock; and Director Stephanie Abisi; and D.C. Director Tyra Nelson.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: The Membership Division, Kelly Harrier, Manager; Bonnie Vest; Elizabeth Chiavarini; Karin Romani; Marti Drake --

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: -- she's from Indiana; Sara Hedding.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: The Finance Division, National Treasurer and Director Sara Riegel; Susan Stewart; Amanda Ginter; Cindy Radcliff; Diana Giraldo; Erin Hoffman, Michaellyn Greeyes.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: The Communications and Development Division, Director Mike Butt; Communications, Aaron Meyer; Alexa Freeman; Jennifer Donovan; Landa Bagley; Sara Nahrwold; Stephanie Holloway; Travis Perkins.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: In the Development, Madison Maves, Manager; Sydney DeLong; and Brad Oppenheim.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Programs and Events, Director Colette Fike; Chrystal Daulton; Elizabeth Sendelweck; Kristin Hinshaw; and Events Programs, Laura Casey, the Manager is out dealing with a special guest issue; Lauren Blakey; Nicole Chernish; Samantha Caudill.

This is your team.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: Thank you. So you want to stand there, or do you want to leave? It's up to you.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: These are the people that make us all look good.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: A year ago, when National President Kathy asked me to take on the responsibility as serving as your National Secretary, we both assumed it would only be for a few months. So of course, I said yes, I'd help. Well two days after National Convention, I packed up my car and headed from my home in Florida to Indianapolis. As you can imagine, I packed light. How much could you possibly need for a few months? Not to mention, I'm now a Florida girl and I don't own sweaters, Cuddl Duds or a warm coat.

It's now a year later, and I'm a proud owner of 20 sweaters, several sets of Cuddl Duds, and a warmer coat. I also learned about windshield deicer and the need for a strong ice scraper.

The governance responsibility of the national corporation's Secretary are outlined in the Bylaws and are to, number one, record meeting proceedings. Two, keep all records for the corporation. And three, protect the trademarks of the corporation. I can report that we have policies and procedures in place to ensure these responsibilities are met. The management responsibilities of the Executive Director position include the day to day operations of our National Headquarters and staff.

The experience I gained from previous careers as an executive in the for profit and nonprofit sectors, combined with my 50 years of membership as an active member in the American Legion Auxiliary, have been advantageous to managing this complex organization. In the first few months, it seemed like there was surprise revelations daily that required exploration and solutions. National President Kathy and I spent lots of nights in long, long conversations. So let's discuss one of our biggest assets, our new building. The biggest challenge and investment of time and money over the last year has been the relocation of our National Headquarters to the building that we purchased in June of 2017. Despite having owned the building for over a year, when I came on board no one had established a timeline to move in, a budget, or a detailed reconfiguration plan to occupy the building. I'm happy to report that even with all those initial challenges, we managed to successfully move into the new location before our lease expired on the existing location. It was and still is a work in progress. We have had to create an entire new set of building management responsibilities and learn about all the mechanical and other pieces required to maintain the building.

Our next biggest asset of the organization is our National Headquarters staff. We discovered that there had been severe neglect in the areas of team building and compensation practices. We now have monthly all-staff meetings where all divisions share information, successes, and challenges. These meetings provide an opportunity for team building, as well as the sharing of information, which helps our National Headquarters team understand how valuable their work is to accomplish our mission. Additionally, compensation practices are in place to ensure consistency. I am continually gratified that we have a broad range of talent in our staff and their mission commitment is evident, and many are active unit members. They embrace and are eager to improve processes and quality to assist our members in carrying out our mission.

Probably the greatest shock that National President Kathy and I received in early October was the fact that the relationship between the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary was severely frayed. We invested a significant amount of effort over several weeks to start the repair and rebuild those lines of communication and relationships. We have continued this effort throughout the year and give it priority at staff and volunteer leadership levels. The American Legion has stated they are pleased with our efforts and enjoy the improved relationship.

While it has been difficult snow birding in Indianapolis, away from my sunny Florida home and husband, and of course my afternoon naps, I have enjoyed the opportunity to use my knowledge and skills to assist the organization that has been such a significant part of my life. Contributing to the success of National Headquarters this year has been the support of our National President Kathy, many Past National Presidents, and our gifted staff. The search for an Executive Director continues. While I understand that not even a broken neck in December could get me sent home -- beautiful picture - - one day, I do intend returning to my husband and sunny Florida.

So to that end, we have hired a search firm out of Chicago that specializes in nonprofit executive placements. Our internal search committee comprised of volunteers and staff will be conducting interviews of potential candidates. This transition year has prepared us to launch into our second 100 years strong and focused. The staff looks forward to supporting the membership as we take advantage of our new membership recruitment opportunities that will provide additional resources to support our mission activities. Thanks to each of you who are so committed to this organization. Your National Headquarters staff looks forward to our work together for veterans, the military, and our families. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Talk about dedication. That's dedication right there. You know, when you try to get out of something, to go as far as breaking your neck?

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: But I said, no, not going home. You've got to stay with me.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you so much, Linda. Updated documents allow questions about the Auxiliary, its governance, programs, and eligibility to be easily answered. National Constitution and Bylaws Chairman Melanie Taylor had the privilege of working alongside departments and units determined to update their governing documents. Please welcome to the stage, Melanie.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President Kathy, the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are the governing documents of our organization, whether it be national, department, district, county, or unit. These documents provide clearly the roles and responsibilities at all levels. They must be

clearly written, reviewed, and updated as necessary. Many departments are still in the process of revising their governing documents to conform with National's revision that was completed in 2018.

The American Legion Auxiliary Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct were adopted by the National Executive Committee last year and included in the National Standing Rules. They stated that members are expected to comply with this organization's governing documents and conduct themselves according to the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

There were many phone calls and emails this year asking for clarity and understanding of our governing documents, to include the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct. Many departments reported creating Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules templates, which were then put on their department websites. They held fall conferences and mid-winter meetings, stressing the importance of updating documents and played games and awarded prizes.

The Department of Illinois reported receiving 34 Unit Bylaws for approval this year, and she reported receiving Bylaws from a district that had never had Bylaws before. Chairman Patricia made it easy for the units by providing a template along with a cheat sheet she created to help the units with revisions of their Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules.

The Department of Michigan at their fall conference made Constitution and Bylaws fun by playing the game Candy Cab, which was an adapted version of the game show Cash Cab. The attendees were asked a question about a topic covered in the Constitution and Bylaws documents. The first person to answer the question correctly won a Hershey's candy bar.

The Department of Alabama scheduled three separate district workshops with a more in-depth discussion on the importance of strong documents to develop a culture of goodwill, which is goal two of the five-year Centennial Strategic Plan. These longer workshops provided opportunities for specific questions and reviews of all the individual units' Constitution and Bylaws. During these workshops, many misunderstandings and misinformation came to light and were addressed. Their units learned the structure of the Legion Family and how to work separately and together.

During the Department of Florida's fall conference, a room was set up with computers and printers to use, helping the units to review and revise their governing documents. The Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman was present to answer any questions and to assist the units in making their revisions. Once completed, the units were able to print off their finished Constitution and Bylaws, which were then signed by the Department Chairman and President right there on the spot.

Thank you and congratulations to the 51 departments who submitted their reports. With our organization looking forward to the next 100 years, our governing documents will keep the American Legion Auxiliary on track. They will continue to reflect how our organization is doing. This year's Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairmen have worked hard to fulfill our mission, educating our members on the importance of updated documents.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Are there any proposed amendments?

(Laughter.)

MS. TAYLOR: Yes, Madam President. We have two for Constitution and Bylaws and seven for Standing Rules.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I would like to remind everyone that if you want to make a motion or an amendment it needs to be on a motion form per Standing Rule 11. Motion forms are located at stage left. I'm directionally challenged. They told me to point that way.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The debate will be limited to two minutes for each speaker. No person shall speak on the same question more than twice without the consent of the Convention. I also remind you that we do have a timer here to fairly enforce this rule. The rules also state that during debate, delegates, alternates, and guests are to remain seated within their own delegation or assigned seating area unless they are approaching the microphone, completing a motion form, or exiting and entering the general session. Are there any questions?

Melanie, please proceed with presenting the amendments.

MS. TAYLOR: It is the responsibility of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee to bring all proposed amendments to the floor for deliberation, apart from the endorsement status by the pre-Convention Committee. Therefore, regardless of the pre-Convention Committee's recommendation on the adoption of the amendments, I will, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, move for the adoption of all amendments. Remember, all departments and delegates received advanced copies of these amendments.

Amendment No. 1. Madam National President, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee presents Amendment No. 1, a proposal from the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee to amend Constitution Article 3, Eligibility, Section 1, by substitution. If adopted, Constitution, Article 3, Eligibility, Section 1, will read, "Eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by the American Legion. The eligibility requirements from the American Legion governing documents shall be provided as a footnote to this Constitution for information purposes and shall be updated as appropriate."

This proposal includes the following consequential amendments. One, Constitution, Article 2, Section 1, strike out the words, "of women." Number two, strike all occurrences of "committeewoman" and insert "committee person." Number three, strike all occurrences of she and her, and insert an appropriate gender-neutral pronoun.

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted. Madam National President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment No. 1.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The question is on the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention

Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? Those in favor of Amendment No. 1, please press the number one on your voting keypad. Those opposed, press number two. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Voting is now closed. Please show the results.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: That was quick. Maybe they were not ready back there. Give us one second. I can't sing and I can't dance.

(Laughter.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You all, technology is great in some ways, in some ways it's not. Like we're waiting on this, but let me tell you. I just got a text on my iWatch and I confirmed my dental appointment for September 3rd.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Okay. We do have a vote count. They just can't display it on the board. So and it requires a two-thirds vote and the vote is affirmative 526 and -- let me get back to my page. The negative is 181. Affirmative 526, negative 181. So the affirmative has it and the Constitution and Bylaws are amended.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Melanie, I would ask that you come and continue. And at this time, the Legion has asked me to come speak to them. So I will turn the microphone over and Nicole Clapp, Vice President Nicole Clapp will fill in until I get back.

MS. TAYLOR: Amendment No. 2, Bylaws. Amendment No. 2, a proposal from the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee to amend Bylaws, Article 4, National Executive Committee, Section 2, Authority, by striking the words. If adopted, Bylaws Article 4, National Executive Committee, Section 2, Authority, will read, "the National Executive Committee shall adopt the annual budget for the National Organization, adopt policies and Standing Rules, unless otherwise noted in the National Constitution or these Bylaws, review financial statements, and accept the national audit, ratify committees, confirm the nomination of the National Secretary and the National Treasurer, confirm committee and other national appointments, and confirm the appointments of officials not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws, levy assessments as needed, ratify the cancellation of charters, receive for filing reports from national subsidiary organizations, and other duties and responsibilities that are the normal function of a corporate board of directors."

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted. Madam National President, on behalf of the

Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Amendment No. 2.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of the Amendment No. 2 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaw Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted. Is there discussion?

Are you ready for the question? I hear yes and I hear no. Okay, it's the staff saying no. Just a second. Okay.

(Laughter.)

MS. CLAPP : Technical difficulty, not you. All right. They are ready. Adoption of this amendment requires a two-thirds vote. Vote in the favor of Amendment No. 1, press the number one key on your voting keypad. Those opposed, press the number two key. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : What they will be doing is, they are tallying and they are relaying it to Stephanie. It's handwritten, and then it's presented to us here at the podium because of the technical difficulty to relay it onto the viewing screen.

Aye votes are 648. Nay votes 69. The amendment has passed. The Bylaws will be amended. Melanie, please continue.

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. Madam National President, Amendment No. 3 is to the Standing Rules, Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee, and it was adopted by the National Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and the National Future Focus Committee. The subject is to change the structure of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee. If adopted the section will read as follows: "The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee shall be comprised of a chairman, who shall serve a one-year term, a vice chairman, and one member serving staggered two-year terms, one of whom shall be appointed each year to a two-year term, and a representative from each National Division, who shall serve a one-year term. The vice president shall serve as the National Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service VAVS Representative, and the member shall serve as the National VAVS Deputy Representative, with the proviso that if adopted this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention."

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Madam National President, on behalf of the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 3 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rule Amendment No. 3 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaw Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rule Amendment No. 3, press number one key on your voting keypad. All those opposed, press number two key on your voting keypad. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : Oh, whew! Success!

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP : And congratulations, the affirmatives have it. The amendment is adopted. Please continue, Melanie.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 4 is to the Standing Rules, Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National Education Committee, and was submitted by the National Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and the National Future Focus Committee. The subject is changes to the structure of the National Education Committee. If adopted, the section will read as follows: “The Education Committee shall be comprised of a chairman serving a one-year term, a vice chairman, and one member, serving staggered two-year terms, one of whom shall be appointed each year to a two-year term, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term, with the proviso that if adopted, this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention.

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Standing Rule Amendment No. 4 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rule Amendment No. 4 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaw Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?
A

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rule Amendment No. 4, please press one key on your voting keypad. All those opposed, please press the number two key on your voting keypad. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : Please show the results. The amendment has passed. The amendment will be adopted. Please continue, Melanie.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 5 is to the Standing Rules Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and was submitted by the National Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and the National Future Focus Committee. The subject is changes to the structure of the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Please note, the word committee was inadvertently omitted from the second sentence after the words Constitution and Bylaws. If adopted, the section will read as follows: “The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and a vice chairman, all of whom shall serve a one-year term. The purpose of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee is to inform members about having proper governing documents at all levels, with the proviso that if adopted this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention.”

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of the Standing Rules Amendment No. 5 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : If there is no objection, the word committee will be added in the second sentence.

Thank you. The word committee will be added.

The question is on the adoption of the Standing Rules Amendment No. 5. The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rules Amendment No. 5, please press number one on your voting keypad. All those opposed, please press number two key. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : The voting is now closed. Please show the results. The affirmative has it and the amendment is adopted. Please continue, Melanie.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 6 is to the Standing Rules, Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National Americanism, National Security, Legislative, Poppy, Community Service, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Leadership, and Public Relations Committees, and was submitted by the National Strategic Planning Implementation Committee and the National Future Focus Committee. The subject is changes to the structure of the National Americanism, National Security, Legislative, Poppy, Community Service, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Leadership, and Public Relations Committees. Please note that the words “a vice chairman” were inadvertently omitted from the second column. If adopted, each individual section will read as follows: “The Americanism, National Security, Legislative, Poppy, Community Service, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Leadership, and Public Relations Committees respectfully shall be comprised of a chairman, a vice chairman, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term, with the proviso that if adopted, this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention.

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of the Standing Rules Amendment No. 6 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rule Amendment No. 6 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rules Amendment No. 6, please press number one key on your voting keypad. All those opposed, please press number two on your keypad. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : Voting is now closed. Please show the results. The affirmative has it and the amendment will be adopted. Melanie, please continue.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 7 is to the Standing Rules Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National History, Liaison to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, and Past Presidents Parley Committees, and was submitted by the National Strategic

Planning Implementation Committee and the National Future Focus Committee. The subject is removal of the History, Child Welfare Foundation, and Past Presidents Parley Committees. The proposed changes would amend Standing Rule 6 and if adopted number one will read as follows: “As provided in the National Bylaws, in addition to the core national standing committees, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Children and Youth, Americanism, National Security, Membership, Constitution and Bylaws, Finance and Audit, there shall be the following national committees: Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Community Service, Education, American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, Junior Activities, Leadership, Legislative, Poppy, and Public Relations. The overall purpose of each standing committee is as specified in this section, the purpose of each national committee is as described in the American Legion Auxiliary National Program Action Plan.”

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted, with the proviso that if adopted this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 7 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rule Amendment No. 7 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaw Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted.

Is there any discussion? Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rules Amendment No. 7, please press number one on your voting keypad. All those opposed, please press number two on your voting keypad. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : Voting is now closed. Please show the results. The affirmative has it and the amendment has been adopted. Melanie, please continue.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 8 is to the Standing Rules Section 4 on Duties of National Officers. The subject is duties of the National Historian. If adopted, Standing Rule 4 will read as follows: “The National Historian shall be responsible for compiling and sending to the departments an outline and rules for department histories that are to be submitted in contest for the national award. Judging of the department histories shall be done by the five National Division Vice Presidents under the supervision of the National Historian. The National Historian shall also be responsible for communicating to departments the importance of keeping and preserving a written record, and of collecting, categorizing, and preserving American Legion Auxiliary memorabilia, with the proviso that if adopted this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention.”

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendments be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 8 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 8 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaw Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rules Amendment No. 8, please press one on your voting keypad. All opposed, please press the number two key. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : That was almost perfect timing. Voting is now closed. Please show the results. The affirmative has it and the amendment will be adopted. Melanie, please continue.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, Amendment No. 9 is to the Standing Rules Section 6 on Committees, specifically the National Children and Youth Committee. The subject is changes to the composition of the National Children and Youth Committee. If adopted, Standing Rule 6 will read as follows: "The Children and Youth Committee shall be comprised of a chairman, a vice chairman, and one committee member, which shall serve as a liaison to the Child Welfare Foundation, and may be a Past National President, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term. The purpose of the Children and Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with the American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans, with the proviso that if adopted this amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 ALA National Convention."

The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, I move the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 9 as just read.

MS. CLAPP : The question is on the adoption of Standing Rules Amendment No. 9 as just read. The Constitution and Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends the amendment be adopted. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of Standing Rules Amendment No. 9, press the number one key on the voting keypad. All those opposed, please press the number two key. Please vote now.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP : Please show the results. The affirmative has it and the amendment is adopted. Thank you, Melanie. Great job. Thank you very much.

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you, Madam President.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP : Thank you, ladies. We appreciate your due diligence in that aspect of the Constitution and Bylaws. Would National Secretary please give us the Convention updates?

MS. BOONE: Surprises, surprises. Okay. Just to make sure you all know where the luncheon is, it's in the Sagamore Rooms 3 and 5. The doors open at 12:15. We'll have lunch at, Woman of the Year Lunch at 12:30. And

then for those of you going to the National Commander's Banquet tonight, it starts at 6:00 p.m. and it's in Hall J and K.

Now for somewhat surprises, surprise, Vice President Pence is going to speak to the American Legion at 1:00 tomorrow. We will be adjourned so you will be able to, or recess so you will be able to go to that before the installation at 2:30. Because of that, there will be lots of security in the building. Additionally, we're fortunate that the National President will be presenting the Public Spirit Award to Mrs. Pence at 11:00 a.m. here tomorrow.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: So we have a special guest tomorrow. So as you can imagine, so Secret Service and everybody has been all over the building the last couple of days. So 6:00 a.m., the magnetometers are going to be in place at the Maryland Street landing entrance, which is by the food court. And the other location is at the J.W. Marriott Skywalk. The more you bring with you to the Convention Center, the longer it will take you to get through security. So pack light tomorrow, ladies.

The other thing is when Mrs. Pence, and we'll announce this again, but when Mrs. Pence is here, you can't run up and take pictures. You stay in your seat unless you want to be tackled by a Secret Service man or woman.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: Well, I'd better tell them to bring extra.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: I've been away from home for a long time, too.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. So your reward for behaving yourself tomorrow is that we won't start until 8:30.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. There are still some departments that haven't picked up their mail at all. So you need to get there and pick up your mail in the Room 103. And because of the security around both Mr. Pence and Mrs. Pence, the mail room and flower room will be closed tomorrow, Wednesday, at 12:30. Okay? So pick up all your mail and corsages by 12:30 tomorrow.

Okay. And for those that may still have a little bit of a fat wallet left, we have some incredibly generous people in the room. Our Giving Tuesday has hit \$8,000 and --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: -- we have another donor who has given \$1,000 to be matched. So you have time between now and the luncheon to go empty your wallet, make it a little bit lighter to carry around. So please, support the Foundation and our Giving Tuesday campaign.

Madam President, that's all.

MS. CLAPP : Thank you, Linda. The meeting is adjourned until tomorrow morning and it says 8:00 but I heard the good news, 8:30 a.m., when we will be back obviously in Hall C. Have a great afternoon, ladies.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

(Whereupon, at 11:03 a.m. on Tuesday, August 27, 2019, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2019**

(Music.)

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to Day 3 of Serving Our Heroes, the 99th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here to begin our session is your National President, Kathy Dungan.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Good morning.

(A chorus of good morning.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: What a beautiful day. God is good. The 99th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will come to order. Welcome to today's session. Please remember to silence all electronic devices. Thank you.

National Chaplain, Dr. Deborah Blanch, will give the invocation.

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Everyone that is able to stand, please do so, and, if not, God knows your heart.

Good morning, everyone.

(A chorus of good morning.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Good morning, everyone.

(A chorus of good morning.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: There you go, that's what I'm talking about.

Let us take a moment of silence for unspoken prayers, for anyone that may be in any pain that does not want to speak on it, anyone that may have a situation, before we take our invocation, and for our fallen angels. Take a moment, please.

(Pause.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Thank you. Let us go together in prayer.

Almighty God, Creator of all that has been, that is and still is to come, be with us as we pray, as we might our members and friends at the American Legion Auxiliary, and our Auxiliary family. Be with us as we meet our commitments as members of the greatest organization ever. Guide our hearts and our minds as we work together for You and only. For God and Country, we say together three times, Amen --

(A chorus of Amen.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- Amen --

(A chorus of Amen.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- and Amen.

(A chorus of Amen.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please be seated.

All of you who attended the Woman of the Year luncheon had the great fortunate to meet our third honoree, Marsha Four. Like Patricia and Leslie, her lifetime of work serving our veterans is incredibly inspiring. Please watch the screens.

(Music.)

(Video:)

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion Auxiliary proudly honors Marsha Four as their 2019 Woman of the Year in recognition of her lifetime commitment to men and women veterans in need.

MS. FOUR: After graduating from nurse's training at St. Vincent's School of Nursing in Indianapolis, I was recruited and joined in the Army Nurse Corps, and my first assignment was at Fort Campbell, but then was sent to Vietnam within about six months. While there, I served with the 18th Surgical Hospital, a MUST unit, first at Camp Evans and then at Quand Tri. My assignment was in the intensive care recovery room while I was on the duty and the emergency room while I was off duty.

Having that experience in the military is what set me on the path to working with veterans.

ANNOUNCER: Like many of the nurses who joined the military right from nurses' training, few had any concept of what they would experience in Vietnam.

MS. FOUR: We weren't trained for that type of environment, first of all, and you cannot know what war is like until you've been in one.

The requirements that were put upon us were in many ways beyond our capacity when we first got there, but we learned very quickly and, I will tell you, at the end of that year, we were the best nurses God ever made.

Working in civilian nursing after Vietnam, I really didn't consider or even think about myself as a veteran until I was introduced to the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project in Washington, dedicated to the women who served during the Vietnam War.

ANNOUNCER: Soon after that, Marsha became active in Vietnam Veterans of America, culminating in her position as National Vice President.

MS. FOUR: With my first work in Vietnam Veterans of America and through the chapter, it was really brought to light how many homeless veterans we actually had in this country and, because of that, I went with another friend to a program in New Jersey, and came back to Philadelphia and organized the Philadelphia Stand-Down in 1994, and actually the remnants of it are still in existence today.

I was the executive director for that program for five years. During that time, I worked with the Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service Center, and at that time also they asked me to help them write some grants to provide services exclusively to homeless veterans.

ANNOUNCER: Her local success with veterans soon became recognized on a national level with VBA, as well as the Veterans Administration, where she served as Chair of its Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

MS. FOUR: Through the work with Vietnam Veterans of America, I was appointed twice to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, which offered great insight to the Secretary on the issues that we found that were necessary to be addressed by the VA on behalf of women veterans.

Through this experience, I also remained with Vietnam Veterans of America, and became a member of their board of directors and then their vice

president. Through all of this, I have been connected to the Government Affairs Division of the organization, and the women veterans and homeless veterans committees, having testified several times on behalf of both.

ANNOUNCER: Marsha's service to our veterans hasn't gone unnoticed.

MS. SCHWARTZ: The most important thing about Marsha Four is she has great heart, and she is driven not to exceed or achieve great things in the world for herself, it has always been for others.

MS. MILLER: Wish Marsha being a great leader, she took the opportunity to grab me by the hand and lead me and teach me what it was to be a leader, and to work with homeless veterans, she taught me the valuable lessons in dealing with homeless women veterans in particular.

MS. POMROY: I not only know Marsha as a talker, but I know her as a doer. Over the 16 years that we worked together, Marsha not only wrote the grants for, but implemented many programs: The Perimeter, which is a day program for homeless veterans; a 95-bed transitional living programs for homeless veterans on the grounds of Coatesville VA; and, in 2005, the largest homeless women veterans program, the Mary E. Walker House. And I must say, all of those programs are still open and active today.

ANNOUNCER: Beginning with her career as an Army nurse in Vietnam, Marsha has made a difference, and she wants you to know you can too.

MS. FOUR: When I started Philadelphia Stand-Down, I recognized that I was just one person working and trying to get into a system that really hadn't organized itself around homeless veterans, and I had to make them believe. And, unless it's in your heart and unless you believe, unless you believe that you can make a difference -- and trust me, one person can make a difference -- and if they are joined by others who believe too, the impact is unsurmountable; it can make the difference between life and death for many veterans.

ANNOUNCER: Thank you, Marsha Four, for your lifetime of dedicated service to our men and women veterans.

(Video ends.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Please welcome Marsha Four.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The next item of business this morning is the nomination of National Officers for the 2019-2020 administrative year. Representatives making the nominations, as well as the candidates, are seated on the stage.

Linda Boone, National Secretary, will read the rules governing nominations and elections.

Linda?

MS. BOONE: Okay, here we go, the rules.

Nominations 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 are to be no seconding speeches.

Following nominating speeches for National Officers, 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 only 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, 2019.

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 or 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 number of votes, with the candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot being elected.

That, Madam President, completes the reading of the nomination and election rules.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Nominations are now in order for the Office of National President. The National Secretary will call the departments with announced candidates.

MS. BOONE: I forgot, I have to be up here.

Okay. The Department of Iowa 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 a nomination.

MS. SEBBEN: Madam National President, Microphone 1. Mary Sebben, Delegation Chairman for the Department of Iowa.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair recognizes the delegate from Iowa for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. SEBBEN: Would the Chair please recognize Wendy Riggle for the purpose of a nomination for the Office of National President.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Yes. Wendy?

MS. RIGGLE: Madam National President, delegates, alternates, and guests, my name is Wendy Riggle. It is with great pride and an 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 American Legion Auxiliary National Vice President -- National President.

(Laughter.)

MS. RIGGLE: Nicole's love of the pretty little red flower started her lifelong journey and desire to serve as the American Legion's Auxiliary Centennial National President. Given the opportunity, her ongoing dedication to serve military, veterans, and their families, will inspire her to lead the ALA into the next century.

When Nicole was four years old, she asked her mother Jeannie if she could help give out the pretty little red flower when she saw her friends doing it in her small town. It was determined at that point her grandfather, a United States Navy 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 proud 45-year PUFL member of Unit No. 127 in Gladbrook, Iowa. She was elected the ALA Department of Iowa and Honorary National Junior President in 1987. During that extraordinary year, Nicole participated in Iowa Girls State, attended Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge, and competed in the American Legion oratorical contest. At the ALA Department level in Iowa, she has served on the Junior Camp and Iowa Girls State boards. Nicole was a 17-year staff member of Girls State, serving as Education Director for more than a decade.

Currently, for the ALA Department of Iowa, she is participating in the 100th ALA Anniversary and 75th Girls State Anniversary committees, along with assisting the Iowa American Legion with junior shooting sports and helping judge the state oratorical competition, again giving back and being involved with the program she loved as a youth.

At the ALA national level, Nicole was a member of the Finance Committee for seven years, five of them serving as the chairman. She also served as National Chairman of Youth and VA&R committees. She held liaison roles in the audit committee and the ALA Foundation.

Nicole has been a member of HR Strategic Plan, Future Focus 100th Anniversary, and National Security Secretary committees.

Nicole is also fulfilling her role as ALA National Vice President, with board positions on the NEC and ALA Foundation.

Nicole's passionate journey for helping others came to fruition with a health care career, with an achievement of both a bachelor and master's degree in nursing administration from the University of Iowa. She is Board certified in health care management and a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Nicole climbed the corporate ladder of expanded responsibility, management, and leadership over the past 22-plus years, preparing her for the administrative stepping stones of middle management, vice president, and ultimately president and CEO of a hospital.

In addition to the American Legion Auxiliary, Nicole volunteers with the Lions Club, PEO International, Gladbrook Corn Carnival Corporation, and the Peace United Church of Christ.

And I'm not sure if her love of the Iowa Hawkeyes or the American Legion Auxiliary is greater, but at least for the next year her focus will be on the ALA and less on seeing those Hawkeye football games in person. But be warned you departments with your scheduled fall visits, you may have to watch an Iowa football game with Nicole.

(Laughter.)

MS. RIGGLE: For the second time in my life, I have the honor of placing a name into nomination for the high office of National American Legion Auxiliary President to serve the centennial year of 2019-2020.

On behalf of the members of American Legion Department of Iowa and my dear, sweet mother, who would have loved this opportunity, I am pleased to place into nomination a most deserving Nicole Clapp from the great State of Iowa for the Office of American Legion Auxiliary National President.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Nicole Clapp 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. BOONE: The Department of Kentucky has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

MS. KABEL: Madam National President, microphone 1. Jerilynn Kabel, past Department President and Delegation Chair from the Department of Kentucky. Would the Chair please recognize Karen Toll for the purpose of nomination for the Office of National Vice President.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair recognizes the delegate from Kentucky for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. TOLL: Good morning, Madam President, officers, delegates, and fellow Auxiliary members. My name is Karen Toll and I am a representative of Team Kentucky 2020. On behalf of the Department of Kentucky, it is with great pride and honor to present my best friend and my sister, Kathy Daudistel, as the candidate for the Office of National Vice President.

Kathy is a member of Unit 203 of Latonia, Kentucky. She is eligible through our recently-deceased father, Bill Kaelin, who served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War era.

The Department of Kentucky is super proud to have Kathy as our representative and will be happy to share Kathy with all of you to serve as the National Vice President.

Kathy is very dedicated to the American Legion Auxiliary and it shows through her work on many various committees that she has participated in, chaired at the unit, department, and national level. Kathy was our unit president for several years and our department president from 2009 to 2010. Her passion for the American Legion Auxiliary shows in the many, many, many friends that she has made in all of you and across the entire American Legion Family.

In her personal life, Kathy has two daughters: Beth, who lives in Seattle, and Stephanie, who will be here later today. She has four grandchildren, we have a brother, and our wonderful mother, Nancy, who will

also be here later. Kathy retired from Western Southern Life Insurance after 33 and a half years.

On behalf of the Department of Kentucky, I am honored to place a nomination in the name of Kathy Daudistel for the Office of National Vice President of the American Legion for the year 2019-2020.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Kathy Daudistel is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the Office of National Vice President?

Hearing none, nominations for National Vice President are closed.

Nominations are in order for the Office of National Chaplain. The National Secretary will call the departments with announced candidates.

MS. BOONE: The Department of Missouri has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of an introduction.

MS. HAUCK: Madam National President, microphone 1. Will the Chair please recognize delegate Rosemarie W. Hauck for the purpose of nomination?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair recognizes the delegate from Missouri for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. HAUCK: Good morning. Madam President, I am Rosemarie W. Hauck, past National Chaplain from the Department of Missouri.

The Department of Missouri endorses Sharon Gayle Metzinger as a candidate for National Chaplain.

Gayle's eligibility for membership in the ALA was gained through her husband, U.S. Air Force Major Donald D. Metzinger, Retired, who served during the Vietnam era for 23 years.

Gayle is active in Unit 21, Independence, Missouri. She's acted at all levels of the ALA, currently serving as Missouri's 100th Anniversary Committee chair and the Truman Days chairman.

A chaplain should be a model, an invigorator, an innovator, inspirational, and know how to show sympathy, as well as empathy. These are a 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 our community and our state.

In view of her dedicated compassion, dedication to God, and active service in the Auxiliary and her community, I place the name of Sharon Gayle Metzinger as a candidate for the 2019-2020 National Chaplain. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Gayle Metzinger is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the Office of National Chaplain?

MS. BOONE: Madam President, the Department of New York has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize a delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Department of New York requests the Chair to recognize Deborah Kryczkowski for the purpose of nomination.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair recognizes the delegate from New York for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Good morning, everyone.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Mary Anne Casadei joined the Auxiliary at birth as a junior member and became a senior in 1973. She has held most positions, as well as President in her unit, county, and district, and she also chaired many committees, earning several department and national awards.

On the department level, Mary Anne has chaired Children and Youth, Constitution and Bylaws, Education, Empower Girls State, Finance, Leadership, Membership, Public Relations, VA&R, and served as our department president.

On a national level, she served as the NEC, was a member of the National Legislative Committee, Eastern Division Committee Service Chair, member of the National Security Committee, and presently a member of the National Leadership Committee.

On a personal level, Mary is eligible through her father, Frank Smith, Sr., who served in the U.S. Navy in World War II. She is equally as proud of her husband, Ron, a U.S. Army Vietnam veteran. They have one daughter and two grandsons; all are members of the American Legion Family.

Mary Anne volunteers at her local hospital, the Syracuse VA, and the local VA clinic, as well as various local civic organizations. Mary Anne is a participant of both the St. John's and St. Peter's Churches, a member of St. Mary's Altar Rosary Society, the Marian Gale, the Christian Women's Group Bible Study, and her own chaplain in her unit for several years.

Mary Anne has a way about her that clearly demonstrates the reasons why she is such a shining example of the American Legion Auxiliary member. She embodies kindness, generosity, and her love of her fellow man. Mary Anne is always reaching out to help others spiritually and as a friend.

She grew up with a deep and abiding love for our American Legion Family. Able to form a working knowledge of many programs of the ALA, Mary became a mentor to all. We are truly blessed to have someone like Mary Anne in our American Legion Family.

So, speaking on behalf of all the members of Henry P. Smith Unit 24, Oneida County, 5th District, in the great department of New York, we humbly ask the delegates here today to please consider Mary Anne Casadei for the Office of National Chaplain for the year 2019-2020.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Mary Anne Casadei is nominated.

Are there any further nominations for the Office of National Chaplain? Hearing none, nominations for National Chaplain are closed.

Nominations are in order for the Office of National Historian. The National Secretary will call the department with announced candidates.

MS. BOONE: Madam President, 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.

MS. LEEDY: Madam National President, microphone 1. Kathy Leedy, delegate chairman from the Department of Tennessee, would like to request the Chair to recognize Vicki Thrower-Mills, past National Chaplain, for the purpose of nomination.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair recognizes the delegate from Tennessee for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. THROWER-MILLS: Good morning, Madam President, officers, delegates, and guests. I am Vicki Thrower-Mills and I am proud to nominate Peggy Monroe from the Department of Tennessee for the Office of National Historian.

She is a member of Lexington Unit No. 77. She has served her department on all levels, she has served as department historian for six years and as department president in 1997-'98. She's had 16 national appointments and served as the Southern Division National Vice President in 2007-2008.

With Peggy's dedication to our organization, she will do a great job in recording the history for our 100th year.

Again, on behalf of the Department of Tennessee, it is my pleasure to nominate Peggy Monroe for National Historian 2019-2020.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Peggy Monroe 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 the 24th, 2019, nominations for the 2019-2020 National Officers are complete.

The convention rules provide that the nominees for the Office of National President, National Vice President, National Chaplain, and National Historian should be introduced to the assembly. The Auxiliary member who made the nomination will introduce the candidate by name and department affiliation only. Each nominee will be allowed a maximum of two minutes for remarks.

Would the representative from Iowa please introduce the candidate for National President?

MS. RIGGLE: Madam National President, it is an honor to present to you from the great State of Iowa the candidate for the Office of National President, Nicole Clapp.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Thank you, Wendy.

Good morning, American Legion Family.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MS. CLAPP: I am very honored and flattered to be standing here today as a candidate for National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. Who could ever imagine that a pretty little red flower, the poppy, could attract

a 4-year-old girl to want to be a part of something so much greater than her own little small town in Iowa.

As Wendy shared with you, The American Legion and Auxiliary afforded me many opportunities as I was growing up. If elected, I will wholeheartedly support and embrace this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give back to the wonderful organization in which I was raised. As a 45-year PUFL member, I have always maintained a strong desire and commitment to serve in a wide array of roles and responsibilities at the unit, department, and national levels.

Each of us has our own ALA story to tell. I truly believe my passion, experience, and knowledge can be a positive influence for the American Legion Family to successfully lead our organization into the next century of service.

I have never shied away from a challenge or an opportunity. I try and live by President John F. Kennedy's saying, "Things don't just happen, you have to make them happen." And that is what I plan to do, with your support, to be the first ever Honorary National Junior President to become National President of the American Legion Auxiliary. I promise --

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: -- thank you -- I promise in service, not self, to continue my dedication to enhance the lives of veterans, military, and their families during our milestone centennial year.

I greatly appreciate your support, and thank you for your time and consideration. God bless.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would the representative from Kentucky present the candidate for National Vice President?

MS. TOLL: Madam President, Team Kentucky is proud to announce Kathy Daudistel as the candidate for Vice President..

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam National President, Officers, members, and guests, it was with great joy, pride, and excitement that I stand before you as a candidate for National Vice President of the American Legion Auxiliary.

As I mentioned on Saturday, I joined the ALA because of a community event. I am still a member of the American Legion Auxiliary because of the mission: to serve veterans, active duty members, and their family.

For as long as I can remember, my family has been involved in community service, but to me the American Legion Auxiliary is where I belong. It allows me to honor not only my father's service, but the service of all veterans and their families. I am humbled and honored to have the opportunity to potentially serve this great organization in a leadership capacity. I owe many thanks to my family, friends, and my department.

If elected, I pledge to keep the passion going for our veterans, active duty military, and their families. I appreciate your support.

Thank you and God bless.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would the representative from Missouri present the candidate for National Chaplain.

MS. HAUKE: Madam National President, I present to you Missouri's candidate for National Chaplain, Gayle Metzinger.

(Applause.)

MS. METZINGER: Good morning, everyone. As she said, I am Gayle Metzinger from the Department of Missouri. I gained my eligibility from my husband, Donald, who flew rescue helicopter in two terms -- I'm sorry. I have had a grandfather in every major conflict starting at the Revolutionary War. I had two, an uncle and a grandfather in the War of 1812, and two in the Civil War. And a grandfather that fought in World War I with and who had mustard gas, so he came home and I was lucky to have him back.

One of the things I'd like to do as your chaplain -- and I know this has been done in the past, so it's not a major idea that I come up with, but I want to do a national prayer chain. With all of us as one voice, we can change the world.

A quick prayer happens every day. And I hear the fire sirens go and I always say a silent prayer for whoever they're getting picked up. So I would like to do that on a national level to the states, to the department, to the units, and we could change the world by doing that.

I hope that you will consider me and I thank you for this consideration.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Will the representative from New York present the candidate for National Chaplain?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: On behalf of the most awesome department in the Nation, New York --

(Cheering.)

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: -- I present to you our candidate for National Chaplain, Mary Anne Casadei.

(Applause.)

MS. CASADEI: Good morning. First, I want to thank my father, who as a 19-year-old ensign in the Navy was involved in the invasion of Normandy and survived to have four daughters that he had the great sense to sign up at birth to be members of the American Legion Auxiliary. My oldest sister has -- she's going to kill me for this, but my oldest sister has 71 years of service to the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. CASADEI: Next, I want to thank my husband, who is a Vietnam veteran who served in country, has been very, very open with me being involved in this great organization.

And lastly, but not leastly, my wonderful Department of New York, who has been behind me the whole way, and I love each and everyone of you. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. CASADEI: I'm a little kerflumped now, because I'm looking out at all these people and it's just a wonderful, wonderful opportunity that I've been afforded.

I thank you for your consideration and, if elected, I promise to do the absolute, positive best that I could do for this organization. God bless you, God bless the American Legion Family, and God bless the United States of America.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would the representative from Tennessee present the candidate for National Historian.

MS. THROWER-MILLS: On behalf of the Department of Tennessee, I present their candidate for National Historian, Peggy Monroe.

MS. MONROE: Thank you, Vicki.

Madam National, Officers, delegates, and guests, what an honor it is to stand before you as a candidate for National Historian, especially in our centennial year.

I'm a 35-year member of the ALA and my eligibility is through my father, who was a World War II veteran. I joined in 1985, but wasn't very active in the beginning. In 1991, my house burned completely to the ground, I lost everything I had. Through the AEF, I was granted a grant for six months while my house was being rebuilt, then the rest is history. You know where I started. I started running for the American Legion Auxiliary and I haven't stopped running yet, okay? And I am out to help and will continue, as long as I can, to help people, especially in crisis.

It would be an honor to write the history of our centennial year. By being an educator for 39 years, I feel I have the ability to handle the task, and I would thank you for your support.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This concludes the nominations for the 2019-2020 National Officers. We will proceed with the election of National Officers.

You have nominated Nicole Clapp of Iowa 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.

All in favor of electing Nicole Clapp as National President for the 2019-2020 administrative year, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: The Chair declares Nicole Clapp of Iowa duly elected as National President for the 2019-2020 administrative year.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Nicole, please stand.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Kathy Daudistel of Kentucky is the only nominee for the Office of National Vice President. All in favor of Kathy Daudistel for the Office of National Vice President, say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Kathy Daudistel has been duly elected as National Vice President for the 2019-2020 administrative year.

Please stand, Kathy.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations.

On Saturday at the division caucuses, each division nominated a candidate for National Division Vice President, and the current division National Vice Presidents has certified to the Chair the following nominees.

Central Division, Ruth Gott of Michigan has been nominated for the Office of Central Division National Vice President. All in favor --

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All in favor of Ruth Gott as National Central Division Vice President, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ruth Gott has been duly elected as National Central Division Vice President. Ruth, please stand.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations, Ruth.

Carolyn Baranowski of Massachusetts has been nominated for the Office of National Eastern Division Vice President. All those in favor of Carolyn Baranowski for National Division Vice President, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You have elected Carolyn Baranowski as National Eastern Division Vice President. Carolyn, please stand.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations.

Rhonda Larkowski of Colorado has been nominated for the Office of National Northwestern Division Vice President. All those in favor of Rhonda Larkowski, National Northwestern Division Vice President, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: You have elected Rhonda Larkowski as the National Northwestern Division Vice President. Rhonda, please stand.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations.

Noemi Burgos De Paneto of Puerto Rico has been nominated for the Office of National Southern Division Vice President. All those in favor of Noemi Burgos De Paneto as the National Southern Division Vice President, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Noemi Burgos De Paneto has been elected the National Southern Division Vice President. Please stand, Noemi. Wahoo!

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations, Noemi.

Cheryl Park of Oregon has been nominated for the Office of National Western Division Vice President. All those in favor of Cheryl Park as the National Western Division Vice President, please say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Cheryl Park has been elected the National Western Division Vice President. Cheryl, please stand.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Congratulations.

For the election of National Chaplain, we will be voting with the electronic keypads. The nominees are Gayle Metzinger, Missouri; Mary Anne Casadei -- no -- yes, Casadei of New York. If you would like to vote for Gayle Metzinger, press number 1. If you would like to vote for Mary Anne Casadei, please press 2. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Voting is now closed. Please show the results.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Mary Anne Casadei has been duly elected as National Chaplain for the 2019-2020 administrative year. Please stand and be recognized, Mary Anne. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Peggy Monroe of Tennessee is the only nominee for the Office of National Historian. All in favor of Peggy Monroe for the Office of National Historian, say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Opposed, no.

Peggy Monroe has been duly elected as the National Historian for the 2019-2020 administrative year. Please stand, Peggy. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Would all the officers stand?

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you your 2019-2020 American Legion Auxiliary National Officers. Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And a big thank you to the entire Elections and Tally Committee. These women are here early every morning distributing keypads, they stay late after every session verifying all keypads have been returned and troubleshoot any keypad issues. Please help me give these women a round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Since they did get up so early, I would like to mention their names. We have Nancy Hansen from Connecticut as judge; Judy Hennis from South Carolina; Cathi Goth, Michigan; Lynda Stadtler from New York; Dara Oliver --

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right, sorry, New Jersey.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: My apologies. That's one of my second homes, New Jersey. Dara Oliver, Florida; Marsha Bible, Minnesota; Julie Smith, North Carolina; Edwina Komen, Pennsylvania; and Ginny Nelsen, Nebraska. Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I would love to formally introduce our next guest, but everyone told me it was a surprise event to me. So I guess I'll just say, please welcome a very special guest with a very special presentation.

(Music.)

MR. CASH: Good morning, ladies.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MR. CASH: I trust everyone is well. We have a distinct privilege this morning of making a special presentation. I'm Randy Cash, past National Chaplain of the Legion and now adjutant in the Department of North Carolina. Where's North Carolina? Okay, now I see you.

It's my honor to introduce to you Captain Lou Cavaliere, who is the Chairman of the Board to the Chapel of Four Chaplains Foundation, and Lou will be making some remarks. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: Good morning, everyone.

(A chorus of good morning.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: So I'm here from the Chapel of Four Chaplains, which is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

(Cheering.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: I guess that's where Pennsylvania is, right there.

(Laughter.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: And I know that most of you know about the Four Chaplains because we hear a lot from the American Legion Auxiliary throughout the year and we really appreciate the support. So I am joined here today by our Executive Director. The young man standing behind me is Bill Kaemmer; he's our new Executive Director. He's retired Army and he's from the State of Wisconsin.

(Cheering.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: And you've already met Randy, who's also on our board, Chaplain Randy Cash.

So the chapel is unique, because we're an Army organization in the middle of the Philadelphia Navy Yard --

(Laughter.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: -- and it's designed that way for a reason. If you know anything about the story of the *Dorchester*, the *Dorchester* was an Army ship -- as difficult as it is for me to admit that, it was an Army ship -- and it was crewed by the U.S. Merchant Marine. And it had on board U.S. Army Air Corps personnel headed for Greenland, with a Navy and Marine Corps Armed Guard, a U.S. Coast Guard communications team, and four Army chaplains. So all of the services were represented and, once the ship was torpedoed, they had 20 minutes to decide their fate. So that's why only 230 survived out of 900.

And the Four Chaplains, as you know, sealed their fate by giving up their life jackets to four of the people so that they might live, and this tremendous act of selfless service is still celebrated today all the way back from 1943.

So we go all over the country, recognizing ordinary people who do extraordinary things, and Kathy Dungan is one of those individuals who has done extraordinary things. So we are here today to induct her into our Legion of Honor and that's the surprise.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

CAPTAIN CAVALIERE: So wherever you are, from what state or what branch of the service you're connected with, you're really connected to the sinking of the *Dorchester* and the legacy of the Four Chaplains, which is selfless service. And I know that this organization here, the American Legion Auxiliary, is all about selfless service.

I have to salute you for the many things you do, but personally, the biggest thing that you do is with the Poppy Program that you have, and we are in the process right now in Philadelphia of trying to engage that and we want to invite the American Legion Auxiliary on board with your Poppy Program. I think that is very, very important to recognize that.

So, my challenge to all of you today is this: continue to stay involved, use your life jacket, use your time for selfless service, and invite you to join in support and continue to support our programs in Philadelphia, the Legion of

Honor Program, which we are doing today. You know, we give out 400 Legions of Honor across the country every year and we recognize ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

If you have children or grandchildren, please introduce them to our scholarship essay contest. We give out \$5,000 in prizes every year, and that's national, all over the country. If you are from towns who have first responder chaplains, or in your post, if you have chaplains and they need training, we do chaplains training all across the country. We also have an emergency chaplains corps that is able to respond to events all across the country.

And, finally, our biggest program is our veterans outreach. We offer an array of services for veterans, but more importantly, also for their families, because we realize that for veterans to heal it has to be a family event. And our motto is, we want to leave no veterans behind.

So, finally, that's the four programs of Four Chaplains. I want to thank you all for your financial support; because of that financial support, we are able to grow our programs. And I have to tell you that we get more demands now than I think we ever have in the past with people who are coming to see the monuments that we have erected in bronze of all the 672 people who went down on the Dorchester. You know, when you die at sea, there is no cemetery to go to. The families come to us, and we are open to all of them and we have a very open outreach to all of them.

So, with all of that said, it's now time to honor and present the Legion of Honor Bronze Medallion, the National President of the American Legion Auxiliary from 2018 to 2019, and I ask you all to please stand.

To all who hear these present greetings, the Chapel of Four Chaplains is pleased to present the Legion of Honor bronze medallion to Kathy Dungan on August 28th, 2019, in recognition of her lifetime service to all people, regardless of race or faith. And this award symbolizes for us, for all time, the unity of this Nation, founded upon the fatherhood and motherhood of one God.

Thank you very much, and I humbled here to be here before you and to present this certificate to Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Oh, my gosh, what an honor. Thank you so much. This means so much to me. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This morning we're going to celebrate. This morning we close our Centennial Strategic Plan with some very special individuals who have led our numerous teams; they have worked tirelessly on all of the goals and strategies.

Please welcome Implementation Team Chairman, past National President Janet Jefford, and Vice Chairman Stephanie Abisi.

(Music.)

MS. JEFFORD: Madam National President, five years ago, 2019 seemed so far away, yet we are here at the end of our Centennial Strategic Plan. Today, we would like you to meet the Goal Champions and their

Implementation Team liaisons as they each tell you about their major accomplishments. We have a lot to celebrate.

We will begin with Goal 5. Please welcome Mike Butt, Rita Navarrete, and Nancy Brown-Park.

(Applause.)

MR. BUTT: Thank you, thank you.

Good morning. Our mission is as critical today as it was in 1919 and will continue to matter well into the next century. As we prepare for our centennial, we must improve messaging who we are, what we do, and why we matter, to build awareness and loyalty to the American Legion Family brand.

At all levels of our organization, we are communicating with more members and more potential members, the result of initiatives carried out from the Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 5 Team.

Dollars invested positively affect how we reach new and existing audiences. One of our team's biggest highlights is an impressive addition to our communications arsenal that allows us to share mission stories.

With MSL Group, a well-respected public relations firm, we distribute stories that apply to our mission. We promote programs such as ALA Girls Nation, events such as National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and other topics, such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day. These stories are placed online and in print across the U.S. in communities where members and others with an appreciation for our mission live.

Stories appear in large publication such as the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, the Houston Chronicle, and also in smaller markets, such as the Beatrice Daily Sun in Lincoln, Nebraska.

(Cheering.)

MR. BUTT: Yeah, Nebraska. The Lancaster Bee in Buffalo, New York.

(Cheering.)

MR. BUTT: And the Times Leader in Martins Ferry, Ohio.

(Cheering.)

MR. BUTT: And, while it varies by story, we typically reach an audience exceeding 150 million. Recently, a story about military caregiver families drew an audience exceeding 245 million. That's right, over 245 million people had the opportunity to learn about our mission.

Let's hear a round of applause for this American Legion Auxiliary milestone. Right?

(Applause.)

MR. BUTT: So I'm sure you'll agree that this is a huge advancement for our organization and all of this is a direct result of our Centennial Strategic Plan.

(Applause.)

MS. BROWN-PARK: The American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations Ambassadors' premise is to generate Internet traffic about all things American Legion Family to the general public. The purpose is to plant the seed of who we are, what we do, and why we matter to those outside of our

organization and to non-active members, with the goal to get them involved in our mission.

There are 25 volunteers that share posts to social media, from the ALA blog, the National Headquarters website, including the e-News and e-Bulletin, and the Legion website, across multiple social media platforms. They encourage members to use social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter.

Each week, the ALA PR ambassadors receive two to four suggested posts and teasers, including the URL. They post them on their personal pages throughout the week, one at a time, as a way to cast our net to a larger audience. The PR ambassadors concentrate on generating Internet interest before, during, and after events like National Convention, Girls Nation, and National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The topics that receive the most likes, shares, or comments included things to do with Americanism, our flag, ALA Girls State, National Poppy Day, and of course our 100th anniversary for both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Now it is your turn to keep the information flowing for the next 100 years.

Rita?

(Applause.)

MS. NAVARRETE: Every member in this hall can tell the story of who we are, what we do, and why we matter in the lives of every veteran. Our Goal 5 Team worked tirelessly over the last five years to be those influencers in making a difference in every community across this great country. We stand here today as team leaders who have had the opportunity to work as a team with dedicated volunteers and staff to get the job done. Thank you to all of those who served on Goal 5. You are the shining stars.

Please continue to share our stories and continue helping those in our communities truly understand who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Now I have the privilege of introducing Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan to show how Goal 4 worked towards strengthening our units and our departments.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Good morning. Goal 4, Strengthening Departments and Units, had many bold initiatives, and today I plan to highlight just a few.

A major accomplishment is the promotion and recognition of longer NEC terms. More than 60 percent of departments now have an NEC structure that is not just one year, but promotes longer terms. Congratulations to those departments that have met the challenge of adding longevity and continuity to our National Board of Directors.

Our team helped departments with their long-term planning. Forty-five departments engaged in strategic planning activities and received a monetary reward from National Headquarters for their efforts. A strategic planning guide and other supporting documents were developed and distributed.

So please continue to work with your unit, district, and department leadership to make strategic planning a priority.

Through the efforts of this team, Compliance Matters was offered in conjunction with ALA mission training, as a way to educate departments and units on fiduciary responsibility and stewardship. After this training was implemented, we saw an increase in unit compliance with 1-IRS-990 filings. Also, many units were able to correct their non-compliant status with the IRS after this information was distributed. This was a huge deal to many units who had lost their non-profit status due to lax reporting.

A risk management tool was developed and distributed to departments and all levels of Auxiliary entities. During Department Leadership National Conference, departments were trained on use of the risk management tool. Also, a comprehensive and formulated DEC-101 training tool is now available online for departments to use annually to train their department executive committees.

We helped implement the Department Organizational Effectiveness Training. This training was offered at National Headquarters to department secretaries, where they learned about risk management and fiduciary responsibilities.

In 2019, this training was offered again with a different target audience, department treasurers and department finance chairmen. This training will continue through the future.

Goal 4 researched and formulated a plan for reorganization of administrative and mission-related committees and programs. Member input was requested and, during a joint meeting with the Implementation Team and Future Focus Committee, changes in committees and programs were agreed upon and distributed to the NEC and departments. These changes were discussed and passed by this convention body yesterday.

These accomplishments could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of the team members whose names are now on screen. Unfortunately, Goal 4 Goal Champion Marybeth Revoir could not be here today. Thank you, Marybeth and all members who serve on Goal 4, Strengthen Departments and Units.

Please welcome Goal Champions from Goal 3, Rosemarie Hauck and Colette Fike.

(Applause.)

MS. HAUCK: Thank you, Jan. Hello. I am Rosemarie and this is --

MS. FIKE: Right here.

(Laughter.)

MS. HAUCK: -- Colette. Management of our work was a leadership learning process. For the last half of the plan, our team operated with a core group of five members who made decisions and assigned tasks to other members as their responsibility; that made all the difference. While all Goal 3 team members contributed to these outcomes I report on today, we found that we were able to be more responsive in exploring new learnings when we had a small team that could engage promptly when necessary.

Our initial work started with the feedback from the 2015 Member Assessment. This was very helpful in understanding the challenges we face in developing leaders at all levels. This led us to focus our efforts in three main areas: clarity about roles and responsibilities; promoting an appointment process based on skills, not just relationship; and a need for accountability and continuity rather than reinventing the wheel every year.

MS. FIKE: To help members understand how to apply for National appointments, we outline the process on the National website. We hope departments will use this and the sample job descriptions we provided to reinvent their own processes.

We shared our learnings at Convention Breakout sessions and provided a training tool on governance and management. You can now take a leadership course in the ALA Academy. And we created a simple graphic to help members understand department roles and accountability.

MS. HAUCK: Now I want to speak to all of the leaders out there. Where are my leaders?

(Cheering.)

MS. HAUCK: Show me your hands. I can't see you, but --

(Cheering.)

MS. HAUCK: -- if your hand is not in the air, raise it now.

(Laughter.)

MS. HAUCK: I don't see the hands raised. Because if you are at the National Convention, you are a leader.

(Applause.)

MS. HAUCK: After three years of reviewing feedback from members, testing theories, and researching other organizations, we began to understand that most ALA members don't think of themselves as leaders unless they have a title. Untrue. Leaders, we encourage you to check out our 7 Simple Truths, a Vision Statement, and other documents in the Centennial Strategic Plan section on the National website.

If you are here or you are watching this at home, we expect great things from you. The American Legion Auxiliary needs trusted leaders like you to step up so we can continue to help our military families overcome their own challenges.

Thank you.

And now, to tell you about Goal 2, Joyce Endres and Tina Washington.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Goal 2 began with a challenge for our team. Why? Members' feedback surprised me, because it included -- included in the Organizational Effectiveness Survey, discussed a negative culture in all levels. It shared that often members and leaders were unkind, know-it-all, and downright obstinate at meetings and events throughout the organization.

So, how do you begin to change a negative culture of service before self -- self before service, and bad behavior? How do you put your arms around goodwill when it's an intangible and difficult goal to measure failure

or measure success? You begin with facing the facts to find new ways to do something about it, and that is what the Goal 2 Team did.

First, we defined "goodwill." Goodwill is a kind, helpful, and positive attitude toward others. A simple, basic beginning.

MS. WASHINGTON: The Strategy A Team created three goodwill cards, which are available on the National website. Goodwill cards were featured in the November 2017 ALA National Magazine and distributed to all attendees at the 2017 ALA National Convention.

This team defined the Goodwill Ambassador Model, which stresses positive attitudes and culture. From this model, the team established the National Goodwill Ambassador Award.

This year, the first Goodwill Ambassador Award will be presented by our National President, Kathy Dungan, after this presentation, and Miss Kathy was also part of the initial team working on this goal.

The Strategy B Team was instrumental in two ways in promoting goodwill. First, during the 2018 Department National Leadership Conference and the 2018 National Convention, attendees heard from Will Bowen, whose movement, A Complaint-Free World, demonstrated how we can promote and be active participants in spreading goodwill.

Second, in partnership with National's Communications Headquarters Division, we developed Goodwill Gail, an advice column that helps members deal with conflict within the Auxiliary. This column is published in each issue of the Auxiliary Magazine and on the National ALA blog and the ALA social media sites.

The Strategy C Team wrote the "Something Different" article, published in the November 2017 Auxiliary Magazine, and also shared goodwill stories across ALA's social media sites.

The Goal 2 Team as a whole collaborated with the ALA Academy Content Team to develop the ALA Academy course, Establishing a Culture of Goodwill, which was launched in the spring of 2018.

MS. ENDRES: We started with ideas to improve goodwill among members and initiatives flourished with discussion, solutions, decision, and implementation to begin to change the ALA culture to a more positive goodwill experience.

This team has evolved and changed over the past five years. Team members worked hard defining goals and we thank them so very much for all their efforts.

And remember, at the end of the day, people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Please welcome the Goal 1 Champion Anita Biggs and Liaison Janet to tell us about Goal 1.

MS. BIGGS: Thank you. Good morning.

(Applause.)

MS. BIGGS: How do you measure success? We have come to the culmination of our 5-year Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 1, Enhance Membership Strength. Many successes have been achieved. We have many

great strategy captains whose teams led the way with innovative ideas and initiatives.

Some of our successful initiatives were, Honor Female Veterans. Starting with the 2014-2015 membership year, female veterans could join the American Legion Auxiliary without paying National dues for the first year. Departments and units were encouraged to forgo their dues for the first year also.

Since 2016, 3,049 new female veterans have joined us.

(Applause.)

MS. BIGGS: We developed an online membership renewal process. Members can now renew their membership online or by phone.

To further good communication, we pushed to compile email addresses for all members. We allowed new members to join online. Over the last three years, 1,294 new members have joined online.

(Applause.)

MS. BIGGS: Online Interest Forms. Non-members looking at the ALA website can fill out these forms online. Completed forms are sent to departments so they can contact these potential members and ask them to join. Nine hundred and fourteen forms have been received so far just in 2019.

(Applause.)

MS. BIGGS: The New Member Flyer. This is a one-page document that units and departments can send to new and potential members to let them know what we do and why it matters.

Spanish membership application. To increase diversity, a new Spanish application is available online.

Diversity blog. Working with the Communications Division of National Headquarters, we helped develop a diversity blog. This blog spotlights members and units that have embraced diversity in the ALA.

Developed ALA Service-Not-Self Volunteer Toolkits. These kits are available for download. Units and departments are encouraged to use these to increase mission outreach.

Develop door hangers for potential American Legion Family recruitment that are available for download from our website.

Our team started in 2014 with a Membership Task Force. This became the foundation for the Goal 1 initiatives. As with all other teams, our team grew and changed as our plans were developed. Thanks to everyone for all your contributions, dedication, and hard work that has resulted in our success.

We wish we could share all the many great initiatives that were introduced and the many successful results, but then we would be here all day and we don't have time for that. Just know that many great ideas came from this phenomenal Goal 1 Team and these highlights have just been some of the successes that have been integrated into the ALA programs and our practices.

Janet?

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: As you have heard, so many people have been part of this Strategic Planning process. Would everyone who worked as a member of a Goal, Strategy, or Initiative, please stand up.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: And stay standing.

Now, would everyone who was a part of Strategic Planning on the department, district, or unit level, please stand up also.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Look at how many of you are here standing and think about all we have accomplished over the last five years.

Let's give them another well-deserved round of applause.

(Applause.)

MS. ABISI: Since its launch in 2017, the courses that comprise the ALA Academy, a comprehensive training resource, has been accessed or taken over 5,000 times, and today we have two very special announcements. For the first time, a course has been developed just for our Junior Members.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. ABISI: It is an updated version of the recently revised Junior Leadership course, providing Juniors with a deeper understanding about why we help those we help, how we accomplish our mission, and how Juniors play a very important role in the success of the ALA.

Our second new course is Fundraising Basics. We know that financial resources are needed to carry out the mission, so this course provides an overview of planning and hosting a fundraiser and the basics of applying for ALA grants.

Both of these courses are available now, today, they're already live. And we have one more course coming this fall, which is Handling Conflict, which will be available in late September. Make sure to share the news in your units and departments.

Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: Successes that you heard about today aside, just the fact that Strategic Planning is now a part of our ALA vocabulary is a tremendous accomplishment of its own.

Now we need to address the elephant in the room. Even though we all worked hard and produced a lot of good work, we need to ask ourselves, did we accomplish our five main goals?

Probably where we have had the best outcome is in Goal 5, Branding. We may be tired of hearing the phrase, "Who we are, what we do, and why it matters," but it is important to always keep that in mind. And you have to admit, all of us are wearing more clothing or identification that shows us as belonging to the American Legion Auxiliary as we work our mission out in the community.

But are our units and departments stronger today than five years ago? Do we have more members willing to take chairmanships and run for office? Are we nicer to each other? And, most importantly, have we stopped the

membership slide? Each of you need to answer those questions and think of what you can do to change the answer.

MS. ABISI: So, as we end this plan and look at our successes, our focus shifts to the new goals and processes that were adopted by the National Executive Committee on Saturday, August 24th. Ultimately, the new plan is more internally focused. While you may not hear about the National Strategic Plan at every turn, you will begin to see the outcomes of the work being done as a result of the NEC adopting the goals.

We hope to focus less on process and more on the outcomes for our members and mission work, with the ultimate goal of a stronger, more mission-focused organization.

So, our newly-adopted goals: Cultivate a Variety of Mission Engagement Opportunities; Enhance Organizational Effectiveness of Departments and Units; Recruit and Retain Members Through Mission Engagement; Ensure Financial Stewardship of Resources to Maximize Mission Delivery; and, Enhance and Foster the Family Relationship with the American Legion.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you again to all that have made a difference by being part of the Centennial Strategic Plan. Even though this plan is done, we need to continue the efforts in our own departments. Make planning for the future a priority; this is so important.

Madam President, this concludes our platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Janet, and thank you, Strategic Teams, for all your efforts and hard work, and thank everyone for working this Strategic Plan.

As a result of this Strategic Plan, it was mentioned that we have a National Goodwill Ambassador Award. Each unit has a special, hard-working, and dedicated Auxiliary Member who goes above and beyond expectations to represent her unit well at all events. She is a true example of goodwill to her peers.

In order to recognize these members, the National Goodwill Ambassador Award was created. We ask our units to show their appreciation by nominating someone who embodies the spirit of this award. Winners were chosen from each division with the judging and selection done by our National Division Vice Presidents.

We are so excited that we have our National Goodwill Ambassadors here today. Please welcome Sherri McGee, Department of Indiana.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Patricia Nelson, Department of Minnesota.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Laura Smith, Department of Delaware.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: And Carol Williams, Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I think this is such an exciting event to showcase our grassroots members working the mission, but doing it in a nice and kind way. These ladies are just awesome and it is an honor to have you here as my special guests of our 99th National Convention. You are an example to all of us. Please accept these awards as a symbol of my gratitude for your work and your amazing attitude. Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Do we have the awards?

(Laughter.)

(Awards Presented.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Aren't these beautiful? Laura Smith, Department of Delaware.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Carol Williams, Department of Florida.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Pat Nelson, Department of Minnesota.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Sherri McGee, Department of Indiana.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: 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 creativity and generosity to engage our Children & Youth is National Committee Chairman Vickie Koutz. Vickie?

(Music)

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: Madam President, the American Legion Auxiliary's Children & Youth Program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families.

Novelist Paulo Coelho once said, "A child can teach an adult three things: to be happy for no reason, to always be busy with something, and to know how to demand with all his might that which he desires."

(Laughter.)

MS. KOUTZ: And members are learning all these things from our youth by working our Children & Youth Program.

Junior Members from Arkansas Unit 27 -- Arkansas Unit 27 --
(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: -- worked with their school district to make thank you cards and coloring pages to give to first responders, and each student who participated received an American Legion lapel pin.

Auxiliary members handed out Halloween safety coloring books, patriotic comic books, American flags, constitutional facts, and other patriotic items. We donated much-needed items to school kids in our communities and provided hundreds of stuffed animals to children undergoing medical treatment.

There were Christmas parties held with Santa for veterans and their families. Supported homeless female veterans by collecting clothing, school supplies, books and toys for their children, and sponsored military kids to attend National Guard Camp.

Three high school girls whose fathers are in the Air Force baked over 200 dozen cookies for the VA hospital in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Unit 92 in the Department of Puerto Rico held a Purple Up for Military Kids event. Legion family members and their children came dressed in purple to support the children of our military. Alfredo Ismail Romarez (phonetic) represented childhood and Junior Member Angelica Barrientos (phonetic) represented youth.

Good Deed Award winner Kaleb Klakulak raised money to purchase a headstone when his best friend KJ died after a long battle with cancer. Kaleb lives in Michigan and decided to help the family when he discovered they couldn't afford a headstone. He earned money by doing odd jobs. Then his mother helped him set up a PayPal account. When this happened, his story went viral. Kaleb was nominated for a Good Deed Award by Unit 4 in Michigan.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Another Good Deed Award winner was Connor Yant. This young SAL member from Nebraska sent care packages to our military overseas for his school community service project. And ALA Junior Member Audrina Rosales won a Good Deed Award for collecting and replacing over 400 American flags, and this young lady from Arizona also properly retires the flags that she collects.

A New Mexico Youth Hero Award winner jumped out of his car at a busy intersection to help a lady who had fallen. Eleventh grader Nathan Nguyen was on his way to work when he saw a blind woman fall in a crosswalk. Nathan said, I just put my car in park, put my hazard lights on, and helped her up. And a big thing I want to tell everyone is just be kind, that's how our society can grow and get better.

There were 200 more kids just like Kaleb and Nathan this past year. There were more than 200 Good Deed and Youth Hero Award winners this past year. Awesome.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: It was reported that 80,000 members volunteered over 200,000 hours and served nearly 250,000 children with \$1.6 million being spent. Can you imagine how much higher these numbers would have been if everyone had reported?

It is amazing that our members continue every year to help our children and youth and their families.

Our members across the Nation have shown their true love of our organization by donating lots and lots of money and volunteering countless hours to ensure the youth of today are safe and sound.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Safety and security don't just happen, they are a result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Vickie. Great report.

Members across the Nation worked hand-in-hand this year to promote the American Legion Auxiliary's promise of Service Not Self. Our grassroots members and National officers worked the Americanism Program to educate and grow our future.

To tell us more, please welcome National Americanism Committee Chairman Beth McGinn.

(Music.)

MS. MCGINN: Thank you. Good morning. Thank you, Madam National President.

Americanism is not only a love of our country, but a way of life, especially for our members of our American Legion Auxiliary.

The Americanism Program provides countless ways to promote patriotism within our communities and in our schools. The year-end department and unit reports exhibited outstanding national pride, providing services to our veterans, our military, and our community in both traditional and unique ways.

The first objective in the Americanism Program's action plan is to be knowledgeable about flag etiquette and proper disposal of used flags. Units shared this information with their local schools by replacing flags and helping their school children and other Legion members in their community.

In the Department of Florida, units helped to replace school flags, provided flag coloring books, and held a coloring contest on Veterans Day. Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: The Pocket Flag Program was widespread throughout the departments as a way to engage their unit junior and senior members.

Unit 524 in Forest City, Pennsylvania -- Pennsylvania --

(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: -- held a Monday night patriotic project where 300 pocket flags were folded by Legion family, local Scouts and veterans for deployed troops.

ALA Badger Girls State in Wisconsin incorporated --
(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: -- the pocket flags into their Veterans Service Project. Units assisted their post homes with flag retirement services by distributing "Let's Be Right About Flag Etiquette" books, small flags, and provided refreshments to those attending.

Having no designated place to retire their used and torn flags, Daniel Bird, Unit 26, Department of Mississippi --
(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: -- solved this problem by building a burn pit on the post grounds. They purchased a metal fire ring with the American flag cut out. When burning, the flag is prominently displayed through the cutout, providing an awesome sight for those who attend the ceremony.

What better way to share the love and pride of our country than volunteering to help our soon-to-be citizens navigate the naturalization/citizenship process. Auxiliary members helped individuals looking to become U.S. citizens by helping them with classes on reading, writing, and filling out applications. They attended naturalization ceremonies and provided refreshments and flags.

Unit 118 in the Department of California --
(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: -- attended a citizenship ceremony where 41 new citizens were sworn in at Manzanar National Historic Site, one of the sites used in 1942 to detain Japanese families.

The second objective, Increase Participation in American Essay Contest. The theme this year, how can we address and prevent veteran homelessness in our communities, focused on helping our veterans. A significant number of schoolchildren and senior members participated and offered solutions to this social issue facing our veterans today.

The fifth-grade students at Millwood Elementary, Sumpter, Department of South Carolina, with the help of Sumpter County Veterans Affairs Officer Valerie Brunson, used the theme as a learning tool. Students not only completed the essays, but also collected 61 blankets to provide comfort to homeless veterans in their area.

The third objective is to promote the programs of The American Legion. Units and departments reported their involvement in Legion baseball, the oratorical contests, and Junior shooting sports.

In the Department of North Dakota, units managed concession stands at ball fields and helped clean up after the games.

(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: They also presented a plaque to the most outstanding Senior player of the year.

The oratorical contest this year saw 53 young people compete for the top prize in Indianapolis this spring. These contestants were all chosen at the

department level where Auxiliary members helped with judging, timekeeping, recruiting the candidates, and refreshments at the contest sites.

Adrian Cronauer, the real "Good Morning, Vietnam" DJ, said "the American flag represents all of us and all of the values that we hold dear."

And what better way to share those values every day at our homes, our businesses, across this great Nation than one simple act: flying the American flag.

Madam National President Kathy, that concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Beth.

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 Pam Ray. Pam?

(Music.)

MS. RAY: Good morning.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MS. RAY: Madam National President Kathy, departments have been busy working the many facets of the National Security Program. One program that was widely supported nationwide was wearing red on Fridays to remember everyone deployed.

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: Department of Connecticut National Security Chairman Debra Knickerbocker made this a main focus for her year. You could see her almost every Friday on Facebook, reminding her ladies to wear red proudly.

A favorite activity for many units continues to be coupon clipping. Several units reported this is an activity done by their home-bound members or those in senior living centers. Keeping in mind, the following numbers are just what was reported to this chairman. Four hundred two volunteers cut coupons that were sent to U.S. military bases here in the United States, Guam, U.S. troops in Japan and (indiscernible), so 48,170 hours later brought a cash value of \$14,797,937.80.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Can you imagine this number if every single unit reported this? It would be so exciting.

Departments reported blood drives, many of them done as an American Legion family. One unit member from South Dakota reported the reason she joined the American Legion Auxiliary was due to their blood drives and her strong belief in that program.

Barrett Davis Watson, Unit 233 in Loganville, Georgia -- hello, Georgia --

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- hey, okay -- held four blood drives this year, collecting 156 units of blood.

Units throughout the country continue to support other initiatives within the National Security Program as well: Hiring Our Heroes, Welcome

Home events, working with the JROTCs in their communities, the Blue Star Banner, CERT Program, and Supporting Our Military Youth, just to name a few.

Sending care packages to our troops was reported by almost every department. The care packages ranged from snacks to cooling rags, to holiday stockings, Christmas trees, and letters from members and students.

It was very rewarding to read the reports from units that made care packages specific to our active female military Guard and Reserve. The ladies were very grateful to receive items such as lotions, feminine hygiene products and shampoo, things we take for granted every day. Thank you notes were received from the recipients.

POW-MIA ceremonies were held throughout the country at many different events. C. Russell Huber Unit No. 57 in Fairbanks, Alaska -- (Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- ensured that a POW-MIA table, complete with an explanation of each item on the table, was displayed at a local shopping mall. Several members attended the POW-MIA ceremony in downtown Fairbanks.

But Unit 57 does so much more. They have created a relationship in the past few years with the 1st Battalion 24th Infantry Regiment. That relationship has grown and branched out to include both the 51 Cavalry and 321 Infantry. There are over 600 troops in each of these three battalions, which is -- and I quote the unit chairman -- "allowing Unit 57 to touch the lives of nearly 1800 troops and their families."

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: On Father's Day at the Post, Unit 57 invited active duty members and their families to attend at no cost to them. During the Christmas holidays, Unit 57 members worked with the 124th Infantry Battalion FRG to provide homemade cookies for the over 300 single soldiers.

The unit doesn't stop there. They donated funds to purchase further cookies, baking supplies, and of course candy canes, it is Christmas. The unit members worked with the FRG to individually wrap the cookies and deliver them to the soldiers. There were so many cookies left, they could also be shared with the married soldiers and their families.

While their presence has given them some new members, they realize that their continued presence on Fort Wainwright assures that these soldiers and their families recognize the American Legion Auxiliary as the go-to organization for their needs.

Congratulations, Unit 57.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Working the National Security Program where there is active military and families on a base is a great way to serve our troops. But what can you do if you live where there is not a military base? Well, you could provide Yellow Ribbon signs with the names of those serving in three communities. You could create holiday cards to send to those local men and women serving. You could recognize graduating seniors entering the military by providing them with red, white, and blue cords to wear at graduation. And

of course you could send care packages to those serving. That's what Liberty Unit 289 in Strasburg, Illinois does.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: This community of 467 citizens has an active and mighty ALA unit that is 115 members strong. Way to go, Strasburg.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: National Security is our program to serve the active military, Guard, and Reserve. It is clear to me while reading all of the wonderful reports that when it comes to National Security, everyone is doing something.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Pam.

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 Committee Chairman Kathy Daudistel.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Good morning.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam National President, our eligibility in the ALA is through our heritage, although what is inspiring is the time-honored tradition of our organization to serve those who have borne the battle. To us, VA&R isn't just a program, it is a way of life. A small thank you for what has been done to protect our freedom.

Members across the Nation showed their thanks every day by volunteering at VA medical centers and outreach clinics, as well as their communities and behind the scenes.

This year, President Kathy asked members to focus on the plight of women veterans, especially the homeless. At VA facilities, ALA members provided funding for women-only wings, and regularly donated their time and resources.

At local stand-downs, members assisted in setting up female-only areas, provided spa-like experiences, as well as female-specific items, and even worked hard to provide female doctors and therapists.

Members also participated in Honor Flights, Quilts of Valor projects, and supported the Veterans Creative Arts Festivals both at the local and national levels.

California Unit 741 Member Carmen Haren (phonetic) saw a homeless veteran in a wheelchair with a little dog while she was waiting at stop light. She wanted to help, but was in a line of cars and could not stop. It bothered her for days and finally she discussed it with her unit members. They came up with the Baggies of Love Project --

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- a quart-size baggie filled with travel-size toiletries and treats, and even dog snacks for the pets. They carry these

baggies around in their cars and, when they see a homeless person, they can gently toss them out. They also included the VA Hotline number in the baggie in case the person was a veteran.

The Department of Arkansas Auxiliary members heard that the VA facilities needed socks. They challenged the Legion members to see who could collect the most socks. The ladies made it fun with a special guest named Sadie May.

(Laughter.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: She was a sock monkey who traveled around to all the meetings and events across the state. All told, 3600 pairs of socks were collected and donated.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Win-win for our veterans.

Mississippi Unit 26 members started a Token of Gratitude Campaign last year and really embraced it this year. They purchased wooden tokens with the American flag and the words "Thank you for your service" on the front, with their unit and location on the back. They used the wooden tokens to let a veteran know someone cares.

Recently, a member was with her husband at a local VA facility. While waiting in the lobby, she witnessed a veteran storming out and saying that he was going to commit suicide. The member reached in her purse and gave the nurse that was going after him one of the tokens and said, "Tell him that someone cares. Every time he looks at it, he will know that someone loves him." The nurse caught the gentleman and gave him the token. He stopped, held the token in his hand for a few minutes and, with tears in his eyes he said, "I want some help."

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: These are just a few of the many inspiring stories reported this year. ALA members across the Nation are making a difference every day one small gesture at a time. There is no doubt that we love our veterans.

As Utah member Cary Fisher states, and I am sure many of us agree, taking care of veterans is my why, this is why I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam President, that concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Kathy.

With so many wonderful, inspirational ideas this year, our Membership Committee went above and beyond to enhance membership strength. To give us more insight into that program, please welcome National Membership Committee Chairman Ann King-Smith.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: Good morning, National President Kathy. I want to begin this morning by personally thanking you, Madam President, for

selecting such an amazing group of ladies for the 2018-2019 National Membership Committee. I can honestly say that I have never had the opportunity to work with a more engaged group that are always working as a dedicated and focus team.

This year, we focused on reaching out in our communities to let everyone know who we are, what we do, and why we matter, and to let potential members know how to join with us. These efforts were very successful as we added 43,718 new members to rosters all across the Nation.

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: Join me while we look back at some very successful recruiting.

Information and instructions were shared to encourage joining new members online and to promote online renewals for current members. As technology grows, so will our membership, thanks to the valuable resources we continue to develop and offer online.

This year alone, we had 383 brand new members join online, 23,359 members renewed online, and 6,994 members renewed by telephone. We now have a total of 1,928 units that use ALAMIS, A-L-A-M-I-S, for accessing membership.

We had 245 members that rejoined or renewed five members and each earned a lovely gift. And we had 31 members that recruited 25 or more members to earn the Silver Brigade Award.

Let's recognize our Silver Brigade Award winners. If you're here today, please stand and continue standing, so that we can recognize you.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: Thank you to all of our Silver Brigade winners.

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: I so enjoyed reading all the department and divisional membership reports this year. It is truly amazing to read all about the recruiting and hard work that is being done nationwide to increase membership in our great organization.

My heart was touched when I read the story of George St. Denis Unit 140 in Pendleton, Oregon, and I read how hard their members fought to save their unit, which was on the brink of closing. The few existing members sent out an SOS to the members they hadn't heard from in a while or had just recently lapsed their membership, and they asked them for help to save their unit. Tessie Williams is their elder and has helped to keep this unit going for many years, but she couldn't do it alone and without any leaders to step forward and to help run it.

Tessie invited Legionnaire David Wolfe to come speak to unit members about different ways to turn things around, and the rest will make you smile. Unit 140 now has officers and new members are joining daily. On one night, five new members submitted applications to join.

Thank you, Unit 140, George St. Denis, for caring enough to make this success story happen.

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: On another note, after many years of attempting to start a new unit in Merritt Island, Florida --

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: -- it finally happened with National President Kathy Dungan signed their charter in November 2018. Unit 344 charter has 20 member names, which includes ten brand new Auxiliary members, two Juniors, one female veteran, and one Gold Star mother. Their membership now has soared to 28 members strong. They declare, "We may be small, but we are mighty."

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: They now have six female veterans in their unit and one is a spunky, 105-year-old World War II veteran.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: And by the way, yes, that's me chatting with her. What a young-hearted member she is. She proudly wears her World War II cap and sports her Honor Flight jacket after being on a recent flight.

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: In December, only one month after their charter was signed, members distributed 150 meals to homeless and low-income veterans. The following month, members volunteered almost 400 hours organizing a local stand-down. They collected and sorted donations for this event, and served as escorts for the veterans.

Additionally, members collected clothing and created a Veterans Closet for the female veterans residing at a local transitional facility.

On Wreaths Across America Day, members made 120 wreaths that were placed on the graves of veterans in local cemeteries to ensure that no veteran is ever forgotten.

Unit 344 members participated in the Missing in America Project, where veterans' remains which had been located at area funeral homes and hospitals, but have never been claimed or properly interred, are laid to rest at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery.

(Applause.)

MS. KING-SMITH: The new unit stepped right into action by assisting and place 660 flags in a field to represent the number of veteran suicides that occur on a monthly basis.

These are only a few of the amazing things this brand new -- and I repeat -- brand new unit has accomplished in less than one year.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: Congratulations, Unit 344, Merritt Island, Florida. I can only imagine what you will achieve in the future.

From the beginning, the Membership Committee --

(Laughter.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: -- better known as "The Team," decided that we would work hard, stay positive, never give up, have fun, and pray for success. The fun part was contagious all over the country.

Okay, sing it girls.

(Applause.)

CHORUS: "You are our members, our wonderful members, you make us happy when you renew; just renew early, to keep you current. Let's work together, recruit, and watch us grow! You are our members, our wonderful members, you may us happy when you renew; just renew early, to keep you current. Let's work together, recruit, and watch us grow!"

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: And by the way, that came from Department of North Carolina.

(Cheering.)

MS. KING-SMITH: Thanks to each of you that have worked together this year to make membership meaningful and for being a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, Ann. Excellent report.

Well, it's that special time again when we get to celebrate our grassroots members for all the hard work they have done delivering our mission in their communities. Remember, there will be a winning unit from every program that reported today.

Would Past National President, and my friend, Mary Davis come to the podium again?

MS. DAVIS: It is my pleasure to introduce today's National President's Award winners.

In the Children and Youth Category, Shenandoah Unit 88, Department of Iowa.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: President Kathy was so impressed with your Birthday Bags and Hero Packs. Excellent Work.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Americanism Category, Dietrich-Luhman, Unit 360, Department of Pennsylvania.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: Your Pledge of Allegiance Program and your Veterans Dinners really make you stand out. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the National Security Category, Dupont-Holmes Unit 82, Department of New Hampshire.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you for your efforts to feed and clothe our veterans, as well as provide Christmas gifts for their families. Fantastic work.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: In the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Category, Harold L. Gregory Memorial Unit 626, Department of Texas.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: President Kathy loved your Vittles for Vets Meals Program and your VA Gift Shop work. Great job.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Finally, in the Membership Category, your winning department is, Department of Florida.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you for creating and hosting your Lunch and Learn for Women Veterans in your community. It was an awesome way to give back while gaining new members. What a wonderful idea. My guess is, those new members helped you achieve 100 percent in membership. That is fantastic. Great job.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: How about one more round of applause for all of today's National President's Award for Excellence winners.

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies, and thank you for your awesome work.

I am pleased to introduce the members of the dedicated Resolutions Committee, Coral May Grout, Chairman; Sandi Dutton was Vice Chairman; and Dr. Carol Hassett, Member.

Coral?

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: Madam National President, Members, and guests, the Pre-Convention Resolutions Committee met on Saturday, August 24th, at the appointed time. Past National President Miriam Junge represented the National organization, and Professional Parliamentarian Chris Dickey was in attendance to offer clarification and professional direction.

Madam President, we have one courtesy resolution.

Whereas, the dedicated delegates, alternates, and guests have gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana for the ALA 99th National Convention, to hear accomplishments of the world's largest patriotic organization, and to show their dedication to serving our heroes in their membership and mission outreach efforts; and whereas the past National Presidents, the National Officers, National Chairmen, and National Committee Members have shown

their commitment to this great organization 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 Indianapolis, and the members of the Department of Indiana have extended a warm hand of hospitality to all of us; and whereas we have been honored by many distinguished guests, including guests from The American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion National; and whereas President Kathy has chaired an inspiring and successful National Convention; therefore, now 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, we express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to these extraordinary women, the American Legion Auxiliary National President Kathy Dungan, by giving her a standing ovation, demonstrating our love, support, and pride in all her accomplishments, along with a unanimous thank you for a job well done.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, thank you so much. I am humbled. Thank you.

With your applause, this courtesy resolution is adopted. Thank you, Coral.

MS. GROUT: Madam National President, this concludes the Resolution report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, ladies.

Now could we please prepare the stage for our special guest?

(Music.)

(Video presentation:)

ANNOUNCER: Never underestimate the healing power of the arts. In VA medical facilities across the country, the creative arts are used as rehabilitative treatment to help our veterans recover from physical and emotional challenges.

VOICE: My involvement in creative arts, it has helped me. It has given me hope, it's given me something to live for.

VOICE: It's just been a terrific experience and it's just so uplifting, you know. So I'm just grateful, you know, I'm just really, really grateful.

VOICE: Well, it gives me a chance to express myself by reading own poems and my novels or short stories.

VOICE: The creative arts helped me come from a very dark place.

ANNOUNCER: And your support, through donations of time and money, is making a difference in the lives of veterans all across the country. The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, co-presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary, recognizes the accomplishments and recovery process of America's veterans through the creative arts therapy of dance, art, music, drama, and creative writing.

In 2019, the festival will be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan and will be hosted by the Battle Creek VA Medical Center.

Over 120 VA medical facilities submit entries into the Annual Creative Arts Competition. Gold Medal winners from the National Competition are invited to attend the National Festival for a week of workshops, rehearsals, fellowship, culminating in an art and writing exhibition, and a live stage show production.

The competition is open to veterans who are enrolled at a VA medical center or outpatient clinic before entering local competitions.

The therapeutic value to participants is striking.

VOICE: I think this is such a great therapy treatment. It has really matched up with my PTSD treatment.

VOICE: My involvement in the creative arts has allowed me to look at some of the past trauma that I've experienced in the military, to get in touch with a less traumatic way of expressing it, and it's allowed me to connect with other veterans that also have similar stories, but yet portray or express it in different ways.

VOICE: When I first got back from overseas, the ghosts and the demons that were brought back with me, they held me captive, but through the Veterans Administration, through their hospital, and through the activities, I've been able to open up more.

VOICE: I'm finally becoming the person that God meant for me to be. (Music.)

ANNOUNCER: Teaming with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary is co-presenter of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, providing both significant financial support and volunteers. That support begins at the local level, providing resources and volunteering at VA centers across the country. It culminates at the National Festival, a moving event that takes place in a new city each year.

Many say American Legion Auxiliary volunteers get nearly as much out of the competition as the veterans, often describing it as a life-changing experience.

VOICE: Want to find out how to make your membership matter? Become involved in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival by working with your local VA to encourage participation, by volunteering either at the local level or at the National Festival, by simply attending the festival and supporting the artists, by donating either as a unit or individual, and by spreading the word about this program. Regardless of how you are involved, you will be enriched beyond your imagination.

ANNOUNCER: The public is invited to the Art and Writing Exhibition and Stage Show Performance on Sunday, November 3rd at Miller Auditorium, on the campus of Western Michigan University. The Art and Writing Exhibition opens at 12 noon and the stage show begins at 2:00 p.m.

For complimentary tickets, call 269-966-5600, extension 33939. For more information about the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival, go to www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.

Learn how you can make your ALA membership matter by contacting American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. Use our main line at 317-569-4500, or on the Web, www.alaforveterans.org.

(Video concluded.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I am so excited to introduce to you Mrs. Karen Pence, the Second Lady of the United States.

Mrs. Pence has an impressive lifetime of accomplishments ranging from educator and advocate, but she is joining us today as a proud military mom and advocate of our veterans. Last September, she launched a campaign designed to honor the service of military spouses, while also raising awareness about some of the unique challenges they face, especially related to employment.

Mrs. Pence's focus on military servicemembers and their families make her the perfect person to receive our Public Spirit Award, an award that honors the efforts of very special people working to enhance the lives of our military and veterans.

Please welcome the Second Lady of the United States, Mrs. Karen Pence.

(Applause.)

(Cheering.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: This is the award we would like to present to you, the Public Spirit Award.

MRS. PENCE: This is beautiful. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: Well, good morning.

(A chorus of good morning.)

MRS. PENCE: Thank you, Kathy, for that very kind introduction.

It is so great -- I just have to put this plug in at the beginning -- it is so great to be back in my home state of Indiana.

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: Go, Hoosiers! But especially because I'm in a room full of people who have a heart for our Armed Services.

You know, I know someone else who has a heart for our military and he just wanted to come say hello today. So please welcome the Vice President Mike Pence.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: Well, thank you all. I just couldn't resist coming by --

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- first and foremost, to say thank you to the American Legion Women's Auxiliary for all you do for America --

(Cheering.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- 99 years and counting.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: This is an extraordinary organization and as I helped welcome Girls Nation into the White House --

(Cheering.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- just a few short weeks ago, I was reminded about the extraordinary, multi-generational impact.

But thank you to the Auxiliary for all that you do. I know you are military families, but thank you for all you do for our military families. And especially today I want to thank you for extending this year's American Legion Women's Auxiliary Spirit Award to the Second Lady of the United States of America, Karen Pence --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- she is so deserving, she is so deserving. And she told me I could pop out here, but she said to me, "Be brief" --

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- because I know she's anxious to speak with you, but let me brag on her for just a moment, a couple of things you may not know. Karen was actually born on an Air Force Base, McConnell Air Force Base --

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT: -- born into a military family. And we are the proud parents of a United States Marine.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT: But what I want to tell you about Karen Pence is that throughout our life together, from when we first met here in Indianapolis so many years ago and I told her I was interested in serving in public office, she was someone that brought a public spirit to everything that she did.

During our time in the Congress of the United States, I watched her as she came alongside the families during difficult times in our district in Eastern Indiana, I saw the way she came alongside the spouses of Members of Congress, she became a mentor to men and women who were serving and supporting those that served, not just in public life, but in uniform then.

She was First Lady of the State of Indiana and I am proud that over those four years she led an effort to support charitable causes for some of our most -- our greatest needs and challenges here in Indiana in all 92 counties.

But as you recognize today in this Public Spirit Award, among her efforts as Second Lady of the United States, Karen Pence has come alongside and supported the spouses of the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: Thank you. And I have to tell you, it's been humbling for me to watch her work, more than 60 meetings around the country, literally from coast to coast. While I'll be speaking to troops, she's

speaking to families, making sure that our families of our servicemen and women know that they serve too, and their President and their Vice President, and their First and Second Family, and the American people know it.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: So I will step away and let you hear from the Spirit Award winner, but --

(Cheering.)

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: -- I just -- I want to thank you, thank you for not just honoring my wonderful wife, our wonderful Second Lady, but thank you, thank you for recognizing today someone who has a heart for military families and lives that out every single day, to strengthen the lives of those families, their opportunities, and thereby strengthen the security of our Nation.

Thank you for honoring our Second Lady, Karen Pence. God bless you all.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: Well, thank you for welcoming Mike out here, I appreciate that.

But I have to tell you, I am so honored to receive the Public Spirit Award. I will take this award back to my office at the White House and display it. But the reason I am so excited about it and so honored is because this is an award that draws attention to military spouses. The fact that we're convening here today and the fact that you honored me gives me an opportunity to elevate military spouses.

You know, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?" That sounds a lot like the ALA motto: Service, not self.

And it is a great privilege for me to serve as the Second Lady of the United States as well and the reason is because I have a platform to elevate military spouses. You know, when you become Second Lady, people take your phone call.

(Laughter.)

MRS. PENCE: It's a new thing for me.

(Laughter.)

MRS. PENCE: And I had an opportunity as Second Lady to choose any cause I wanted and I've got to tell you, as this service organization knows, there are a lot of great causes out there, one of them being our veterans. And I was approached by several veterans organizations and lots of groups wanted me to be their champion, but I really felt like military spouses and military families needed someone to champion their cause.

You know, I'm a proud Blue Star Mom --

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: -- yep, of a Marine. Any Marines out there?

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: Okay. Oorah! But I can tell you as a proud Blue Star Mom, without reservation, that Americans have a special place in their hearts for all of those who chose and choose to answer the call of duty. We understand the respect and care so deserving of our military servicemembers and their families.

So to all of you, thank you for what you are doing for others, thank you for your unwavering love and support for our U.S. military. As the spouses of servicemembers and veterans, know that we care about you and we recognize what you are doing.

You know, I can say without a doubt that the strength of our Nation does not just come from those in the uniform who fight to protect our freedoms, the spouses and the families who serve right alongside them make tremendous sacrifices for the betterment of our country.

As members of the American Legion Auxiliary, I admire your commitment to the cause of freedom. Through your programs, you educate citizens of all ages about the vital role that our servicemembers and their families play in the defense of our Nation.

I know that the American Legion Auxiliary will celebrate 100 years of patriotic service in November.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: Nicely done. Let me offer my congratulations to you.

This organization serves such an important purpose. So, thank you to each and every one of you for everything that you do, and I know you represent so many other members back in your home states.

You know, military families hold a special place in my heart. You know I'm the mom of a Marine and last September I got to witness his wife, Sarah, pin on his Wings of Gold, and today Michael is the captain of a fixed wing aviator.

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: And I'm the daughter of an Air Force Airmen, born on McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas.

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: Wichita, Kansas. And my father-in-law, Ed Pence, also served in the U.S. Army. And soon -- yes, Army, let's hear it for Army --

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: -- and soon we will have another military member in our family, because our daughter Charlotte just got engaged to a Navy pilot.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: So we're pretty well covered at our house. We're working towards Coast Guard and then we'll have everybody covered.

(Laughter.)

MRS. PENCE: So I think you can tell that our family supports the military.

But, you know, when I became Second Lady, I decided to take on this initiative. And so, last fall, I traveled to Fort Carson in Colorado Springs --

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: -- to launch an awareness campaign to elevate and encourage military spouses, and since then I have met with hundreds of military spouses across our country and around the world to say, we see you, we thank you, and we stand with you.

Military spouses do so much for our Nation. They make so many sacrifices without asking for very much in return. They experience frequent moves, job changes, periods of being a single parent while their loved one is deployed, all while exhibiting pride, strength, and determination. Spouses are the backbone of our military families, and they contribute directly to the strength and readiness of our Armed Forces.

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: They are the Home Front heroes, you are the Home Front heroes.

We know that military life is not easy. You know, I'm not a military spouse, so I don't want to pretend that I know everything that you've dealt with, but I do know a little bit about having to move because of your husband's job.

(Laughter.)

MRS. PENCE: But spouses have shared so many stories with me. Some of them have been very exciting stories about how amazing it is to be a military spouse. We had all of the Joint Chiefs' spouses travel with us to Colorado for that announcement and on the way back on the plane, they were all huddled, sharing stories, and I felt like an outsider. I thought, I'm not part of that group. That is a very elite, special group. You military spouses have something that ties you together, but we also know that you've had a lot of difficulties being military spouses.

So when I decided to come alongside military spouses I thought, you know, I don't want to pretend to know how to fix everything for military spouses, that's not my job. So we went around and we had listening sessions all over the country and we asked the spouses to tell us, if there's one thing that I could accomplish for you in these four years, what would it be? And I said, don't tell me everything, because I really want to be able to accomplish something. And what really rose to the surface over and over was the difficulty of being hired and the inconsistent professional licensing requirements that they face because they have to move so many times.

According to the Department of Defense, the military spouse unemployment rate is 24 percent, and that is just not acceptable. Military spouses, as you all know, are well-educated, hard-working, flexible, reliable, flexible, loyal and flexible.

(Laughter.)

MRS. PENCE: I mean, these are the kind of people that we want to hire, these are the kind of employees that people want to have. Employers who hire these spouses benefit from their tremendous talent and their breadth of experience.

Military spouse employment is a very important aspect of a strong and resilient military family. We know that if spouses aren't happy, they're going

to say it's time for you to get out of the service. It's my turn, I want a career too. And we don't want that to happen, number one, because we want to keep our military strong, but, number two, it's the right thing to do for these spouses. We want our spouses to be fulfilled in careers. For the sacrifices that they have made, this is the right thing to do. And so we want to come alongside and do everything we can to enable them to work in their chosen field.

The Trump administration is working hard to create military spouse employment solutions. Last year, the President signed an executive order to enhance opportunities for military spouses who are looking for opportunities for employment in the Federal Government, and now we are working with American businesses and other organizations to find ways to hire and keep military spouses employed when they relocate.

The Department of Defense's Military Spouse Employment Partnership has brought together more than 390 companies and organizations that are committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining military spouses, and so far these partners have hired over 100,000 spouses.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: In May, I hosted a business summit at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building at the White House and we brought together 46 businesses from across the United States to brainstorm ways that they could hire military spouses. I've invited those businesses to return to the White House this fall and I'm looking forward to hearing about all of the innovative ideas that they have come up with.

And, as I travel across the United States to raise awareness about military spouse employment challenges, I am seeing the momentum building to address military spouse unemployment.

Hiring Our Heroes launched a campaign last year called Hiring 100,000 Military Spouses, and this is what we've been needing. We've been needing a national call-to-action campaign for companies and businesses of all sizes across America to make a collective commitment to hire military spouses.

The Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program really is a leader in the military spouse employment space, partnering with public and private sector organizations to develop and communicate best practices, dedicated resources, and research related to military spouse employment.

In San Antonio, Texas, they have created the Nation's -- where's Texas? I see Texas right over here.

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: They have created the Nation's first-ever Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone. I joined Hiring Our Heroes and USAA in Texas just a few months ago to celebrate the first anniversary of the Nation's first-ever Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone. And it was so much fun to go and celebrate their year anniversary, because spouses were able to share with me, in the past year, I've

gotten employment, now I'm working in health care, now I'm working as a teacher, now I'm working in this area.

The goal of the Empowerment Zone, if any other states are interested in getting them started, is to bring together local community leadership with industry leaders to develop workforce solutions for military spouses. But the Empowerment Zones are more than just the jobs, they're also focused on changing the way an organization views military spouses as employees, and that's what's so key here. Today, there are Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zones in other areas of the country as well, places like -- are you ready? Let's hear if your state has it -- Washington?

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: Georgia?

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: North Carolina?

(Cheering.)

MRS. PENCE: And there is room for many, many more Economic Empowerment Zones for military spouse employment.

So, in closing, know that the Trump administration and Mike and Karen Pence value our veterans, we value our active servicemembers, we value their families, we value their children and their spouses. We are so proud of our Armed Forces and we know that the spouses are the backbone of the military families. Yeah.

(Applause.)

MRS. PENCE: And, as I said before and I'm going to say it again, they contribute directly to our Armed Forces; not indirectly, directly. You know, we know that if you send your spouse off motivated, it's okay, we're going to be fine here at home, they're going to be able to focus on their missions, they're going to be able to fight and protect our freedoms, and that's not always easy to do when you're struggling to keep everything going at home. So you directly play a role in our protection.

I also want to thank you just one more time for the Public Spirit Award. It means so much to me and it's just so exciting to have a group of military spouses here, the American Legion Auxiliary, recognize that this is what the Second Lady's Office is focusing on, we are focusing on you. We want to come alongside these military spouses.

So I just want to say one more time, thank you for everything that you do to support our troops, to educate our citizens. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

(Video presentation:)

(Music.)

ANNOUNCER: Montana, truly a beautiful American treasure. Nestled in central Montana is the little town of Judith Gap, filled with good, caring, hard-working people. The town is miles away from a grocery store,

but in this quiet part of the world you won't find a traffic jam, road rage, or indifference. The highways and countryside are void of litter.

Just outside of town, they've harnessed the wind that blows briskly through the mountain valley. Each turbine generates enough electricity to power 350 to 400 homes. Children still attend the local school that's been in use since 1911. And the most noise you'll hear is the distant sound of training weaving through the mountains.

The hard-working people of Judith Gap raise cattle, sheep, buffalo, and the American flag.

Within Judith Gap, you'll find American Legion Auxiliary Unit and Post 70, located in a former bank building. Inside, Auxiliary members started Flags on Main Street, a program designed to paint the town red, white, and blue on patriotic holidays.

VOICE: In 2014, our unit and our post lost members of the World War II generation. Their families donated memorials to us, that was the start of our Flags on Main Street project.

ANNOUNCER: Their goal was to fly a flag on every building, home, and structure on Main Street.

VOICE: We learned our patriotism from our World War II generation and we thought, what better way to honor them than to use their memorial money to purchase flags to put on Main Street. And on patriotic holidays, we show our patriotism by flying our flags.

ANNOUNCER: They involved the entire community.

VOICE: We asked our community members on Main Street if we could put flag holders on their buildings and residence. They were all enthusiastic about the problem.

VOICE: I'm the owner of the Judith Gap Cafe. It makes me feel proud to display the flags on the highway.

VOICE: This truly is an American Legion Family project. The Legionnaires have helped us with putting up the flag holders, the flags, and they've even donated their memorials to us.

VOICE: When the Auxiliary came to us with their project, we were more than honored to help them out, and it really involved our full American Legion Family.

ANNOUNCER: And they get the kids involved too by tying in their Memorial Day flag distribution with their flag education project at the local school. Even from their remote location, the word of this project quickly spread.

VOICE: We've been doing it for a couple of years. This spring, a lady passing through noticed our flags on Main Street, turned around, came back, took some pictures, posted them on "You Know You're in Montana When," and it went viral from there. Students and community members that grew up here posted it on their Facebook and it spread from there.

VOICE: The amazing part of this program has been the enthusiasm that everyone has shown for it: the Legion, the Auxiliary, the townspeople. And when we see those flags, those red-white-and-blue flags waving on our streets, we can't help but feel pride in America.

VOICE: A portion of the funding came from my mom's memorial and, when I see those flags flying, I am just so proud and it makes me feel so wonderful to be a part of Judith Gap.

ANNOUNCER: Unit 70's patriotic display is just one example of the great work smaller American Legion Auxiliary units accomplish every day throughout our country, further showing the reason we are the world's largest women's patriotic service organization.

(Video concluded.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Well, wasn't that fun. And what a nice surprise the Vice President came to grace our stage. That was very generous of his time.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: But what I really want to know is anybody get tackled?

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: William almost did backstage.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. So, some announcements. A ring was turned in, I'll give it to lost-and-found, but it's -- it looks like rubies and diamonds that was found at table 103 last night at the Commander's Banquet. It looks nice, maybe I'll keep it.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: The mail room will be closing at 12:30 and there are some new things in there, so please make sure you have your delegation pages, go pick them up.

Okay. Tomorrow morning is the post-convention NEC meeting and it will be at 8:45 a.m. in Rooms 109 and 110 here at the Convention Center.

And this afternoon, installation, we anticipate it starting at 2:30. And then we have the States Dinner tonight to honor this year and that's at -- 6:00 p.m. is the Head Table Reception, for those that are invited to that, and then it will begin at 7:00 p.m. in Halls J and K.

Now -- and in terms of the installation tomorrow, there will be reserved seating for a variety of people like the Department of Iowa and Kentucky --

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: -- and Central and Southern Division, and past National Presidents and Department Presidents. So, when you come in, just look for somebody in an Iowa shirt to tell you where to go.

(Laughter.)

MS. BOONE: Okay. And the drum roll for money, we are just now \$100 short of reaching \$15,000 for Giving Tuesday.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: So I know you want us to reach \$15,000. So take your five bucks, your ten bucks, your twenty bucks, or your hundred bucks, and get to the table right after we close.

Now, one of the most fun things at any convention I've ever been to is being able to listen to the National President's report.

So, Madam President, I believe it's about time, are you ready to share your fantastic year in your report to us?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you. What an awesome year it has been serving as your National President. It was an honor representing you and our great organization. It has been heartwarming, enlightening, happy, and sometimes sad, but always inspiring as I've witnessed the incredible work of the American Legion Auxiliary serving our heroes.

Please watch the screen.

(Video presentation:)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Friends, it is time for me to say goodbye. It's been a wonderful year, one that I will never forget. I've made so many friendships during my travels. Thank you for following along with me and supporting me on the awesome journey.

Serving our heroes, selflessly helping and honoring our veterans, servicemembers and their families any way we can, that in a nutshell is our mission. It's what the American Legion Auxiliary has been doing for 99 years and what this Auxiliary will be doing in the next century and beyond. I believe our organization's tradition of service, not self, will endure longer than the lifetime of anyone within the sound of my voice.

During my official visits around the country, I had the privilege of seeing some of the awesome mission-based work done by our members, our mission in motion with our hearts in every action. Our members often achieve these things while working alongside The American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion.

The same has been happening at the National leadership level. American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad, Sons of the American Legion National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs, and I have worked together to represent all Legion Family members, and we worked together to honor and advocate for veterans, servicemembers, and military families.

For example, the National Commanders and I paid respects to America's fallen military servicemembers laid to rest in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, commonly called Hawaii's punch bowl. We also paid respects to those killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The three of us appeared together on the American Legion's float in the 2019 Tournament of Roses Parade. We were accompanied on the float by other distinguished individuals, including four Medal of Honor recipients. Participating in this widely-televised parade helped bring attention to our Legion Family.

The National Commanders and I have spoken at Post homes about membership recruitment being done as a Legion Family joint effort. We participated in the Department of Indiana's Operation Race to 100 membership drive, bringing leadership face-to-face with volunteers. It was a four-day trip covering nearly 1,000 miles. What an exciting and memorable time we had.

And together in Europe we paid our respects to our fallen soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice during the historic D-Day landing at Normandy 75 years ago. We also visited the grave site of Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who was a decorated veteran and one of the founding fathers of The American Legion. We honored the surviving D-Day veterans and visited servicemembers stationed in Europe.

I hope our Legion Family teamwork will continue, from the grassroots level to the National leadership level and everywhere in between.

In keeping with this year's special focus on female veterans and their specific issues and challenges, I was able to spend time with many of them during my official visits.

When I was in Arizona, Auxiliary Units 41 and 65 hosted a reception for female veterans. Auxiliary members also hosted a barbecue dinner for some local women veterans at the VA nursing home where we presented them with crocheted lap robes and shawls. We spent time with them, we listened to their stories. It was just amazing. We saw Heal Her Art, an exhibit of female veterans' paintings. The project, funded partially by an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation grant, is a huge success.

One special memory from my official visits is meeting one of the real Rosie the Riveters. Her name is Virginia Ball and she is 94 years young. Her name fits her, because she is a fireball. Virginia is an Auxiliary member from the Department of Kansas. She is the epitome of service, not self.

Virginia and the other Rosie the Riveters were not veterans, but they are heroes. They jumped into America's workforce during World War II to fill the gaps created by the men enlisted to fight. Our Rosies had a major role in the war effort.

Auxiliary members dedicate their time and talents every day to serving our heroes. They volunteer at veterans homes, they collect personal care items for projects like Purses with a Purpose, which benefit the homeless. And they provide food, clothing, and supplies at veterans transitional housing sites, like The Home of the Brave and the Guardian House of Saratoga that's specifically for female veterans. I was privileged to visit these homes.

The list of mission outreach continues from there. This year, the Auxiliary has collaborated with the non-profit organization U.S.VETS for the Women Vets on Point Project. This project bridges the gap between women veterans and access to the care and support they need.

I visited some U.S.VETS facilities and was impressed by what I saw and heard. One thing a veteran told me, she would not be alive today had it not been for the caring employees of U.S.VETS. That's the type of impact the American Legion Auxiliary can make, especially when we collaborate with organizations which, like U.S.VETS, care about veterans as much as we do.

It has been a privilege to serve as the American Legion Auxiliary's 99th National President. I owe a debt of gratitude to many people. My husband, William, and my son and his family for their love and support. Team Mississippi for their dedication and hard work. National Commander Brett Reistad and Sons of the American Legion Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs. I could not have asked for two finer gentlemen to serve with this year.

Tamara Shumate, Executive Support Director and my assistant, who made sure I was where I needed to be and made my year awesome. And our wonderful staff at the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. Thank you all for making my journey one that I will never forget.

As we approach our 100th anniversary, think of how many people our organization has helped and honored through the decades. Let's continue to stand firm in our commitment to veterans, military and their families.

Thank you for a wonderful year and God bless you all.

(Video concluded.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you, everyone. I love you all. We are adjourned.

VOICE: We love you, Kathy.

VOICE: Awesome job.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

(Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the above entitled session was adjourned.)

**INSTALLATION OF 2019-2020 NATIONAL OFFICERS
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2019**

(Music.)

ANNOUNCER: Good afternoon and welcome to the Installation Ceremony for National Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary. Please welcome your National President, Kathy Dungan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: What a special day it is for the American Legion Auxiliary. It is my honor to introduce the Installing Officer for the ceremony, Past National President Mary Davis from the Department of Washington. Mary?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you. Just a quick note for those of you that are in the back that might want a closer view, there are some chairs down front here. So feel free to move down.

What a very special day it is for the American Legion Auxiliary. It my honor to introduce -- thank you, Madam President --

(Laughter.)

MS. DAVIS: -- she's done such a good job all year.

Thank you and good afternoon to all of you. It is with a great deal of pride that I welcome everyone to installation of Nicole Clapp to the highest office in the American Legion Auxiliary, National President. It is a very special day for the Department of Iowa.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: We also recognize the Department of Kentucky as we install Kathy Daudistel as our National Vice President.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: Along with the other National Officers and Department Presidents who will serve with Nicole and Kathy during this Centennial year. Participants in this afternoon's installation are the following: Sergeants at Arms are Nicole's two cousins, SAL Members J.T. and Drew Wiemers from Kansas.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: Department of Iowa Color Bearers are Mary Sebbon and Michelle Long.

(Cheering.)

MS. DAVIS: The Gladbrook Iowa Ehrig-McTurk Unit 127 Color Bearers are Jolene Denbrow and Terry Luehring (phonetic).

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Members of the audience, please remain seated as the Sergeants at Arms bring the incoming National President, Kathy Daudistel, from the Department of Kentucky, who is escorted by Kentucky's Vice President and Kathy's stronger support, her sister Karen Toll, to the platform.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Music.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Please stand as the Gladbrook Ehrig-McTurk Unit 127 and the Department of Iowa colors are presented.

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: Please be seated. It is with great delight that I ask you to welcome the incoming National President for the year 2019-2020, Nicole Clapp, escorted by her cousin Rear Admiral Paul Wiemers, United States Coast Guard Assistant Commandant for Reserve from Virginia.

(Music.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Please stand for the opening reading, our Nation's Prayer, given by Past National President Rita Navarrete.

MS. CONATSER: Thank you, thank you. Thank you so much.

Please welcome the Installing Officer for the 2017 Installation, Past National President Rita Navarrete.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. NAVARRETE: Oh God, upon our knees we fall, our arms outstretched to thee, that you may bear our impassioned cry, our earnest, heart-felt plea, we pray that you will shelter us from evil's wrathful hand, and hold us in your loving arms and sooth our restless land. Please cause our hearts to be as yours, softened, true, and still, and grant us wisdom when we plea that we may know your will.

We ask for you for humility to learn that man alone cannot upon this earth prevail without you on your throne. Please lift us up to take our stand, emboldened by your love, assured that you will walk with us and lead us from above.

We thank you for your holy word, our precious gift from you. We know, through our obedience, your blessings will come true. We pray that you will bless our land and guide us, Lord, each day to follow you with prayerful hearts across the U.S.A.

(Pause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Rita.

The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by Nicole's cousins, Lila and Rhiana Braun, Junior Auxiliary Members from Colorado.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Lila and Rhiana, please be seated.

Nicole, it is a personal privilege to share this day with you. Your growth in the organization, and your finesse and passion with which you have worked and conveyed messages to our members, has shown all of us the quality of leadership we look forward to. I'm excited to get this show on the

road and install you as a Centennial American Legion Auxiliary National President.

Newly-elected officers, please rise to take your oath of office.

The members of the American Legion Auxiliary 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 offices. Always remember that the welfare and success of this organization depends upon you.

Every American Legion Auxiliary member assumes the obligation of preserving the integrity of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, contributing to the aims and purposes of our organizations.

Please raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your name, where I give mine. I, Mary Davis --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- promise to perform faithfully --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- all the duties of the office --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- I am about to assume.

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: And I further pledge --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- that I am not a member of --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- and do not subscribe to the principles of any group --

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- opposed to our form of government.

(Officers respond.)

MS. DAVIS: You may lower your hand and be seated.

Newly elected Department Presidents, please rise.

President Nicole, please come forward and give the oath of office to these Department Presidents who will serve with you this year.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Raise your right hands and repeat after me. I, Nicole Clapp, promise to perform faithfully --

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- all the duties of the office I am about to assume.

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I further pledge --

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- that I am not a member of --

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- and do not subscribe to --

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- the principles of any group --

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- opposed to our form of government.

(Department Presidents respond.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You may lower your hands.

Congratulations, ladies, I am honored to be serving with you.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: You, the Members of the American Legion Auxiliary, have chosen outstanding officers to lead us this year. I have charged them with a serious responsibility, and I likewise charge you. All the Members of the American Legion Auxiliary, please stand and raise your right hand, and repeat after me.

I solemnly promise --

(Members respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- to renew my pledge of service --

(Members respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- to the American Legion Auxiliary --

(Members respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- and to give wholehearted support --

(Members respond.)

MS. DAVIS: -- to these newly elected officers.

(Members respond.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you. Please remain standing as I ask the rest of the audience to rise for a prayer by our installing Chaplain, Gladbrook Unit Member Reverend Barbara Moon.

CHAPLAIN MOON: Let us pray. Creator God, as we pause during our time together to give you thanks, let us remember why we have gathered and the tasks that you have before us. We give you thanks for all of those who have made the commitment to this organization, past, present, and future. And we reflect and see where you have led us throughout 100 years, and that is something to celebrate.

During times of war you have been there with each man, woman, and child who has felt the pain of war, and who have come to know the comfort of peace with a cost.

We especially remember the women who served not in locational war, but those whose service on and in the home line made the differences. The women who found ways to serve and act while holding the home lines intact, through hours of dedication and creativity, to support our country and the military.

Gracious God, in time when it seemed that patriotism is fainting, we pray that you give us courage to stand tall while proclaiming that serving our country is serving our sisters and brothers on the line of defense. Help each of us to grow in service to you and to our veterans who have risked it all. Freedom comes with a cost.

Let us never forget the words as we encourage one another and find ways to offer hope, as you offer hope to us. Let us offer encouragement, as you offer encouragement, and may we offer love, as you offer love to us. Open our eyes, our minds, and our hearts to you and to one another in the years to come.

Like individual poppies in a field that when looked upon together create a beauty of remembrance, let each of us be a bloom in the lives of those who serve, to make a difference during and beyond their time of service, and let our service and our lives create a living field of hope and encouragement to those who have served on our behalf.

We come looking for ways to strengthen our patriotism among ourselves, so that we can go forward teaching and learning of how you plan to use us to make a difference in our country and in the ALA organization.

How is it that we serve both you and our country? We pray for guidance and we pray for our leadership as they guide and lead us into new, uncharted territory for the next 100 years, with visions of creative support, energy for hours of service, and hearts for each other in our common goal to make a difference in the lives of others.

And so it is, Gracious God, for your blessings and strength we pray, as we ask you to continue to bless the ALA and all of its work. We continue to ask you to bless America and all that she stands for on this day and beyond.

Amen.

MS. DAVIS: Past President Kathy, assisted by Past National President Peggy Thomas and Carleen Ashworth, will present the outgoing Officers with their pins and ribbons.

We will begin the National -- yes, you may be seated --
(Laughter.)

MS. DAVIS: We will begin with National Chaplain Mary Anne Casadei of New York.

(Music.)

CHAPLAIN BRANCH: I present our National Chaplain, Mary Anne Casadei of New York.

CHAPLAIN CASADEI: Thank you to my Department of New York, and I look forward to serving our organization to the best of ability.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. DAVIS: National Historian.

MS. COLLINS: May I present your National Historian, Peggy Monroe.

MS. MONROE: Thank you to the department, to my Department of Tennessee. I look forward to serving our organization to the best of my ability.

(Applause.)

MS. RIEGEL: I present our National Western Division Vice President, Cheryl Park of Oregon.

(Cheering.)

MS. PARK: Thank you to my Department of Oregon and the Western Division. I look forward to serving our organization to the best of my ability.

(Applause.)

MS. FOCHTMANN-HAYGOOD: I present Noemi Burgos De -- is it Pantero --

MS. BURGOS DE PANETO: Paneto.

MS. FOCHTMANN-HAYGOOD: -- Paneto of Puerto Rico.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BURGOS DE PANETO: Thank you to my Department of Puerto Rico and the Southern Division. I look forward to serving our organization with the best of my ability.

(Applause.)

MS. VETTER: It is my privilege to present to you Rhonda Larkowski from the Department of Colorado, Northwestern Division Vice President 2019-2020.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. LARKOWSKI: Thank you to my Department of Colorado and the Northwest Division. I look forward to serving my organization to the best of my ability.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BARYLSKI: I present our National Eastern Division Vice President Carolyn Baranowski of Massachusetts.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. BARANOWSKI: Thank you to my Department of Massachusetts and the Eastern Division. I look forward to serving our organization to the best of my ability.

(Applause.)

MS. ISENSEE: I present to you Central Division National Vice President Ruth Gott from the Department of Michigan.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. GOTT: Thank you to my department and the Central Division, and I look forward to serving our organization to the very best of my ability. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: On stage we have two Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary who will be appointed to continue their service at the National Executive Committee meeting tomorrow. The interim National Secretary, Past National President Linda Boone, and National Treasurer Sara Riegel, please stand to be recognized.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Congratulations to all of you and our very best wishes for an incredible year of service during this special 100th anniversary.

National Vice President Kathy, please come forward along with President Nicole, so she can present you with your pin and ribbon.

(Music.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve as your National Vice President. I am truly humbled and honored to have this opportunity, and I will do my very best to serve this organization.

I want to thank my family, especially my sister Karen; my mom, Nancy; my daughters Stephanie and Beth. If you guys will stand up, please?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: As well as their families. My extreme gratitude to all of my Latonia 203 family. Will you please stand up?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: And also to the entire Department of Kentucky, please stand.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Without your love, support, mentorship, and kindnesses you have shown me, I would not have had the opportunity to be here today. So, thank you.

Thank you as well to the entire Southern Division. Will you please stand?

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Thank you very much.

National President Nic, wherever she went --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Right here.

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- thank you --

(Laughter.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- over the past few years I have witnessed your drive and dedication to this organization, and have had the chance to get to know you better. I now think of you as a great friend, as well as a mentor. I am so happy to have the opportunity to serve with you and I look forward to celebrating a century of service under your leadership.

I know that we are all going to have an amazing year. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Kathy.

President Nicole and Past President Kathy, please come to the podium so that Kathy can present you, Nicole, with your pin and ribbon.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you for entrusting me to serve as your National President. I am honored and humbled as I wholeheartedly embrace this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to give back to the organization in which I was raised. I am excited to be serving alongside National Vice President Kathy and all the National Officers, Department Chairmen, committee members, and our National staff.

To be successful, you need a team of supporters. The Iowa Standing Tall with Nicole Committee dedicated their time and talents for us to be

enjoying this moment. The committee included members The American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and the Riders.

Thank you, past National Commander Dave Rehbein and past Department President Ann Rehbein for jointly leading the Standing Tall with Nicole Iowa Team.

Department of Iowa Legion Family, thank you for your ongoing love and support. Please stand, Iowa.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Iowa, remain standing. Central Division, please join Iowa, so I can show my appreciation for your support.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Massachusetts is the home of my first National Commander when I was his Honorary National Junior President, just 32 years ago. Jake Comer, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We know past National President Pearl Behrend would have been so proud and honored to be here today.

I have had the opportunity to serve with many of our past National Presidents in a variety of roles. Most notably, having the pleasure of sitting across the table during finance meetings with 16 of you at one time or another. I greatly appreciate the friendship, guidance, and ongoing support. Please stand, so we can show our appreciation for your years of service.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I quickly learned growing up in the American Legion Family the meaning behind the different colored Legion caps. In attendance, there are several individuals who once wore the infamous red or gold cap. Past National Commanders of the Legion and SAL, please stand to be recognized.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: There are 24 family and close friends from across the United States, spanning from Arizona to Virginia, and many spots in between sharing this special week with me. Please stand, my mom and dad, Jeannie and Darrell Paustian; my two aunts and my uncle; all of my cousins and my four younger second cousins. Without saying -- without having siblings, my cousins are truly like my brothers and sisters, in addition to our close friends from Wisconsin and back home in Iowa. Thank you all. It means the world to me to have you here.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I asked individuals who have played key roles in my journey to become National President to take part in this ceremony.

Thank you, Past National President Rita Navarette, who appointed me to the Finance Committee. Past National President Linda Newsome took me under her wing since my very first finance meeting and has been leading me along the way ever since.

Then National Secretary Miriam Junge let me twirl around in the National President's chair at Headquarters when I was the Honorary National Junior President. Thank you, Miriam.

Past National President Sharon, our friendship has grown so much through our years, and I truly enjoy having a copilot to drive to Indianapolis. Thank you.

Past Department President Ann Rehbein, formerly the Mistress of Ceremonies, to me she is my chairman of everything.

And, lastly, Past National President Mary Davis, my Installing Officer, thank you for recognizing our organization was ready for what some considered a monumental change in our leadership profile by appointing a nontraditional member to assume the highest office in the American Legion Auxiliary. Thank you.

I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to say I truly wish past National Presidents Kris Nelson and Sherry McLaughlin were with us. Kris gave me my first chairmanship, Finance, and Sherry, a fellow Iowan, who encouraged me to volunteer at the National level.

Wendy, I know your mom is smiling down on us today. Thank you for conducting my nomination in her memory.

Preparing to assume the role of National President, I felt I needed to take a firsthand appreciation for the 99 years of history that came before me. So I have been reading the ALA histories from the very beginning this summer. So, Past National Presidents Mary, Miriam, and Linda will set the stage for us as we begin to celebrate the 100th Anniversary by sharing some unique anecdotes from the Silver, Gold, and Diamond Anniversary celebrations.

Mary?

MS. DAVIS: The date was November 18th, 1945, the Silver Anniversary Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary. Until that August, our Nation was at war. Auxiliary unit members were fully engaged in voluntary service to support the war effort and at least 2,348 Auxiliary members chose to serve their country in the Armed Forces.

The Silver Anniversary was a special convention. After many years of war, the members could finally come together with a renewed purpose and unlimited possibilities. Previous war year conventions had not been held in port cities as a safety precaution and originally the Silver Anniversary Convention was scheduled to be bare-bones delegations, one member from every department in Indianapolis. But with the end to the war and lifting of travel restrictions, a last-minute change of venue to Chicago was made, as were preparations for a full-blown, complete convention.

Attendance at the convention was the largest ever with 975 delegates representing over 600,000 members. Those unable to attend listened to the convention, which was broadcast over the radio. Television was still a few years away.

Membership had reached an all-time high, having increased over 50 percent in 10 years. In May, the Auxiliary News reported that all but eight

departments had reached 100 percent or more membership. And of those eight, only two were below 90 percent.

National President Helen Gilbert's project was threefold. Purchase of training cars at military amputation centers to retrain those who had lost limbs, support prosthetic research, and the establishment of Battle Fatigue Stations.

For this endeavor, the goal was a lofty \$500,000, but at the completion of President Gilbert's term more than \$98,000 had been raised.

Dignitaries addressing the convention boldly spoke on the need for an adequate national defense and the important work to combat leprosy.

One of the most compelling speakers was Madam Helma Sanua-Seymour of the Paris unit. She relayed the experiences of Auxiliary members in Paris during the war and the current work to support widows and children of American veterans, nearly 10,000 French war brides. Can you imagine the level of excitement of the members at this convention?

Our first National President, Mrs. Lowell Hobart, was a special guest at the luncheon where members who had helped from the principals of our organization and continued to serve for 25 continuous years were honored. Each was presented a silver 25-year pin.

Fourteen hundred members and guests attended the States Dinners. Special guests included Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, General Omar N. Bradley, and Ernie Pyle and Mary Bales.

As the new President was elected, a renewed sense of purpose and optimism for the future of the ALA was born.

(Applause.)

MS. JUNGE: What a special day this is for the American Legion Auxiliary family. Now won't you join me as we turn back the clock and highlight some other memorable events in this amazing history of our great organization.

The year 1969 was a huge milestone for The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, our 50th Anniversary. While in Washington, DC for our spring meetings, the National Commander held his traditional banquet, which included the members of the United States Congress and their spouses.

While the dinner was taking place, some of us were on buses headed to Arlington National Cemetery. What made this unique is we had never been there after dark. It was a cold night and the only sounds were the planes overhead arriving and departing from Washington National Airport, and the click-click of the heels of the Guards who were protecting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

When William Doyle, the National Commander from New Jersey, received word at the dinner that the rest of us had arrived at Arlington, he presented on behalf of both organizations our 50th Anniversary gift to President Richard Nixon, who accepted our gift on behalf of the Nation.

Our gift was a permanent lighting system for the National Shrine, along with the perpetual maintenance of that system. Since that March day 50 years ago, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and those guarding the tomb have never been in the dark again.

As our National organization was celebrating its Golden Anniversary, all of the department presidents were fondly known far and wide as Marcella Golden Girls, a title we still carry today. To our knowledge, there were only two Golden Girls still living, my dear friend, Past National President Betty Calder from the Department of Utah, and me, Miriam Junge, from the Department of Ohio. But when we arrived in --

(Applause.)

MS. JUNGE: -- when we arrived in Indianapolis this past Thursday, we received word that our dear friend Betty had passed away earlier in the day. And so our thoughts and prayers go with Betty's wonderful family.

The Presidents and Secretaries Conference was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota rather than Indianapolis in 1969. One of the memorable highlights during the conference was the privilege to attend a special ceremony outside of the old Lyceum Theater, the site where the American Legion Auxiliary was born 50 years before, and what an amazing experience that was.

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established in 1969 by the National Executive and National President Marcella Davidson selected the AEF as her special project. It was funded initially by a bequest from Helen Colby Small of Wisconsin in the amount of \$80,000.

At the 1970 Legion spring meetings held in St. Louis, the Department of Missouri dedicated a monument honoring the anniversary and encased within that monument was a time capsule that included historic pictures and letters from the National President and the National Secretary to be opened by the Centennial National President 50 years later.

During the 1970 National Convention, Bertha Parker of Oklahoma became the first member to hold the newly-created office of National Vice President.

Well, I hope you've enjoyed these few historical highlights as much as I have enjoyed reliving them. But, as the saying goes, the best is yet to come.

Madam President, this year we are beginning a new century for the organization and I am truly impressed by the tremendous leaders who have been selected to head the various committees in your administration. I am excited by the enthusiasm I have felt since arriving here at the convention and I wish you a most successful year.

I also want you to know what an honor it has been for me to participate in your milestone installation. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWSOME: Celebrate! Celebrate! Yes, there was a huge celebration for the 75th Auxiliary year. And, looking back, we did well and boy did we have fun.

Diamonds were presented to everyone who personally met and shook hands with the National President, me.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: Of course, they weren't real, but real diamonds were given as membership awards and the sparkle seemed to pay off, because membership at the end of the celebration brought our ALA to the largest number of members since the end of Korean War, the second-highest ever.

The celebration was embraced by the leadership of The American Legion, when the past National Commanders and other leaders at the Awareness Assembly, now the Washington Conference, dressed as members of the ALA and depicted our early days of working with veterans and the community. I have to admit, there were many laughs at watching them try to walk around in high heels and long dresses.

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: To conclude the evening, a huge 75th Anniversary cake was enjoyed by all.

This year also was the presentation from Samsung Corporation to National Commander Detweiler a check for \$5 million for scholarships for the Boys State and Girls State programs.

Our motto of service, not self, promoted our financial participation with the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, WIMSA, which is located at Arlington National Cemetery. This special tribute to our nurses and other women who served our country in the military is a beautiful thank you to each of them.

The ALA is part of the cemetery's history by sponsoring one of the 14 alcoves which is part of the educational center of the Women's Memorial.

While we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the ALA and then the 75th, wedged in between was our country's bicentennial celebration. Girls Nation and Boys Nation met together for three weeks. Not only were they involved in their own political processes, but they also had the real world stick its head in because the group was scheduled for a trip to Philadelphia. But Legionnaires disease showed up at the Pennsylvania Legion convention, so obviously the trip to Philly for the kids didn't happen.

So, while in my biased opinion, the 75th Anniversary was the best year ever in the ALA. As National 100th Annivers -- blah, blah --

(Laughter.)

MS. NEWSOME: -- Anniversary Chairman -- I get excited about it still -- my pledge to our new National President is to outdo even the 75th year. The full 100th committee and your department leadership all agree and we will make the beginning of our next century of service, not self, the very best ever.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, ladies, for showcasing those special memories.

I am a person who loves history and is very sentimental. When I was four years old, I asked my mom, Jeannie, if I could hand out the pretty little red flower, not knowing what the poppy was. It was determined at that point my grandfather, Roger Schroeder, United States Navy Seaman during World War II, would be the veteran whose service to our country I would honor by becoming a Junior Member of the American Legion Auxiliary. My love of the pretty little red flower started this lifelong journey.

I watched intently as my great uncle Duff created thousands of the beautiful crepe paper remembrances while he and my great aunt Hilda lived at

the Iowa Veterans Home. So I knew the poppy would be the focal point of the Centennial theme.

Please enjoy this moving video rendition of In Flanders Fields.

(Video presentation:)

VOICE: In Flanders Fields the poppies blow. Between the crosses row on row, that mark our place; and in the sky. The larks, still bravely singing, fly Scarce heard amid the guns below. We are the dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie In Flanders Fields. Take up the quarrel with our foe: To you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us you die We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders Fields.

(Video concluded.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I think that's a familiar voice to all of us.

United States Army General John J. Pershing said, "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

Celebrating a century of service, the Poppy Fields of World War I are the reason we exist to be celebrating our service a century later. Please envision this pin as a poppy field at night giving way to a sky of fireworks.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Like the song says, you've just got to ignite the light and let it shine. You're a firework, show them what you're worth. It's always been inside you and now it's time to let it through, by continuing to remind what the American Legion Auxiliary can do.

I have always been mesmerized by fireworks. To light a fire on the ground and to turn it into something so beautiful way up in the sky for all to enjoy.

I think every one of us would have to admit to saying "ooh" and "ah" once or twice in our lives. I can't agree more with Billie's thoughts when it comes to fireworks. I wish we were watching it on TV.

So as we realize fireworks, fireworks are for special occasions. Our 100th Anniversary is one such occasion to celebrate. Let's embrace an upbeat atmosphere of celebration the entire year through. I believe celebrating a century of service blends the past and the future in such a fashion that people will want to gravitate towards our mission.

Special thank you to Jim Valentine of Iowa for building these wooden poppy boxes, and to Jody Betts, a good friend, to creating our beautiful poppy field and the corsages today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Please note the corsage that I am wearing has a unique broach incorporated into it, which was worn by Iowa's second National President Bess Lainson in 1954.

My special project will focus on the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families.

Throughout my health care career and especially during my years as a burn care nurse, I witnessed firsthand the internal and external wounds, and

how life takes a toll not only on the patient, but also on the family members as their world is turned upside down. It is no different for a veteran. Edith knew it from the very start.

(Video presentation:)

ANNOUNCER: Delegates elected Edith Hobart as the Auxiliary's first National President. She wasted no time setting the groundwork for a national hospital system for veterans.

(Video concluded.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: One hundred years ago, we entrusted our lives into their hands. At that time, National President Hobart helped lay the groundwork to establish the health care system for veterans. Today, it is still our responsibility, because what is more important than entrusting their health and well-being in our hands.

Bone and muscle injuries make up half of all combat wounds sustained by Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, according to the National Institute of Health. During the past two decades, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs reports that the number of veterans using prosthetics, sensory aids, and other equipment has increased more than 70 percent. The ALA Foundation can help veterans in your departments transition back into civilian life through grants from the Veteran Projects Fund. Imagine how we could impact their health and well-being while enjoying the vocal talents of Past National SAL Commander Michael Deacon as he sings "My Wish" by Rascal Flats.

(Video presentation.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: During National Commander Denise Rohan's 2018 congressional testimony, Montana Senator John Tester stated, "Serving our veterans is one of the costs of war."

I look forward to accompanying The American Legion on System Worth Saving visits around the country.

The ALA has been a key partner in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for 20 years. However, we have not addressed the physical aspects of well-being outside the traditional walls of the VA medical centers or veterans homes. Well-being encompasses all aspects of someone's world, from the transition back into civilian life to years later when other challenges may arise.

Nationally, we are working with two organizations to respond to the adaptive lifestyle needs of veterans, military, and their family members.

The first organization is All-In Sports Consulting, which is tasked to create an extensive active-living engagement plan for the ALA. The plan will outline opportunities for members to volunteer with ongoing sports and physical activity programs.

The second organization is the Independence Fund, founded by Sarah Verardo, a devoted military wife and caregiver to her husband, Mike, a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army who has undergone 119 surgeries after being wounded in combat.

A dedicated mother of three, Sarah, who wrote the children's book "Hero at Home" as a result of their oldest daughter being made fun of in preschool class because of how her daddy looked. We will utilize this book to understand what the sense of well-being is needed in their everyday lives.

The leadership team, in partnership with the National staff, has created unique initiatives that we feel to guide our mission delivery. First, mission trainings will grow from six to eight, with two separate yet related educational tracks, at some new locations around the country, including Orlando, Nashville --

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: -- Kalamazoo, and Albuquerque.

In 1948, National President Laura Goode of Oregon stated, "Today they are Juniors, just little girls doing little things as a part of our American Legion Auxiliary program, yet soon those little girls will be the mainstays in the vast organization of nationwide influence."

Had I not been a Junior Auxiliary member, who knows if I would be a senior member today, let alone the first ever Honorary National Junior President to become National President.

We have established -- well, thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I look the same, don't you think?

We have established two American Legion Auxiliary Junior Member Loyalty Scholarships for Higher Learning, which includes accredited trade schools, in each division, so that our Junior members may one day be prepared to lead this organization again.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you. And, lastly, we need to stop the membership slide. It is everyone's responsibility to recruit and retain members. With the passage of a Legion Act, our membership floodgate should be opening wide.

Our National birthday wish is to increase membership in each department by one new member per the number of units there are in that department.

In the spring, we will host one week of caring and sharing for our members to personally reach out to one another to show we value their membership. We are modeling our campaign after The American Legion Buddy Week Program.

In 1965, Past National President Opal Glynn from Iowa focused that the time is now to update our activities, to move ahead vigorously, to strengthen our organization. I personally knew Opal and she had the foresight. And I firmly believe the time is now for an exciting new aspect of membership recruitment, beginning with the 100th year of our organization, with the inclusion of spouses into our eligibility.

Think about the American Legion membership. Currently, 1.9 million women veterans are living in the United States and 9 percent of the military is female. By 2045, it is estimated that 18 percent of the United States military will be comprised of women. We have even the first female National

Commander. We need to look at how we can serve future veterans and their families by embracing people and by opening our membership. There is so much promise for growth and additional diverse talent into our members.

Past National Commander Denise Rohan is here today and we, as we issue the first male spouse membership to her husband, Mike Rohan, of course contingent upon the American Legion resolution approved tomorrow, Mike and Denise, please come forward.

(Applause.)

MR. ROHAN: Hi.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Hi. How are you?

MR. ROHAN: I'm wonderful. How are you?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: I am pleased to present you, Mike, with your 2020 membership card as the first male spouse to join the ranks of the American Legion Auxiliary.

MR. ROHAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Congratulations.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MR. ROHAN: Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We have just witnessed history. Mike is a triple member and Denise is a dual member.

Thank you, Rohans. We appreciate it very much.

When asked if Mike would like to join the Auxiliary, he said he was excited. He was coming back to the Auxiliary, since he served as an ALA Vista AmeriCorps volunteer back in 2009.

Thank you again, Mike and Denise, for your dedication to the American Legion Family.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Well, speaking of family, if you are an only child, you and your parents are usually very close. It is now my privilege to share the podium with my two best friends, who I love with all my heart, my mom and dad, Jeannie and Darrell Paustian.

(Music.)

MR. PAUSTIAN: Nicole, before you were born, your mother dreamed of having a brown-hair, brown-eyes little girl. Well, she got her wish. But never in our dreams did we expect our bundle of joy to become such an admirable young woman, a daughter that has given us so much of her time and talents to help others in need.

Nic, as you have made your lives very special, and we are very happy and excited to share the next chapter in your life, leading the American Legion Auxiliary in their Centennial Year. Congratulations on your new office and we love you with all our hearts. Enjoy the red roses and, as you and your mom always say, "Go Hawks!"

(Laughter.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Mom and Dad.

And, yes, every card, every flower I've ever received, it says, "Love, Mom and Dad. Go Hawks!"

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: But a girl can never have too many moms. Thank you, Florence Publicover (phonetic), Frances Oxford, Peggy Thomas, and Linda Newsome for always being there as my mom's away from home.

At the beginning of this ceremony, Installing Officer Mary Davis challenged each member to renew your pledge of service to the American Legion Auxiliary and the newly elected Officers.

In 1955, National President Ruby Ward of West Virginia had a saying she shared throughout her year of service: "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do, and what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do."

I challenge each of you to want to do something different, to do something that matters, that's better. And it is stated in the lyrics of the song by Lady Antebellum, "I Was Here," which Mike Deacon will now sing for us.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The 100th Anniversary Committee has been actively planning for our milestone. I look forward to visiting your departments, celebrating our birthday. We created a special hash tag ALA100thCelebration to simply post your festivities on your own page, and we will find it and replace it on the ALA National Headquarters page, as well as the National President's page. Please use #ALA100 for the rest of your posts.

One lucky member who recruits ten new members by our birthday, November 10th, will be randomly drawn to win \$1,000 towards a trip to next year's National Convention in Louisville to be right in the center of our celebration. Ten times ten equals 100? Okay.

Please help us as we are looking for the oldest member, we are also looking for the longest-tenured member in our great organization.

Department Presidents, to start our year off you will be given personally autographed National President portraits for all units and departments, inviting everyone that comes in to join our 100th celebration. That means I personally signed 8,500. Enjoy your pictures, please.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: During the five mission trainings, we will enjoy our heritage with a 100th birthday party where National Vice President Kathy or myself will be attending. We hope to see you there.

As a 45-year PUFL member, I pledge my ongoing dedication to serve veterans, military, and their families. I hope to inspire you through my passion and knowledge to successfully lead the ALA in celebrating a century of service.

I close my remarks with the expectations set forth by our first National President, Edith Hobart.

(Audio Presentation:)

VOICE: The hope I have is that this past year may be but a stepping stone over which a great edifice may be built. I leave with you my earnest prayer to carry on.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And carry on we will. Thank you.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, President Nicole, for the eloquent way you intertwined the historical references with your inspiring thoughts and plans for this milestone year of the Celebrating a Century of Service.

Past National President Sharon Conatser will share a personal message as Nicole begins her administrative year.

(Music.)

MS. CONATSER: Madam President Nicole, a very dear friend shared this with me and, when I asked if I could share with you, she said, of course, I'd be honored.

I can't give you solutions to all of life's problems, doubts, or fears, but I can listen to you and together we will search for the answers.

I can't change your past with its heartache and pain, or the future with its untold stories -- and there will be good ones -- but I can be there now when you need me to care.

I can't keep your feet from stumbling, I can only offer my hand that you grasp it and not fall.

Your joys, your triumphs, your successes, and your happiness are not mine, yet I can share in your laughter.

Your decisions in life are not mine to make, nor to judge, I can only support you, encourage you, and help you when you ask.

I can't prevent you from falling away from friendship, from your values, or from me, I can only pray for you, talk to you, and wait for you.

I can't give you boundaries which I have determined for you, but I can give you room to change, room to grow, and room to be yourself.

I can't keep your heart from breaking or hurting, but I can cry with you, and help you pick up the pieces and put them back in place.

I can't tell you who you are, I can only love you and be your friend forever.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: It is with great pride to introduce our next National Commander of The American Legion, if elected tomorrow, from the Department of North Carolina, please welcome Bill Oxford.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. OXFORD: Thank you, thank you. Please, I just thank the young lady for her vote of confidence. I hope it happens tomorrow.

I'd like to bring greetings from The American Legion. That's I guess the other part of our family.

But, Madam President, we have a great mission facing us, and I think we all realize that, but we also have a tremendous opportunity to succeed and I know we'll be able to do that. But as

we celebrate a Century of Service, which is your motto, your legacy, we also need to realize that we need to consider the future. We hold the future to this organization, we -- and I look around, there's a tremendous history here, but we are the future to this organization. We are tasked with building the foundation for the future of our organization.

Madam President, I just glad as I could be to make myself part of your team and I'm honored to have you on my team.

(Applause.)

MR. OXFORD: From the 1.8 million Legionnaires across the country, I'd like to say congratulations on your election. It is my honor and pleasure to serve with you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Bill. And good luck tomorrow!

(Laughter.)

MS. DAVIS: It is with great pride to introduce our newly installed National Commander of the Sons of the American Legion, Clint Bolt from the Department of Virginia.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. BOLT: Thank you all. President Dungan, President Nicole, officers, members, and guests, I am honored to be here with all of you today to celebrate Nicole's special day.

Nicole, congratulations, dear, on being elected the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial National President.

Over the last couple years, Commander Bill and President Nicole and myself, we got to know each other and we would exchange texts and emails. And on all my visits this year, as I would go to department to department, I would get home and I would tell Nicole I felt like I was in a sea of angels, because I would learn about all the volunteering hours that each of you did at the VA hospitals, about the amount of money you raised, at the mentoring that you do for your Juniors. You have to be angels.

But I never called Nicole an angel, but I'm here to tell all of you --

(Laughter.)

MR. BOLT: -- now, now, let me finish --

(Laughter.)

MR. BOLT: -- I want you to know, each one of you, you have elected an angel to serve with Commander Bill and myself this year. When she walks in a room, everybody smiles. When she was coming down this aisle, I looked out and all of you had a smile on your face. She just has this -- she makes you feel good. She is an angel and I'm blessed that she's going to be serving with Bill and I this year. And I think your Centennial year is going to be the biggest ever for you and I'm proud to be just a small part of it.

Thank you all very much for having me today and God bless the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Clint. And we wish you all the very best.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: It is my pleasure to introduce the Mistress of Ceremonies, from the Department of Iowa, Past Department President Ann Rehbein.

(Music.)

MS. REHBEIN: National President Clapp, we have been waiting for this moment for over 1200 days.

(Laughter.)

MS. REHBEIN: Since that first phone call in 2016 up to today, your State of Iowa has been working tirelessly towards this goal. While I cannot name all of the individuals, they all know who they are.

As campaign co-chairman, along with my husband, Dave, we never heard a "no," and I think that speaks volumes for the support that you have in Iowa.

(Applause.)

MS. REHBEIN: Since we first met you, your smile and charming personality have shown you to be an engaging and loving person. But smiles and charm don't help in attaining goals and achieving missions.

You didn't remain National Finance Chairman without intellect, drive, and, dare I say, your Type A personality.

(Laughter.)

MS. REHBEIN: Your belief in a better life for today's veterans and their families, as well as honoring the memory of those gone before us, will serve you well in this Centennial Year.

You will be Iowa's fifth American Legion Auxiliary National President. Virginia Macrae told her fellow delegates, "We have found our work for the rehabilitation of veterans heavier than ever."

While Bess Lainson stated, "I firmly believe that the future of freedom in the United States and in the world is being made more secure by the things which our ALA is doing."

Opal Glynn Hanes said, "We know our purpose and we accept the challenge: the time is now."

And Sherry McLaughlin expressed magic in America's dreams by stating, "We must and we will continue giving our full support to the young men and women in today's military."

Your focus on the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families echo the thoughts of those that came before you.

Please let me introduce the Iowa guests on our platform. If they would please stand and stay standing.

Iowa Sons of the American Legion National Executive Committeeman Kenneth Rochholz, Iowa American Legion National Executive Committeeman Jerry Sebben, Iowa American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committeewoman Anne Crawford.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. REHBEIN: We will now honor Nicole with some congratulatory remarks. Please welcome these three people to the platform, Sons of the American Legion Detachment of Iowa Commander Michael Monserud,

Department of Iowa Commander James Kessler, and Department of Iowa President Kelly Elliott.

(Music.)

MR. MONSERUD: Thank you, President Nicole. On behalf of the Detachment of Iowa, I want to say congratulations.

Nicki has been a big supporter of the Sons of the American Legion, as we have of her, because our two organizations are very similar. The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion, we joined because of a veteran, the service someone provided our great country; they wrote that blank check that it may be cashed someday.

Now, for many of us, our veteran is no longer here. So we have to carry on and honor that veteran, and Nicole does a great job of that. So you just don't pay dues to join this great organization. When you pay your dues, you do two things. You carry on the legacy of that veteran. If that veteran is no longer here, you are the voice of that veteran. And Nicole throughout her campaign has proven that, she has been the voice and she has carried on the legacy.

So we must carry on the legacies, we must be the voice. When our voice is strong, we cannot be denied. And with a strong voice, a family working together, we will succeed, and we all need to help Nicole succeed this year.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. KESSLER: It's my honor to stand here today and to say a few words to Nicole. Nicole, I've not known you that long, but in the years that I have known you, I have seen tremendous things.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you.

MR. KESSLER: And if you remember back at a Junior shooting event, a young lad that come with me for Junior shooting took a liking to a young lady, and he was her companion only when he wasn't shooting on the line. But Nicole had the patience and the time of a young lad to mentor him in how things were done, how to officiously run an errand or whatever the task may be.

And, as I have watched Nicole over these years, we have all witnessed a smile that can't be matched. We have watched the enthusiasm of a young lady that is beyond what most of us can do. It is enthusiastic, it is energetic, and it has a meaning that ensures warmth to each and every person.

Nicole, I have a charge for you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right, Commander.

MR. KESSLER: You know my motto is "Onward and upward."

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Onward and upward.

MR. KESSLER: And that's the way we're going to take our membership. But my charge to you is keep your chin up, that engaging smile upon your face, and your enthusiastic enthusiasm going every day.

As you travel across this great land we all live and as you travel abroad, your characteristic will certainly touch many lives for the better. To

those who live in other countries, your presence of character will inspire many to want to come to live in America.

Wrong paper.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It's okay.

MR. KESSLER: But, Nicole, I know as you and Detachment Commander Clint and National Commander Bill take on your task for the year ahead that we will only set a bar that is high and high, that will be a challenge for other people to reach, because with the help of you three, the Department Commanders across the state, the nine Department Presidents across -- Auxiliary Presidents, excuse me -- and the Detachment SAL, we will set a bar that will make a lot of people reach.

Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. ELLIOTT: Madam President Nicole -- doesn't that sound wonderful?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It's kind of exciting.

MS. ELLIOTT: It is.

(Laughter.)

MS. ELLIOTT: National Officers and American Legion Family, good afternoon. It is an honor to represent the Iowa American Legion Auxiliary members and especially the 3rd District, since Nicole and I both belong to the 3rd District in Iowa.

Nicole, we are so very proud of you. We know you are going to do wonderful things this year. We are very honored to have you as our second National President from our 3rd District. As we all know, Sherry is here today with us today, I know she is, and she is sharing this with us in this moment and she is very proud of you.

You have shown us what it means to be a great leader. Your kindness, your smile, and your love for our veterans always shows. We know you will continue to demonstrate these wonderful qualities as you travel this year. Iowa looks forward to welcoming you home to Tama County in October. We hope you all plan to come and experience our wonderful Iowa hospitality in October 3rd through the 6th.

Madam President Nicole, I am blessed to serve with you during our Centennial Year. Iowa truly stands tall with you.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Commanders Mike and Jim, and President Kelly. And please welcome Past National Commander Jake Comer.

(Music.)

MR. COMER: Thank you very much, National President Nicki, past National Presidents, National Officers, delegates and alternates, guests all. What a beautiful day.

We think of memories, talking about the past 100 years, and the future. I have many memories as I come to this stage with the Auxiliary today. I think back to 1975 when I was privileged to serve as State Commander of Massachusetts, along with Department President of Maryland, Past National

President Linda Newsome, and National President Lotys Schanel of Rhode Island.

And of course we go on to 32 years ago when a young lady, a National Auxiliary Junior President served with us, with my dear friend Pearl Behrend, who could not be with us today, but she is looking down on us today with so much pride.

We told The American Legion and the Auxiliary and the Sons in the 8 and 40 to give us 20 cents a member to raise a million dollars for child welfare. You did not succeed; instead, you raised \$1,168,000, with the 8 and 40 being the only one with a hundred percent challenge.

(Applause.)

MR. COMER: That's what Nicki was all about then, as she's going into the new century today.

I have the privilege and honor of being married to Elsie Bailey from New Jersey, a past National President.

(Cheering.)

MR. COMER: We went on then on a year of nostalgia when her good friend and mine, Past National President Sherry McLaughlin passed on. And I met Wendy here again for -- after many, many years, but it brought back great memories of the Auxiliary association that I have had.

But the future is now and the future is President Nicole, who is going to do outstanding things for all of us. I am going to be honored next April when we bring her to Massachusetts for the first time to have the National Commander and the National President Banquet on the same night.

(Applause.)

MR. COMER: So my congratulations also to the Eastern Division Vice President Carolyn that will be serving with her, and all the other officers, I know they're going to be doing great things.

We must do it, because the American Legion Family has never given up on America and they never will under this leadership.

(Applause.)

MR. COMER: And to all of you I say, when we hear, we forget, and when we see, we remember, it's when we do we understand. God bless you all.

(Applause.)

MS. REHBEIN: Thank you, Commander Comer. And now please welcome Past National Commander David Rehbein.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. REHBEIN: I'm the only one in the room that gets to say this: Thank you, honey.

(Laughter.)

MR. REHBEIN: Nicole, my congratulations.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you.

MR. REHBEIN: You are beginning a year that several of us in this room have had, but none of us can describe to you adequately what it's going

to be like. You will make memories, you will visit places, this will be a year you will remember forever. But record the year, because so many things will happen that the memories will run together.

We heard the names and some of the statements of the four women from Iowa that have served in this office. Iowa enjoyed their year as they traveled, Iowa will enjoy your year as National President as you travel. But Iowa also gained the benefit of their leadership and knowledge after that year was over. So as much as we look forward to seeing you travel as National President, we look forward to you coming back home to make Iowa, the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion Family stronger in the Department of Iowa.

I use the words, pride and purpose, I am proud.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. REHBEIN: And I understand that you feel the purpose. Have a great year.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. REHBEIN: I invite all of you to join us in the Homecoming in America's Heartland Celebration to be held October 3rd to 5th, 2019, headquartered at the Meskwaki Hotel and Casino in Tama, Iowa. Join us for the weekend or for a particular event as we relax beside a scenic lake. Visit a John Deere factory. Learn how prosthetics are made. Meet some of our Nation's heroes. Have a farm-to-table dinner. And visit the birthplace and home of National President Nicole Clapp and the famous Matchstick Marvels Museum. A banquet in President Clapp's honor will be held on Saturday evening.

And you should all find all of that information in a brochure on your seat. Please send your reservations in as soon as possible. And please note that you need to fly into the Cedar Rapids airport, not the Des Moines airport, because we're only going to pick you up in Cedar Rapids.

(Laughter.)

MS. REHBEIN: President Nicole, my wish for you is that all of your dreams come true and that you have the very, very best possible year that you can have.

(Applause.)

MS. REHBEIN: Past National President Mary, this concludes my remarks.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Ann.

What tremendous support is shown to our National President as she begins this memorable year of service. Past National President Kathy, please come forward as we welcome you into the ranks of Past National Presidents.

Presenting Kathy with her Past President's pin is Past National President Peggy Thomas from the Department of Virginia.

MS. THOMAS: My friend Kathy, what a distinct honor to be the one to place this beautiful pin above your heart. This pin with the diamonds and sapphires with a red ring encircling the emblem of the American Legion

Auxiliary says it all beautifully: Wear it with pride and honor, for it represents what a wonderful year you have had leading the organization, representing service, not self.

Thank you, Kathy, for giving us a year out of your busy life to lead us into our Centennial Year. Keep the memories and successes close to your heart.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: To present President Kathy with her ribbon is Past National President Carlene Ashworth from the Department of Texas.

MS. ASHWORTH: Kathy, it is with great honor and pride that I present to you this ceremonial ribbon as an expression of the conclusion of a tremendous year of service to our organization. You will wear this ribbon proudly and with confidence in the years to come, with the knowledge that you made an impressionable difference in the lives of those we serve.

Congratulations, Kathy.

(Applause.)

MS. ASHWORTH: The audience will please remain seated during the present -- oh, I'm sorry -- oh, I've already said -- Past National President Peggy will conduct the presentation of colors.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you. We're all excited.

The audience will please remain seated during the presentation of colors. Mississippi pages, please present the retiring National President's colors.

(Pause.)

MS. THOMAS: Retiring National President Kathy, escorted by her husband, William, please take their places between these two glorious colors.

Kathy and William, it is both an honor and a privilege to represent nearly 700,000 members of the American Legion Auxiliary in presenting these colors to you. Kathy and William, as you stand side by side between these standards that you have served so faithfully and so well during your year, may they always symbolize for you the spirit of America and the spirit of the American Legion Auxiliary.

You have endeavored to bring awareness to our homeless veterans, which includes women veterans with children. It is your belief that no veteran should have to sleep on the street, nor should their children.

Kathy, to your right stands the flag of the United States of America, the symbol of hope, freedom, and justice for all, a beacon of hope around the world. Of all signs and symbols, there is none that surpasses the Star-Spangled Banner of red, white, and blue.

To your left is the vibrant red banner of the American Legion Auxiliary, on which signs the emblem of our noble organization, the high ideals of justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty.

With these colors, you will be taking home precious memories of what you have witnessed and accomplished, and the lasting friendships that you have made.

And now, Kathy, your colors are entrusted to you and your husband, William, who has encouraged you and stood by you all through the year. It is

with deep pride that I present this band of colors, the flag of our country and the beautiful banner of the American Legion Auxiliary. They are yours to take home to Mississippi, where they will always have a special place in your heart.

Mississippi pages, return the colors to their standards. And, William, please escort the retiring President back to her seat.

Congratulations. I love you both.

(Applause.)

MS. DAVIS: Thank you for those inspiring presentations. There are a few announcements before Past National President Kathy closes the 99th National Convention.

Everyone please remain in your seats until the close of the convention and recessional of Past President Kathy with her colors. Then 2019-2020 Department Presidents and Secretaries, please proceed to the tables on the right side of the stage to receive a token of appreciation from National President Nicole.

Past National Presidents, National Officers, NECs, and National Chairmen, you will receive a token of appreciation from Nicole during the NEC meeting on Thursday morning.

Department of Iowa American Legion Auxiliary members in the red Standing Tall With Nicole shirts will hand out the National President pins at the back of the convention hall.

National President Nicole and Vice President Kathy will be outside the convention hall to say thank you for all your outgoing confidence -- ongoing confidence and support.

Madam President Nicole, would you please return the gavel to Past President Kathy, so that she can close her convention?

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you so much.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort our National President and her new Officers from the platform as the Gladbrook Unit and Department of Iowa colors are retired. Please rise.

(Music.)

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I just want to thank each of you for being a part of my world this past year and for sharing your time with me. Just know that each one of you touched my life. I am forever grateful. I will not forget your many smiling faces and acts of kindness.

Thank you so much for serving our heroes. I love you all and God bless you.

Now I would ask Chaplain Blanch to come and give the closing benediction. And as soon as she is through, I would ask my Officers that I served with to escort and go to the back of the room, followed by my pages carrying my colors, and my husband will escort me out. When I reach the back of the room, this National Convention will be adjourned.

Dr. Blanch?

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: Could everyone in the spirit of celebration cup your hands to receive the blessings of this benediction?

Father God, as we depart today from this ceremony, we wanted to say thank you for so many things. First, thank you for the leadership, fellowship, and knowledge that we have received. Secondly, thank you for a wonderful and productive year. And we know that the upcoming 100th year will be just as exciting and wonderful.

Last, but not least, we ask that you continue to protect and keep our women veterans safe, healthy, and empowered by your grace, mercy, and peace.

Give us traveling mercies as we go forward to continue to work for service and not self.

Let us leave with this that we are all familiar with: May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind always be at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rain fall softly upon your fields. And, until we meet again, may God so hold you in the palm of His hand.

For God and country, let us go, as we say Amen --

(A chorus of Amen.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- Amen --

(A chorus of Amen.)

CHAPLAIN BLANCH: -- and Amen.

(A chorus of Amen.)

(Music.)

(Whereupon, at 4:37 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28, 2019, the above-entitled convention was adjourned.)

**POST-CONVENTION
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2019**

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Well, good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: This is the National Executive Committee. We'll now come to order.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Please make sure and disable all of your devices or place them in the silence mode. And I know we're really compact. You look like you're really squished in here today. So I think I'm going to have you remain seated instead of trying to get up and down for the prayer this morning.

So our opening prayer will be given by the new National Chaplain. Mary Anne Casadei from New York will lead us in the invocation and a moment of silence for our fallen heroes and those serving our nation today for the protection of all of our freedoms.

Mary Anne?

MS. CASADEI: Our Heavenly Father, we ask your blessings upon this meeting and these new officers. Grant that we may serve You as we carry out the work of the American Legion Auxiliary. Guide our President Nicole so that she may complete the work that is set before us. And finally, Lord, let us remember the true reason that we are here today: service to our military veterans and to our great organization. Let us complete your work with happy and humble hearts. This we ask in your name. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I guess I told my first fib as national president. You are going to have to get up because it's the Pledge of Allegiance and that will be led by Denise Conrad, our new Americanism Chairman.

Denise?

MS. CONRAD: 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 CLAPP: And the National Anthem, Denise, if you would like. You have such a beautiful voice.

MS. CONRAD: A frog voice.

Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light what so proudly we hail at the twilight's last gleaming, whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight, o'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming. And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Denise.

And now Trish Ward, Constitution and By-laws Chairman, will lead us in the Preamble to the Constitution this morning.

MS. WARD: 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 through 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 accomplishments of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: This meeting of the National Executive Committee is convened. Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Welcome to the centennial year of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Administratively Kathy and I look forward to you celebrating a century of service with us. Hopefully it will be a year of wonderful memories so that in 25 years from now people can look back on our hundredth and have wonderful stories to tell as Mary Anne, Mary, and Linda did yesterday for us, and realizing that our organization is at a time of great possibilities and great opportunities.

We will let you know that the spousal resolution passed through the Legion yesterday.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And everything becomes effective at the end of their convention which should be around noontime today.

So with that opportunity in front of us, and opening the floodgates of the Legion Act with now just two times of eligibility, World War I and then from Pearl Harbor forward, you have an opportunity to knock on some doors and to readdress some conversations that years ago may have turned some individuals off because they were not eligible. Their service didn't change, we changed, Congress changed in believing that we've never been at a time when we weren't in some type of conflict and now we want to recognize their service in a way that we can honor them.

And so as you're trying to kind of craft your message, we met with the officers this morning, we talked through some of those things, what does these new opportunities look like for us.

And as we know, we've got some fun things planned for the hundredth. We hope to see many of you at mission trainings. The first five trainings, which are the traditional module, we're going to throw a birthday party so Kathy and I are ready to celebrate with many of you at the birthday party. If I personally can't be there, Kathy will and then we're going to technology, somehow Skype me in, so I can be a part of the party too, and realizing that if

you recruit ten new members by November equals a thousand-dollar potential to come to national convention next year.

So the things that we really do want to honor everyone's service. And I said I feel we will be successful at the end of the year if celebration becomes like a four-letter word for us. So that is our goal, that we will wear that word out and have felt that we have made an impact on that next century of service.

And so I can't thank you enough. Past national presidents, thank you as I said yesterday for your ongoing guidance and support. And now it looks different looking across the table from you.

(Laughter.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I brought you in just like you did Kathy.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yeah. Well, you know, we were talking about that this morning. We were talking -- somebody asked me a question about next convention. I just looked at them. Okay. I said can we talk about today first.

That's wonderful. I am a forward thinker and I appreciate people's planning and I'm not a procrastinator and I truly believe if we're not moving forward, we're already passed by because everyone else has.

And to remain -- yes, we are no longer the women's largest patriotic service organization in the world. That's okay. We are darn good at what we do and we're still very strong and now we're going to be stronger an organization.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I know it's for us, many of us, it's day 12. We're tired. We understand that, but we're here to forge on, we're here to convey a message and I will convey our collective message this morning at incoming National Commander Bill's installation, that we are herein committed all 600 strong to a foundation for the future and how that relates with celebrating a century of service.

And so with that as we begin our business, we would like to take a few minutes to welcome all of you to your new role. There are some new faces in the NEC chairs. Congratulations. And those of you that are seasoned, help those around you. Help them to understand what that role means.

So those present who are eligible to vote today and at the subsequent NEC meetings are the NEC members only. The NEC members include the NECs from each of the departments, the five division vice presidents, the national chaplain, the national historian, the national vice president, and myself.

Those present at the NEC meeting that are not a voting member have voice are the past national presidents, the national secretary, and the national treasurer.

We welcome those of you behind the rows similar to a pre-con meeting. If you're in a seat that doesn't have a state attached to it, welcome. And realizing -- I didn't realize when I became on the national scene that people could come to the NEC meeting. So I made my first faux pas as a finance committee member. They're like well, come on, Nic, I'm like, no, I don't have a meeting 'til 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. They're like, no, no, you can come. So welcome and we want you to ask the questions that are appropriate through your NECs.

So as you're reviewing your information it's a two-way street. Information is sent out. I am a person that likes to get information out as soon as possible. Some things aren't possible. Some things are at the last minute and we just have to accept that, but we all have a responsibility to read the information, interpret it, and ask questions if you do not understand. No one should feel intimidated or fearful to get up to the mic and ask a question.

And as we always say there is no dumb, stupid question, plain and simple. It's all about knowledge. The more knowledge we have, the more transparent we can be and collectively the more informed and influential we can be.

So with that, please realize that -- to impress upon the members that we are serving on a national role now. You're on a national board of directors that have fiduciary responsibilities to the national organization. Now that sometimes is hard. It's kind of like middle management. You're caught in the middle. You're tugged one way from your department and you're tugged another way from national and sometimes you don't know what your role is.

Realizing your departments entrusted you to represent them at the national organization. That means now you think in the mindset of the national organization. So as a member of the NEC you will no longer have the interests of your department as your primary focus. They're still your heartstrings. They're still where you reside. They're still the people who you see and do the mission work every day, but you're a national representative now and of the national organization.

So national is now you. Okay? We hear that word. We are national. It's kind of when you were they, now you're them. Okay? Yeah. Okay. It's not a bad thing. If you like red, it's really not a bad thing. Okay? You'll be making decisions and casting votes according to what's in the best interest of now the national organization.

For future meetings you will again receive information in advance and again expected to read that information and be prepared. It's an important role and we appreciate your due diligence in doing that role. You have a strong fiduciary responsibility and that is to the entire organization.

So for the business at hand this morning, the Chair asks those who are wishing to address the meeting to make sure that the microphone, they go to the center because Chris will need to have that for the transcript over there, and realizing that that is the only way they will be heard appropriately, and we don't want to misquote someone just because of the lack of being able to hear.

Also please make sure that when you're making remarks you do address the Chair. We try to follow parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules, as best as we can. We have Chris Dickey here to guide us along the way, our professional parliamentarian. And attendance at previous NEC meetings is each member's responsibility. However, we have amazing convention teams and headquarters staff to make this happen, so thank you headquarters staff for another very early morning.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And obviously when you came in you were registered electronically as you have been for the convention thus far. So at this meeting and future meetings the minutes will be approved by a minutes

approval committee. And the Chair appoints the committee's membership to be Mississippi, Kentucky, and Florida as a minutes approval committee responsible for approving the minutes of this year's NEC meetings.

I have a couple or two very important matters of business. Yesterday, we mentioned in the remarks that Mary Davis did that the confirmation of the national secretary and treasurer, I believe that the first responsibilities for the president is to appoint that national treasurer and national secretary for NEC confirmation.

The question is on the confirmation of Linda Boone to the office of national secretary. I want to make a point of reference. Judge Advocate says there's a national secretary. It's not interim. For her benefit it's interim so she gets to go home eventually. I know another winter in Indiana is not for her liking.

So it is for the office of national secretary, but our darndest we're going to have a secretary sooner than later so Linda can go home and not have to use her boots a second time.

So the office -- the question is for the confirmation of Linda Boone and the office of National Secretary for 2019-20 for the administrative year.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All those opposed, no.

The ayes have it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yeah, that was a big thank you.

Okay. The second question, the order of business is the confirmation of Sara Riegel as the Office of National Treasurer for 2019-2020.

Is there any discussion?

All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed say no.

The ayes have it.

Thank you, Sara for agreeing to serve on another year.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. I would like to recognize the national officers, to have them stand to be recognized. And actually why don't you introduce yourselves this morning. Would you do that for me? It would be a nice way for you to project this morning if that would be all right. Noemi. Go ahead, Noemi.

MS. DE PANETO: Good morning, everybody. I'm Noemi Burgoes de Paneto, I'm the Southern Division Vice President, and I (indiscernible) for all of you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Wonderful. Thank you, Noemi. From Puerto Rico if you couldn't guess.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Rhonda?

MS. LARKOWSKI: I'm Rhonda Larkowski from the Department of Colorado. I am Northwest Division Vice President and look forward to working with all of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay.
Cheryl?

MS. PARK-BROWN: Cheryl Park, from the Department of Oregon and Western Division National Vice President. And I'm looking forward to working with all of you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Perfect.
Peggy?

MS. THOMAS: (Indiscernible) excuse my voice. I'm looking forward to working with you all and especially recording our centennial history.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right. Perfect.
All right. Mary Anne?

MS. CASADEI: Mary Anne Casadei from the Department of New York and I look forward to serving you as your National Chaplain.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right.
Ruth?

MS. GOTT: I am Ruth Gott from the Department of Michigan. I'm your Central Division Vice President, and I hope to get -- I know a lot of people from all over the United States and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: All right.
Carolyn?

MS. BARANOWSKI: I'm Carolyn Baranowski. I'm from the Department of Massachusetts, from the Eastern Division. We're going to have fun in this coming year.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And our National Vice President?

MS. DAUDISTEL: Hi, I'm Kathy Daudistel from the Department of Kentucky. Super looking forward to y'all. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you. It is a new perspective. So again these are your national officers with Sara and Linda, so please reach out as needed. They're here to serve you. We are going to make sure that they have all of my calendars so they know exactly where I'm at, but now that I'm becoming such a Facebook person as we know, ha ha, starting next week it's official the page and so we will -- I will put a post out there of where I'm going that month so you all have an indication of what's going on and where we'll be. All right?

So realizing that the past national presidents -- I put you way at the front of the agenda, I see you're later on, so thank you Madam National Presidents

for everything you're there to do and looking forward to serving and your guidance and support this year once again, so I thank you very much.

And so with that being said, it's time to look at the confirmation of appointments. The next item of business is appointments of special -- standing and special committees as well as foundation board appointments.

My understanding is you have -- should have received a copy on your chair. Chair recog- -- yes.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President. On the Constitution & Bylaws Committee it was brought to our new chairman's -- you have that already.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Trisha Knight (phonetic), she sent me a text regarding it.

MS. CONATSER: Okay. All right.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That according to the by-laws there is no vice chair.

MS. CONATSER: That's right.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It is a chairman and the four committee members.

MS. CONATSER: Four members, correct. Yep, it's right here.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And so with that being said, we will change the vice chair to a member.

MS. CONATSER: Okay. It's on page 43 if -- on the Constitution and Bylaws, Madam President.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We did not receive one of those.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Do we have more copies? Thank you. And keep one for me, Ang, in the back. Thank you.

Any other -- does anyone see any other questions, concerns? There were a couple of appointments. I'll clarify that we needed to backfill. And what I mean by backfill is we were short and not many. I think there was only one or two for the Western Division that we needed to fill with another individual.

So that's better than some years. Some years I know we've had to work a little bit harder at that. This was a good year. We had over 200 applications. Yeah. Vicky, Kathy, thank you for helping me with that.

All right. So no other questions, then the question is the motion to approve the completed list of appointments for the standing committees of the administrative year 2019 and the foundation board appointments. Are we ready -- yes, Janet.

MS. JEFFORD: Okay. Sharon forgot about this, but we were wondering on the ALAF Board of Directors --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes.

MS. JEFFORD: -- is that an incomplete list?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, unless we're missing a page.

MS. JEFFORD: Unless we don't have a page.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You are correct. It's incomplete. I don't know if -- there probably should be a fifth page the way it looks. I don't know if I can do it from memory. Here, I do. I got a red book.

So we have Dory. We have Cathleen MacInnes, Terri Wallace. A new director is Carrie Davenport. Mary Beth Revoir should be added, Sara Riegel, Coral May Grout, Laura Santina, Santino, excuse me. Sorry, I'll go through them. Yeah, I'll go back. We're just making sure we have the right matching up our lists here.

Okay. So the first four are accurate that are on the bottom of the page. Okay. We've got it now. We think we got it. Because they're an elected office. Okay. Thank you, Tamara. Okay. So we'll address this and then I'll answer your question, Liz.

Okay. The Foundation Board of Directors, they are elected directors. These are the new members who are coming onto the Board. The rest are still within their current terms of service. So Doris, Cathleen, Terri, and Carrie Davenport are the reappointees elected directors.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I thought the (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That is true. So the AE -- excuse me, AEF, I've got that on the brain this morning. I apologize. The Foundation director, the liaison from the Finance Committee is Nancy Brown-Park, so you can add that to the line above. It says to be determined, that was determined since we've been here at national convention at the finance meeting last week.

And the Audit Committee liaison is Jenny Hobbs. And that is back probably on the first page halfway down. And I don't know, has -- the Foundation has not met again to do their appointment, have they, or do they have their appointee for the audit?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's Terri Wallace.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Terri Wallace. So on the first page the Finance Committee Audit Liaison is Virginia Hobbs, and the Foundation Liaison to the Audit Committee is Terri Wallace. Those appointments are all moving appointments because the timing of when appointments are done in March to when those committees meet throughout the year, so we apologize for the incompleteness of that report.

Yes.

Liz Foster?

MS. FOSTER: Liz Foster, Department of New Mexico. I do have a question. Madam Chair, if my name is on this list, do I need to recuse myself from the vote? No?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You do not. Thank you for asking.

MS. FOSTER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And the question would be because she's concerned about a conflict of interest. Very good question.

All right. Any other discussion?

Ready for the question?

The question is the motion to confirm the complete list of appointments now as amended for the administrative year 2019-2020, and the Foundation Board appointments as presented.

All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed no?

The motion is confirmed to complete the list of appointments has passed. Thank you. And thank you individuals if you're in the room for agreeing to serve on our leadership for this upcoming year. Thank you very much.

It is now a key time, and it's a role for me that this is really an odd role to be sitting here to be now hearing the finance report. So the incoming National Finance Chairman, Sharon Conatser, will present the FY20 budget for the American Legion Auxiliary.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President, good morning. As your National Finance Committee Chair, I am proud to have the opportunity to serve this organization and present the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget. Your consideration of the budget as an NEC is vital to the success of this organization. I'm presenting this on behalf of the Finance Committee which includes, and if they're in the room please stand, Vice Chairman Ginny Hobbs, Committee Members Peggy Thomas, Paula Raney and Nancy Brown-Park. Thank you, ladies.

(Applause.)

MS. CONATSER: I must start off by thanking Headquarters staff and the National Chairman for their input, guidance, and ideas to be sure we are able to develop and present a comprehensive budget. We hope that you liked having more time to look over the budget before attending national convention since you received the post NEC packet before you left home.

We need to continue to meet our goals, our obligations, and our expectations of providing services for you the members while continuing to do our mission, the reason we were formed.

Before getting to the budget, I must thank a few people: Sara Riegel, Linda Boone, Diana, and Stu from National Headquarters for their countless, and I repeat, countless hours putting this budget together for their review and for answering my questions.

Let's begin with the budget narrative. Thank you.

This is a summary document to help you understand. You all should have that in front of you as NECs. Do you have any questions on the budget narrative?

You will see the first section talks about the strategic planning of new projects covered in this budget.

I see we have a question. Go right ahead.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Debbie Kryczkowski, Department of New York. I have a question on the department secretary/executive directors for the LMS.

MS. CONATSER: Yes.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: What if the department secretary can't make it, is there someone we're allowed to send in their place?

MS. CONATSER: This is the one where I believe that we're going to do onsite in the departments; am I correct? Yes.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Are the departments chosen already?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: No. What we're trying to do is we're recognizing - and this was actually asked at DLNC this year. Lot of different secretary turnover remains and so would we be willing to go out and actually I'm looking at the person who asked the question in the back of the room and that

was Anne Rehbein who said we have a new secretary. I punted in the job, Nicole, for two months. Anne Crawford punted for a couple months, and Ann Rehbein was in it for the duration until we were able to shore up the secretary. So would National be willing to go out and help orient them in the department? Okay?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Thank you.

MS. CONATSER: Good question.

Listening to you the members National President Nicole has added three mission trainings called Mission -- I'm sorry -- Development, Mission, Training, Development for those members who might be ready to learn the next level of our programs. We hope that this will meet the needs you have suggested.

As you will remember, besides the donations to Veterans Creative Arts Festival, we have a \$120,000 donation we make as a cosponsor of that program. Besides the overhead costs in our administrative area, our staffing, our support of the Foundation, we are also proud to celebrate our heritage this year and celebrate our hundredth birthday.

And you will see the next section in your narrative. You will see that we are presenting a deficit budget. One statistic that really stands out is that our membership is declining. Now, ladies, you need to listen to these numbers. From 2014 to 2018 our membership has decreased by 81,000 members which equals \$972,000 in lost revenue for FY19. If we would just retain our membership, we would not be in a deficit budget. You have heard others say it and we will continue to say it: we need to be nice to each other, be welcoming, and remember that we all have the same eligibility to belong to our American Legion Auxiliary.

You don't have to be the best friends. You just need to work together for our mission which involves your eligibility, your veteran.

Any other questions on the narrative?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible)?

MS. CONATSER: I'm sorry?

VOICE: (Indiscernible).

MS. CONATSER: That I just quoted? 2014 to 2018 we decreased 81,000 members which equals \$972,000 in lost revenue.

MS. SEELEY: Good morning, Sharon.

MS. CONATSER: Hi, Glynis.

MS. SEELEY: I know you're surprised I'm at a microphone, right?

MS. CONATSER: Shocked.

MS. SEELEY: I do have one question regarding the narrative. In the explanation it authorizes 52 department legislative chairs to attend the Washington, D.C. conference.

MS. CONATSER: Yes.

MS. SEELEY: Is that also going to include divisional chairwomen?

MS. CONATSER: Division chairmen?

MS. SEELEY: Uh-huh.

MS. CONATSER: That -- go ahead, Madam President.

RESIDENT CLAPP: No, that's fine.

MS. CONATSER: No, go ahead.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Actually, where we're at is you know last year we increased our attendance back at the American Legion D.C. Conference. We made a commitment going into this year that we wanted to have a presence. We would not be hosting our own. We would be a part of their commission meetings. Very well received and very welcoming. So with the 52 legislative chairmen, our roles of who will attend, when you say divisional chairmen, did you mean division vice presidents? No.

MS. SEELEY: No. I mean the divisional --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Legislative.

MS. SEELEY: -- because it's authorizing one legislative chairperson from each department, but we also have the division chairs as well.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Correct. Sure.

MS. SEELEY: I was wondering if they were also getting --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Right now, No. They are not on the list, but the list as we told our national officers this morning is a moving target based on what is a hot -- just to give you an example, what is a hot legislative topic that could be coming that we're not aware of yet, so we're going to make sure the right people there.

Now as Lisa Chaplin did so well with legislative this year of reinvigorating our legislative councils, we are definitely going to be tapping into those individuals where needed, but thank you for asking the question.

MS. SEELEY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Uh-huh.

MS. LLOYD: Yes, good morning. Lauren Lloyd from the District of Columbia. Under the strategies under Development, since we are the National Executive Committee and the Board serving the Auxiliary, we should be responsible for helping to find other fiscal sponsors. So as someone who works in grants in my normal job who -- and I'm sure everybody has asked this question -- who can we email when we have opportunities for funding come across our desk?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That will be the Development Division and Madison Maves would be your best contact for that.

MS. CONATSER: Absolutely.

MS. LLOYD: Thank you very much.

MS. CONATSER: And we had new sponsors here at National Convention for, as you saw at lunch, at the luncheon, was it LogicMark, the luncheon was sponsored by a new sponsor or vendor this year. Great question. Forward thinking, bringing in revenue, supporting the mission, can't ask for more than that.

The next piece we're going to discuss is the budget you have in front of you and it's on the screen. I want to assure you that your Finance Committee vetted this information for each line item. Our due diligence in representing you is taken very seriously.

In the detail of the budget you will see that we have scholarships, our publication, and the normal cost of doing business. Our new Strategic Plan

Committee did not ask for a large budget, so you will not see that budgeted separately.

A few years ago a finance chairman said in reference to our strategic plan of growing membership, and I quote, "So we're committed to this and we hope you are as well and we know where we want to be by 2020."

So here we are in our FY20 budget. Are we where we should be in membership? No. The entire team for 2019 and 2020 is asking you to recommit yourselves to the ALA and help yourself as a member of this organization and help the organization retain members and grow membership.

With the new opportunity in membership, with the new dates, and the new eligibility, this should help our cause.

Madam President, I move on behalf of the Finance Committee the adoption of the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget for approval.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Since the motion comes from a committee, a second is not required. The question is on the approval of the proposed FY2020 budget as presented. Is there any other discussion?

MS. MAZUR: Kathy Mazur, Department Nebraska. I know last year's budget that we voted on showed that we were going to be in the black, but we ended up in the red.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: We did.

MS. MAZUR: And so I just feel very uncomfortable starting out in the red right at the beginning of the year.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: As did we. And we had multiple discussions about it and the rationale as we looked at our membership, we are down 20 -- I didn't look at yesterday's -- 23,000 members this year. So 23,000 members times \$12, we all can do the math. So the accountability now becomes all of our accountability and responsibility too. As Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan always told me once we started sending out renewal notices we forgot how to do membership. We forgot to say please and thank you. And as you heard my story my mom went and asked if I could be a member. Kathy went and asked if she could be a member. That is not what today's members, potential members, expect to happen.

Thank you for your concern, Kathy. We are all in the same considerations.

Chair recognizes the Past National President, Janet.

MS. JEFFORD: Janet. Under Expenses, line 139, I love the idea that we're putting more money towards the Creative Arts Festival, but can you explain those because it looks like a discrepancy between what was budgeted, what was spent, and then we're increasing it quite a bit for this year. Can you just explain it?

MS. CONATSER: I didn't bring that with me. Sara. I'm referring to my expert.

MS. RIEGEL: I'm shorter. So one of the key things that we noticed over the years is how we budget, how we do things in our financial reporting. This year is a transition year for us where we did a lot of classifying within the fiscal year and this is our transition year, so what you see is a projected amount of those expenses falling -- so you see how it fell in our projected

category. You're going to see more expenses on the fiscal year '20. We have done this. This is still the combined, you know, budgets that we presented before, but in order to transition, one of the things that we ended up doing was a lot of our financial reporting was delayed because we're at the mercy of the government as far as giving us information to finalize that VCAF. And so this year I am actually putting everything in line as it occurs naturally.

So what you see is our projected is way down. Those are actual costs that we've already spent. The activity actually happens in October and November and so I had to put it in line with where it naturally occurs. Okay.

MS. JEFFORD: No. You didn't explain it at all.

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. Sorry.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The timing?

MS. RIEGEL: Timing?

MS. CONATSER: Timing of when VCAF occurs and when the expenses are incurred. This year -- we used to book it in the previous year, you know, so

--

MS. JEFFORD: Right.

MS. CONATSER: So that it showed up under that admin year. Now we're going to move it to where it really happens.

MS. RIEGEL: Okay. Naturally occurs, yeah.

So this is a transient year. I apologize.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: So naturally means when it actually occurs.

MS. RIEGEL: Is that good, Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: Okay. Thank you.

MS. DUSCHECK: Diane Duscheck, Wisconsin.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Madam Past National President Diane?

MS. DUSCHECK: This isn't a line item, but I think it would be good for us to know what the cost to the organization has been as we are looking for a new national secretary, things like we've had an active secretary, we're still going to have one going forward, and I'm sure there's going to be overlap when we get a new secretary.

There's an apartment, there's a headhunter group that has been hired. I'm sure there may have been extra travel and hotel expenses for the groups that are looking at the candidates. And so if you can let us know like this last year what it was and what you're projecting this next year that'd be handy.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sara, why don't you just stay back here, sweets?

MS. RIEGEL: As far as the national secretary, that has been basically a contract amount that was equal to -- actually it was less than what we were paying before for the national secretary, and then of course the Finance Committee approved specific travel within that, so -- because we're displacing Linda for a long period of time.

The headhunter was \$50,000 in total and we have paid the majority of that, so you will see actually we will end up paying it in fiscal year '19, and that will be done for the year. So do you want --

MS. DUSCHECK: Bottom line?

MS. RIEGEL: Bottom line, I did not come with that, Diane. I'm sorry. But I can get it to you if you would like.

MR. DUSCHECK: Okay.

MS. RIEGEL: Okay.

MS. CONATSER: I'll work with Sara on that, Diane. I also have that information. I'm sorry.

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. With the new addition -- well, to change the amendment to go from wives to spouses, to change all of our publications to IRS filings, to all of the things that that actually now entails, that's obviously going to cost some money. Do we have -- will that come out in the February NEC meeting because we don't have any numbers on what that will cost us for this?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes, Linda will address that to answer your question, Glynis.

MS. CONATSER: I've been asking those same questions. Luckily, brochures and all those -- and printed material, we're going -- we have -- we won't like throw a whole bunch out. We're going to keep using it. Luckily, our inventory isn't really high. We've put off reordering things until everything was settled after this convention. So you won't -- there's not big blip in expenses planned for just because of the eligibility changes. There just isn't that.

MS. SEELEY: And the tax --

MS. CONATSER: There's no --

MS. SEELEY: Nothing changes there regarding the 990s, we don't have to change --

MS. CONATSER: No. No.

MS. SEELEY: Okay. I just -- I wasn't sure.

MS. CONATSER: Yeah. Well, those are questions you need to know, so.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Well, and for example, the Legion, they're not throwing out all their membership applications. They're just writing on it "Legion Act," and they know so they're trying to use up their supply as well. Yes, Debbie?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: I have two questions. Debbie from Department of New York. On Line 400 of Expenses, the mission training and volunteer development it's up 70,000?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Could you explain that?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sure. Do you want to --

MS. CONATSER: That is the training that we just talked about with the team from National going out to train the secretaries. That's included in that line item.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Okay. Does that also include the 42,000 for the -

MS. CONATSER: For what?

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: -- 201 training, mission training?

MS. CONATSER: Mission training is under a different line item, I believe.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: That's under a different line item?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: This one actually is mission training --

MS. CONATSER: Yes, we did put it together.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It's rolled up together, they're rolled up together, yes.

MS. CONATSER: In 400.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It has all eight mission trainings.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Everything. Okay, good. Also, Line 200, the Washington, D.C. office, I mean, went from 38,000 to 117, what's the --

MS. CONATSER: We had a part-time person. Now we have a full-time person.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: One full-time person?

MS. CONATSER: Yes.

MS. KRYCZKOWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: That wouldn't just be salary if that's what you're thinking. No, okay. I'm just trying to help --

MS. CONATSER: No, no, yeah, there's more involved than the salary there.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: She's in the room. She's shaking her head that's not her salary.

MS. CONATSER: I see you back there.

Thank you for the great questions.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: See, I can read minds.

MS. CONATSER: We're impressed.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Okay. Any other questions? Okay. The questions is on the approval of the proposed FY20 budget as presented. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say no.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed?

The motion has been approved and I will commit to you we will do our due diligence to work to get us back to flat, if not in the black. But that means I have a commitment from this team and your team that we will work membership together. Thank you.

MS. CONATSER: The next piece that we will look at is the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board budget. Does anyone have questions?

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board presents their budget to the Finance Committee for their review.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It was attached to the back of the budget what you got.

MS. CONATSER: It's on the screen also if you have questions.

If not, Madam President, on behalf of the Finance Committee and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Board, I move the acceptance of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Budget for FY20.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the approval of the proposed FY20 Foundation Budget as presented. Is there any discussion?

Are you ready for the question?

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: The question is on the adoption of the FY20 Foundation Budget as presented. All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Ayes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Opposed, no.

The motion has been approved to -- motion is approved for the FY20 Foundation Budget.

MS. CONATSER: Madam President, that concludes my report.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Thank you, Madam Past National President and Finance Chairman.

Is there any other business to come before this NEC meeting?

NECs, I hope you have received a box on your chair, past national presidents and officers. They were kind of hot commodities yesterday. I had to stop people from -- and thank you for taking some of the pictures that were -- we only had a few departments with that and we appreciate that very much.

Yes, Janice?

MS. MACLEOD: Yes, Janice MacLeod, North Carolina. When will we see the exact language that we should distribute among the department for the eligibility change?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: For the spousal change?

MS. MACLEOD: Yes.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It will be coming. Actually, they've been working on it this week with the Judge Advocate and so there will be a concise message. That's what we've told the officers as well. Right now encourage membership.

MS. MACLEOD: Okay. And wouldn't that come out by email to departments or a master major list?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: It would go to the major, the traditional email listing which includes the NECs on that.

MS. MACLEOD: Okay.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: And I will tell you I had -- besides of course Mike Rohan, we have Chanin from the D.C. office will be the second member. I had several departments come up to me last night and they wanted to have their picture taken as the first from their department. And Vermont we had a nice little chat last night.

MS. MACLEOD: I do have one more question, one that's been asked often on the replacement for our national secretary.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Yes.

MS. MACLEOD: The message we're getting now that we have a search for them engaged and you've identified a few clients or prospects that are being interviewed, is pretty much what we heard in February.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sure.

MS. MACLEOD: What has transpired in that period or why do we not today have that candidate?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sure. Do you want me to -- anyone?

Okay. Yeah, I know. All right. So, yes, internally the candidates that were presented they were not of a fit and the caliber for our organization and that's when the Search Committee requested Finance to approve for a search

firm. The search firm has been working with us this summer. The committee that Past National President Kathy appointed and then the leadership team we are ad hoc members to that.

The Search Committee actually interviewed while they've been here candidates via -- five via Zoom, it's like Skype, and we have email this morning that we will be doing second round interviews face to face in two weeks.

So keep your fingers crossed that one of our first administrative large responsibilities will be to present a candidate as the national secretary.

MS. MACLEOD: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: You're welcome, Janice.

MS. MACLEOD: Sorry (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT CLAPP: There's no sorry. You're fine.

MS. LLOYD: And Lauren Lloyd again from District of Columbia. Madam President, can I pose a suggestion?

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Absolutely.

MS. LLOYD: When the notes are sent out to all of us about the recommended language, could we also have an NEC takeaway points? I did appreciate the last time that we had that because it keeps us with consistent messaging --

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sure.

MS. LLOYD: -- and making sure we're all reporting the same thing as a committee.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: Sure. And what we did this morning with the national officers, they received the 11 points for the Legion Act, how to communicate that as well as the Q&A that was sent out from National regarding why it's the spousal, what does that mean for the ALA, if that's what you're referencing, Lauren. Yes. That will be part of what that concise message should look like and then you have as national representatives your consistent message.

Thank you for your time this morning. If there's no other business.

Madam National Secretary, do you have any updates?

Woohoo, good.

All right. So thank you very much. And if you did not attend the NEC 101, I am told that there's a staff member at the back of the room, it looks like Stephanie is back there, for your packets. There are some documents that you need to sign before you leave today. I assume it's confidentiality, conflict of interest statements that we did with officers this morning.

And for us as we close the first NEC meeting for 2019-2020 I leave you with these words. Let service in the community, state, and nation be an ever major objective for the American Legion Auxiliary and its members as we are celebrating a century of service.

Thank you. And we'll please stand as National Chaplain Mary Casadei offers us our benediction this morning.

MS. CASADEI: Our Father, in departing this post-convention meeting, touch our hearts and minds and guide our actions so that Your will will be

done. Protect each of us. Let us go forth into the world with happy hearts as we continue our service to God and country.

And to finish up, Lord, please bless us and keep us safe as we travel home to our loved ones and those who may not love us so much, and let us carry out our work in the spirit of service, not self, to veterans, God and country.
Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT CLAPP: This concludes the first NEC -- and records that we're going to celebrate, right? We're going to laugh, we're going to have fun, and whatever little dose of that is you can take it for what it's worth.

The meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 9:35 a.m.)

Appendix A



SUMMARY OF MOTIONS / RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

BY

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NATIONAL
GOVERNING BOARDS (NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE)**

FOR 2018-2019 AND 2019-2020

and

**2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES
CONVENED AUGUST 24 – AUGUST 29, 2019
IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**

**2018-2019 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 24, 2019**

**2019 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
NATIONAL CONVENTION AUGUST 24 – AUGUST 29, 2019**

**2019-2020 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 29, 2019**

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2018-2019
Final 2018-2019 NEC Meeting Held Pre-National Convention
in Indianapolis, Indiana
August 24, 2019**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted

M/S/C = Moved/Seconded/Carried

- M/S/C to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as circulated in advance in NEC board packet emailed August 16, 2019: Charter cancellations - 151 charters canceled, as listed in NEC board packet enclosure and as amended.
- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the National Audit Committee to rescind the charter of the National Audit Committee
- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the Special Committee on Strategic Planning for a proposed strategic planning process and five goals: 1) cultivate a variety of mission engagement opportunities, 2) enhance organizational effectiveness of department and units, 3) recruit and retain members through mission engagement, 4) ensure financial stewardship of resources to maximize our mission delivery, and 5) enhance and foster the family relationship with the American Legion
- M/C to adopt the recommendation of the National Constitution and Bylaws Committee to rescind the Code of Conduct in the Standing Rules
- M/S/C to rewrite the Code of Conduct in the Standing Rules that does not include a pledge; National Vice President Nicole Clapp will appoint a committee.

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Convention 2019
in Indianapolis, Indiana
August 26, 2019**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions/Amendments Adopted

M/S/C = Moved, Seconded, Carried

- M/C **Amendment 1:** to amend ALA National Constitution, Article III, Eligibility, Section 1 by substituting **Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion**, and to the ~~grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during any of the following periods: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918; December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946; June 25, 1950 to January 31, 1955; February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975; August 24, 1982 to July 31, 1984; December 20, 1989 to January 31, 1990; August 2, 1990 to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the Government of the United States; all dates inclusive, or who being citizens of the United States at the time of their entry therein, served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during any of said periods, and died in line of duty or after honorable discharge; and to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.~~ **to read “Eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by The American Legion. The eligibility requirements from The American Legion governing documents shall be provided as a footnote to this Constitution for information purposes and shall be updated as appropriate.”**

Footnote:

Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

- (1) Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, **spouses**, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and
- (2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918 and any time after December 7, 1941 who being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died

- in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;
- (3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941 who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
 - (4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

Consequential amendments include

1. **Article 2, Section 1, strike out the words “of women.”**
2. **Strike all occurrences of “committeewoman” and insert “committee person.”**
3. **Strike all occurrences of “she” and “her” and insert an appropriate gender-neutral pronoun.**

Yes: 526, No: 181

M/C Amendment 2: to amend ALA National Bylaws Article 4, National Executive Committee, Section 2, Authority by striking to read “The National Executive Committee shall adopt the annual budget for the National Organization, adopt policies and Standing Rules, unless otherwise noted in the National Constitution or these Bylaws; ~~or Standing Rules, strategic plans and agreements, and memorandums of understanding,~~ review financial statements, and accept the nomination of the National Secretary and the National Treasurer, confirm committee and other national appointments, and confirm the appointments of officials not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws; levy assessments as needed; ratify the cancellation of charters; receive for filing reports from national subsidiary organization; and other duties and responsibilities that are the normal function of a corporate board of directors.”

Yes: 643, No: 69

M/C Amendment 3: By striking and inserting in ALA National Standing Rules VI, Committees, Section 6, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, to read “The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committees shall be comprised of a chairman who shall serve a one-year term; ~~three (3) members~~ a vice-chairman and one (1) member serving staggered ~~three-year~~ two-year terms, one of whom shall be appointed each year to a ~~three-year~~ two-year term,

and a representative from each National Division who shall serve a one-year term. ~~Of the three (3) members serving three year terms, one (1) The vice-chairman shall serve as the National Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Representative, and two (2) the member shall serve as National VAVS Deputy Representatives.~~

The purpose of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee is to promote programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families, ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives.

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 690, No: 32

M/C Amendment 4: By striking and inserting in ALA Standing Rules VI, Committees, Section 6, Education to read “The Education Committee shall be comprised of a chairman serving a one-year term; ~~three (3) a vice-chairman and one (1) member serving staggered three-year two-year terms, one of whom shall be appointed each year to serve a two-year term; plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.~~”

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 691, No: 32

M/C Amendment 5: By striking and inserting in ALA Standing Rules VI, Committees, Section 6, Constitution & Bylaws to read **Constitution & Bylaws: The Constitution & Bylaws Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and vice chairman ~~four (4) members, all of whom shall serve a one-year term. The purpose of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee is to inform members about having proper governing documents at all levels.~~**”

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 676, No: 47

M/C Amendment 6: By striking and inserting in ALA Standing Rules VI, Committees, Section 6 to change the composition of the Americanism, National Security, Legislative, Poppy, Community

Service, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Leadership, and Public Relations National Committees. These sections will now read:

Americanism: The Americanism Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~four (4) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

National Security: The National Security Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~four (4) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

The purpose of the National Security Committee is to promote a strong national defense.

Legislative: The Legislative Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~three (3) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

Poppy: The Poppy Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~two (2) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

Community Service: The Community Service Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~four (4) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund: The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~two (2) members~~, **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund provides grants to American Legion Auxiliary members who qualify for specific types of emergency assistance. A three (3) member review and processing committee shall consist of the National Secretary, the National Treasurer and a staff member of The American Legion Children & Youth Commission.

Leadership: The Leadership Committee shall be comprised of a chairman ~~plus three (3)~~ and **a vice chairman**, plus a representative

from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

Public Relations: The Public Relations Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and ~~three (3) members~~ **a vice chairman**, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term.

Proviso: This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.

Yes: 689, No: 34

M/C **Amendment 7:** by striking in ALA Standing Rule VI, Section 1 to read “As provided in the National Bylaws, in addition to the core National Standing Committees – Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Americanism, National Security, Membership, Constitution & Bylaws, Finance, and Audit – there shall be the following national committees: Auxiliary Emergency Fund, ~~History~~, Community Service, Education, American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation, Junior Activities, Leadership, Legislative, ~~Liaison to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation~~, and ~~Past Presidents Parley~~, Poppy, and Public Relations. The overall purpose of each standing committee is as specified in this section; the purpose of each national committee is as described in the American Legion Auxiliary National Program Action Plan.”

~~**History Committee:** The History Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and three (3) members, all of whom shall serve a one year term. The National Historian shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.~~

~~**Past Presidents Parley:** Past Presidents Parley shall be comprised of a chairman and two (2) members, all of whom shall be Past National Presidents and all of whom shall serve a one-year term.~~

~~**Liaison to Child Welfare Foundation:** The Liaison to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Committee shall be comprised of three (3) members, two (2) of whom shall be Past National Presidents and one (1) of whom shall be the Chairman of the Children & Youth Committee. The appointed Past National Presidents shall serve staggered two year terms, one of whom shall be appointed each year to a two year term. One (1) Past National President shall be appointed each year to serve as the chairman, the Auxiliary’s primary liaison to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation~~

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 606, No: 113

M/C Amendment 8: Amend ALA Standing Rule IV, Duties of Officers, National Historian, Section 2 by adding “The National Historian shall be responsible for compiling and sending to the departments an outline and rules for department histories that are to be submitted in contest for the national award. Judging of the department histories shall be done by the five National Division Vice Presidents under the supervision of the National Historian. The National Historian shall also be responsible for communicating to departments the importance of keeping and preserving a written record, and of collecting, categorizing, and preserving American Legion Auxiliary memorabilia.”

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 666, No: 56

M/C Amendment 9: Amend by striking and inserting in Standing Rules VI, Committee, Section 6, Children and Youth to read “The Children and Youth Committee shall be comprised of a chairman, a vice chairman, and ~~two (2) members~~ one committee member, which shall serve as a liaison to the Child Welfare Foundation, and may be a Past National President, plus a representative from each National Division, all of whom shall serve a one-year term. The purpose of the Children and Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with the American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.”

***Proviso:* This amendment will not go into effect until the close of the 2020 national ALA convention.**

Yes: 674, No: 48

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**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2019-2020
First 2019-2020 NEC Meeting Held Post-National Convention
in Indianapolis, Indiana
August 29, 2019**

Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted

M/S/C = Moved, Seconded, Carried

- M/C to confirm the continuing service of Linda Boone as National Secretary for the 2019-2020 administrative year
- M/C to confirm the continuing service of Sara Riegel as National Treasurer for the 2019-2020 administrative year
- M/C to approve the complete list of appointments to American Legion Auxiliary national Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Foundation Board for the 2019-2020 administrative year as amended from the list distributed onsite to every meeting attendee
- M/C to adopt the proposed 2020 fiscal year American Legion Auxiliary budget, as circulated in advance to the 2019-2020 administrative-year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY20 Budget Proposal Packet, via email on 8/20/19
- M/C to adopt the proposed 2020 fiscal year American Legion Auxiliary Foundation budget, as circulated in advance to the 2019-2020 administrative-year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY20 Budget Proposal Packet, via email on 8/20/19

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Appendix B



**AWARDS PRESENTED
DURING NATIONAL CONVENTION
August 23 – 29, 2019**

*(Visit www.ALforVeterans.org
to see a full listing of 2018-2019 awards.)*

NATIONAL GOODWILL AMBASSADOR AWARD

Patricia Nelson, Department of Minnesota
Laura Smith, Department of Delaware
Carol Williams, Department of Florida
Pat Nelson, Department of Minnesota
Sherri McGee, Department of Indiana

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION COMMITTEE AWARDS

Excellence Award – Department of Wyoming
Meritorious Achievement Award – Department of Michigan
U.S. Udie Grant Award – Department of Florida
Garland M. Murphy Jr. Award – Department of Florida

NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Legislative: Colonial Heights, Unit 284, Department of Virginia
Juniors: Charles A. Conklin Unit 28, Department of Michigan
Poppy: Las Cruces Unit 10, Department of New Mexico
Leadership: Northeastern Unit 459, Department of Michigan
Community Service: Liberty Unit 289, Department of Illinois
Public Relations: Unit 230, Department of Indiana
Education: Fredonwarell Unit 17, Department of New Hampshire
Children & Youth: Shenandoah Unit 88, Department of Iowa
Americanism: Dietrich-Luhman, Unit 360, Department of Pennsylvania
National Security: Dupont-Holmes Unit 82, Department of New Hampshire
VA&R: Harold L. Gregory Memorial Unit 62, Department of Texas
Membership: Department of Florida

PUBLIC SPIRIT AWARD

Second Lady of the United States, Karen Pence

PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY COMMITTEE AWARDS

Salute to Servicewomen Award

Army: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kaylan Harrington
Marines: Colonel Jennifer Shaar
Navy: Corpsman 2nd Class Diana Mendoza de Saenz
Air Force: Lt. Colonel Rachelle Hartze
Coast Guard: Petty Officer Elizabeth Haworth

Unit Member of the Year

Sandy Keenan, Alabama
Debbie Van Tassel, Alaska
Dana Ramsey, Arizona
Patricia Clark, Arkansas
Carmen Candelario Haren, California
Joni Giarratano, Colorado
Sherri Dell Vecchia, Connecticut
Alicia Fansmith, D.C.

Judy Campbell, Delaware
Donna Anderson, Florida
Mary Malone, Georgia
Laurie Baum, Idaho
Rhonda Davis, Illinois
Joyce Young, Indiana
Jackie Bolen, Iowa
Shirley Booe, Kansas
Joy Hamilton, Kentucky
Pauline Roach, Louisiana
Crystal Fitzgerald, Maine
Holly Merchant, Maryland
Paula-Anne Cullen, Massachusetts
Diane Alexander, Michigan
Eileen Eisenschenk, Minnesota
Tabitha S. Stanley, Mississippi
Shayli Larabee, Missouri
Billeta Mainwaring, Montana
Josephine "Jo" Chesley, Nebraska
Julie Dale, New Hampshire
Lisa A. Mayer, New Jersey
Joyce Hudgens, New Mexico
Deborah Benedict, New York
Jo Spyrison, North Carolina
Alicia Roman, North Dakota
Ann Ernst, Ohio
Debra Bunch, Oklahoma
Edna Redhead, Oregon
Earlyn Deardoff, Pennsylvania
Sophia De Jesus, Puerto Rico
Anne Graham, South Carolina
Mary Wienbar, South Dakota
Sharon Rosethal, Texas
Virginia "Ginny" Henderscheid, Utah
Anita Pickielnok, Vermont
Lynn Feasenmeyer Norton, Virginia
Norma Hendrickson, Washington
Dawn Lutes, West Virginia
Bonnie Phaneuf, Wisconsin
Cathy Raymer, Wyoming
(Note: Not all American Legion Auxiliary departments submitted names to be considered for this national award.)

Woman of the Year:

Patricia Harris, Department of North Carolina Member, U.S. Army Veteran
Marsha Four, U.S. Army Veteran
Leslie Lightfoot, U.S. Army Veteran