



AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY

Serving veterans, their families and their communities

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 28, 2009 - MARCH 1, 2009

RENAISSANCE WASHINGTON HOTEL
Washington, D.C.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD AT

**RENAISSANCE WASHINGTON HOTEL
RENAISSANCE EAST
999 9TH STREET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001**

ON

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2009

FROM

7:30 P.M. TO 9:33 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

NATIONAL OFFICERS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| National President..... | Desireé Stoy |
| National Vice President..... | Rita Navarreté |
| Central Div. Natl. VP..... | Virginia Kodl |
| Eastern Div. Natl. VP..... | Mary Ann Ventulett |
| Northwestern Div. Natl. VP..... | Thelma “Tootie” Fueller |
| Southern Div. Natl. VP..... | Nancy Weatherly Jordan |
| Western Div. Natl. VP..... | Josephine Keanu |
| National Chaplain..... | Cherita Potter |
| National Historian..... | Marian “Pic” Webster |
| National Secretary..... | Mary “Dubbie” Buckler |
| National Treasurer..... | Marta Hedding |

PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENTS

Josie Melgard
Pearl Behrend
Linda Boone
Linda Newsome
Phyllis Bachman
Barbara Kranig
Virginia Hobbs
Elizabeth “Lib” Stewart*
Kristine West
Sherry McLaughlin
Elsie Bailey
Sandi Dutton
Carol Van Kirk
JoAnn Cronin
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan

*also acted as National Parliamentarian

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEWOMEN

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Alabama | Versie Rutherford |
| Alaska | Betty Randall |
| Arizona | Barbara Matteson |
| Arkansas | Mary Alice Graham |
| California | Shelby Hitch |
| Colorado | Dee Chappell-Haley |
| Connecticut | Doris Lafontaine |
| Delaware | Helen Skelton |
| DC | Jacqueline Cunningham |
| Florida | Linda Teasley |
| Georgia | Dot Thornton |
| Hawaii | Laura Hashimoto |
| Idaho | Pearl Bentley |
| Illinois | Carolee Junge |
| Indiana | Judy Butler |
| Iowa | Norma Hawkins |
| Kansas | La Veta Miller |
| Kentucky | Pamela Rice |
| Louisiana | Maggie Watts |
| Maine | Charlotte Wing |
| Maryland | Catherine Wheeler |
| Massachusetts | Cynthia Johnson-Smith |
| Michigan | Deb Meskill |
| Minnesota | Marie Goede |
| Mississippi | Madeline Vuncannon |
| Missouri | Kathy Petterson |
| Montana | Barbara Monroe |
| Nebraska | Gayla Schmid |
| Nevada | Nancy Michalski |
| New Hampshire | Harriet Lemery |
| New Jersey | Lynda Stadler |
| New Mexico | Beverly Miller |
| New York | Carol Johnson |
| North Carolina | Joyce Willis |
| North Dakota | Charlotte Lassonde |
| Ohio | Carol Robinson |
| Oklahoma | Sue Heil |
| Oregon | Cyndi Dahl |
| Pennsylvania | Delphine Strine |
| Puerto Rico | Maria Vazquez |
| South Carolina | Dot Tunstall |
| South Dakota | Lila Speckels |
| Tennessee | Jo Bridges |
| Texas | Charlie Collins-Dew |
| Utah | Debra Swafford |
| Virginia | Pat Lambert-Knight |
| Washington | Eva Wallace |
| Wisconsin | Rose Wenger |
| Wyoming | Peggy Miller |

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PROCEEDINGS

(FROM THE SCRIPT)

PRESIDENT STOY: This National Executive Committee Meeting will now come to order.

PRESIDENT STOY: Please disable all electronic devices or place them in the silent mode.

Please rise and remain standing for the opening ceremonies.

PRESIDENT STOY: Bonnie Crews and Pat Reed will advance the colors.

PRESIDENT STOY: National Chaplain Cherita Potter will offer the invocation and recognize and honor our promise to America's POW/MIAs.

POW/MIA CEREMONY

CHAPLAIN POTTER: The American Legion Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

The chair cover on the empty chair -- a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing. Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

PRESIDENT STOY: The Chair calls upon Americanism Chairman Coral May Grout to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem; Constitution & Bylaws Chairman Nancy Brown-Park will lead us in the Preamble to the Constitution.

CHAIRMAN GROUT: 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.

"Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hail'd as the twilight's last gleaming? Whose bright stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight, o'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof thro' 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?"

CHAIRMAN BROWN-PARK: For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to stay 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 STOY: You may be seated.

PRESIDENT STOY: This meeting of the National Executive Committee is convened.

Good evening and welcome to the second NEC meeting of this administrative year. It is my genuine pleasure to see all of you and I hope that each of you look forward to your NEC experience.

It falls into your capable hands to exercise unbiased, equitable decisions in the best interest of the American Legion Auxiliary, and I am confident that our actions will ensure our continued progress and success.

Before we begin our business, I want to remind you that anyone wishing to speak is first asked to make their way to the microphone in the center aisle as this is the only way your remarks can be heard for recording by our reporter for the transcripts of the meeting.

Each of you is charged with the responsibility to document your attendance at this meeting. Attendance sheets are provided for your convenience. Please indicate your attendance in the appropriate spot. These sheets will be collected at the close of this meeting.

It is my pleasure to introduce the head table.

Rita Navarreté, National Vice President, New Mexico;

Virginia Kodl, Central Division National Vice President, Wisconsin;

Mary Ann Ventulett, Eastern Division National Vice President, Maine;

Thelma ‘Tootie’ Fueller, Northwestern Division National Vice

President, North Dakota;

Nancy Weatherly Jordan, Southern Division National Vice President, South Carolina;

Josephine Keanu, Western Division National Vice President, Hawaii;

Cherita Potter, National Chaplain, Oregon;

Marian ‘Pic’ Webster, National Historian, Michigan;

Mary ‘Dubbie’ Buckler, National Secretary Candidate, Indiana;

Marta Hedding, National Treasurer, Indiana;

Elizabeth ‘Lib’ Stewart, National Parliamentarian, North Carolina;

Bonnie Crews, Personal Page, Virginia;

Pat Reed, Personal Page, Ohio.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NATIONAL SECRETARY

PRESIDENT STOY: Our first order of business is the election of the National Secretary.

Voting is necessary because, one, we do not have appropriate policy defining mail voting, so 100 percent response is necessary; two, 100 percent responses were not achieved.

The Chair asks the National Vice President to assume the chair.

VICE PRESIDENT NAVARRETÉ: The Chair recognizes the National President for the purpose of nominating a National Secretary.

PRESIDENT STOY: It gives me great pleasure to nominate Mary ‘Dubbie’ Buckler for the Office of National Secretary for the remainder of the 2008-2009 administrative year.

VICE PRESIDENT NAVARRETÉ: You have heard the nomination of Mary ‘Dubbie’ Buckler for the Office of National Secretary.

All in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

VICE PRESIDENT NAVARRETÉ: All opposed, say no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

VICE PRESIDENT NAVARRETÉ: You have elected Mary ‘Dubbie’ Buckler your National Secretary for the remainder of the 2008-2009 administrative year.

The National President will now assume the chair.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Rita.

The Chair requests the newly elected National Secretary to join me at the podium for the Oath of Office.

You will raise your right hand and repeat after me:

I, state your name, National Secretary (pause)

MS. BUCKLER: I Mary Buckler, National Secretary (pause)

PRESIDENT STOY: Do hereby accept the responsibilities (pause)

MS. BUCKLER: Do hereby accept the responsibilities (pause)

PRESIDENT STOY: Of the Office of National Secretary (pause)

MS. BUCKLER: Of the Office of National Secretary (pause)

PRESIDENT STOY: And I promise to perform faithfully (pause)

MS. BUCKLER: And I promise to perform faithfully (pause)

PRESIDENT STOY: The duties of that Office. (pause)

MS. BUCKLER: The duties of that Office.

PRESIDENT STOY: Congratulations, Dubbie!

We will be utilizing a consent agenda in lieu of multiple motions to handle many of the basic business items. These items are listed on your agenda and include:

The approval of the proceedings from the August 2008 meeting;

The ratification of replacement committee appointments for this administrative year;

The charter cancellations since August 2008.

You received information on each of these items prior to this meeting, with any updates, on your chair today.

The consent agenda will work as follows:

The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt all items as presented and with no discussion necessary.

If a member wishes to discuss any of the items or make corrections to an item, the Chair will entertain a motion to remove that item from the consent agenda prior to voting.

Voting on the consent agenda will then proceed and then the item removed from the consent agenda will be handled separately.

Are there any questions on the use of the consent agenda?

PRESIDENT STOY: The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the consent agenda or to remove an item from the list.

MS. ROBINSON: Moved to accept.

MS. TUNSTALL: Second.

GREETINGS

PRESIDENT STOY: National Vice President Rita Navarreté will bring greetings.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Rita.

It is now my pleasure to welcome Past National President Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan to bring greetings on behalf of all of our Past National Presidents.

PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT PULVERMACHER-RYAN: My role today, by special request, is to present to you some of our very best Past National Presidents one by one. You will meet those here when we're all done.

These ladies served one special year, much work before, that is what I hear. As I call their name, I'll have them stand, so hold your applause, then give them a hand.

Josie Melgard's first in line, then Wisconsin's Pearl Behrend comes to mind. Linda Boone is next on the list and Linda Newsome cannot be missed.

Phyllis Bachman is with us, too, and Barbara Kranig is part of the crew. Ginny Hobbs joined them in year '99, with Elizabeth Stewart immediately behind.

Then Kristine West stepped up to the plate and Sherry McLaughlin didn't hesitate. Elsie Bailey then came along, with Sandi Dutton following, coming on strong.

Then we elected Carol Van Kirk, next JoAnn Cronin shared in the work. Then I joined them in 2008. That's all the presidents now up to date.

Although there are others not with us today, we honor their service in our own special way. This whole group of ladies has given so much to serve the Auxiliary as chairmen and such. So to recognize their service and talent and time, put your hands together in concert with mine.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Jan.

Would the Pages please escort Marcy Schmidt, Le Chapeau National, to the podium to bring greetings on behalf of the Eight & Forty.

PROCEEDINGS

(FROM AUDIO)

LE CHAPEAU NATIONAL SCHMIDT: Thank you. National President, Desi, National Officers, National Committee members, and Chairmen, National Executive Committee members, and Past National Presidents, it is a real honor and privilege to bring you greetings from your subsidiary organization, the Eight & Forty.

There are many challenges facing each of us in these uncertain times. Our brave young men and women are still defending the freedoms that we cherish on many different fronts. Our economy is in shambles and many of our values are being tossed by the wayside.

We have to remain strong and committed to our beliefs. The American Legion Auxiliary is dedicated to the aims and purposes of The American Legion, which is the welfare of our veterans, their families, our communities, and our nation.

As partners in the Eight & Forty, we are members of the American Legion Auxiliary first and we are willing to help our great organization in any way that we can.

Our focus is on children with respiratory diseases and our support is given to National Jewish Health in Denver, who once again was named by *U.S. News and World Report* the number one hospital in the research and treatment of respiratory diseases.

Our special project this year is the art therapy program at National Jewish. We are continuing to raise funds for the lung and respiratory nurses scholarship, which is offered to those who desire to become respiratory therapists, and will continue our support of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

We will honor our promises every day as we are tied together in service to our children.

May you accomplish much in your Executive Committee meeting and have a most successful year as we continue to work for God and country.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Marcy.

The Chair calls upon National Finance Chairman Linda Boone.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Thank you, Madam President.

This evening, we're going to start out with having a review of our FY '08 audit that the NEC all received copies before we got here.

And since some of you, most of you NECs are new to this position, I wanted to introduce our auditing firm representative tonight and give you a little bit of background because although Mike is not new to some of us, he is new to a lot of you. So we wanted to make sure that you knew the credentials of the auditing firm and person that we have entrusted this audit to.

Mike Alerding is the managing partner of the audit firm that we have chosen, Alerding & Company, and he's been in the business for 39 years. And they have a wide variety of clients and do a significant amount of nonprofit business with -- so they have -- over those 39 years, he's learned a lot about nonprofits and he has served on the board of over 40 not-for-profit organizations in his professional career.

And a few of those, I'm just going to mention two or three of those, is like the United Way of Central Indiana, the United Way of Indiana, and the PBS Channel 20 in Indianapolis. And those are some significant clients that you might recognize even if you're not from Indiana that require a lot of skill.

He has chaired actually 12 nonprofit company boards. So that brings a lot of experience and expertise. He has been helpful in establishing and responsible for establishing six foundations for not-for-profit clients in his career.

And one of the things he does in his spare time is a guest speaker on local and national level, various not-for-profit topics, including Sarbanes-Oxley for nonprofits, best practices, audit committees, board of director governance, board leadership, foundation endowments, and a new form 990, just the expertise we need for a firm that is helping guide us in auditing and in our management of our not-for-profit.

He's a features and viewpoint writer for over 25 years for the Indiana Business Journal or the Indianapolis Business Journal and he has received the Small Business Administration's Accounting Advocate for the Year in 1989 and 2000.

So we're real pleased that we have such an expert to help guide us and give us counsel.

So, again, Mike Alerding.

MR. ALERDING: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. ALERDING: Thank you, Linda.

I hope you can hear me. Maybe not. I would stand behind the podium, but when you're 5-foot-6, you tend to get lost behind a podium. So if I can walk, it might be a little bit better.

Okay. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Let's see if you've got some technology here. We do. Good.

My job is the audit partner on board every year. The Auxiliary has an audit which is (unintelligible) fiduciary responsibility to all (unintelligible) who are the largest female organization worldwide.

And it is truly an honor for us to have the opportunity to work with you. I have thoroughly enjoyed it over the last three years and all of our staff look forward to this job. And it is not a simple job.

For those of you who had the opportunity to look at the financial statements, you can tell this is a monster organization. It has a lot going on in it. It has a lot of people who -- here we go. There are a lot of programs -- ah, there

we go -- lot of people, lot of programs, and a lot of good things that are being done.

And my job today is going to be to give you an overview of those financial statements and, most importantly, to talk about a time for change.

No, I'm not Obama. I'm not going to run through that kind of information, but it is, ladies, a serious, serious time for change in this country. And if you're a not-for-profit organization, if you've read anything at all in the last two years, you will know that the landscape has changed, that you are no longer as an entity or as an industry, you're no longer favored.

This is my 39th year in working in the not-for-profit area and I can tell you in the early days, not-for-profit entities were held in high esteem by everyone. Those days are now gone.

Senator Grassley, the Senate Finance Committee, and others have made it clear that many of those entities, certainly not you, but many of them have been abusive. And as a taxpayer, I stand back from this and go "You're right; they have."

And we need to get rid of that abuse and Grassley, of course, paints you all with the same brush. So things are different. Things are going to change. Your organization is going to change. And I know it's difficult, especially an organization that's entering its 90th year, it makes it difficult to change. And I know that, but now is the time.

There are a lot of factors coming together, not just the change in the political landscape in our country, but there are a lot of factors that have come together to make this the time to do that. And that's what I'm going to speak about in the latter part of my remarks. I'm going to talk about the need for an Audit Committee and we're going to get a little -- we're going to get real serious about that.

We're going to talk about governance, organization of the Auxiliary, the need for a dues increase, and, lastly, the Foundation.

Now, you may ask yourself, "What are you talking to us about a dues increase for?" Well, I'll tell you why. I mentioned this the other night to the Finance Committee.

One of our young Seniors, she's whatever a young Senior is, 25 years old. She's on the audit a few years ago and she comes in -- at the end of every audit, we bring all the audit team together and we say what do you want to tell us that isn't in the work papers. What did you observe? Was there anything that just kind of gave you kind of an uneasy feeling or whatever?

Everything was fine except Sarah looked at the other partner I have on the work with me and she said, 'You know what really is interesting about this?' And I said, 'What?' She said, 'These people haven't raised dues since 1996.' And I said, 'No, that can't be right.' She said, 'Well, then somebody didn't tell me the truth because I asked the question.' I said, 'Well, there's no way in the world this -- they could even be in business today if they didn't raise dues.'

Well, it turns out to be true. Time has come today. We're going to talk about that when we get to it.

The financial statements, I understand that you have had an opportunity to look through these. And your financial statements are your representation to the world of how you did last year.

Now, keep in mind they're September 30 statements. September 30 in the world we're in today was a decade ago. So I don't spend a lot of time looking back to September 30 other than to tell you what we did in the audit.

What we are hired to do, and we are independent, is we come in and we perform an enormous number of tasks to determine whether or not the information that you're getting in those financials that will be used to go a whole lot of places is fairly presented.

But as importantly as anything for your sake, because, after all, ladies, this organization is the governing body of the Auxiliary. Now, I'm not -- this isn't part of the show. I'm just -- I got to --

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: I don't know about you. You're waving in here and I want to stand next to you 'cause it's so hot.

Okay. The most important thing I believe that we do that's of interest to you is we look at the internal control system. Inside the Auxiliary is an enormous number of transactions every year. I think you can probably imagine when you've got 800,000 members, there's a lot of transactions. They're not all big. Some are. Many of those transactions are relatively small.

Well, how do you know that the system that they have, the organization has set up to control that, how do you know sitting here as the governing body, how do you know that's okay? You hire us. And we go in and we perform an enormous number of tasks of transactions and we come back and say we think the system is in pretty good shape.

And that's what I have to report to you tonight, that thanks to the -- all the people at the home office, and I think you probably have to give Marta most of the credit, it is an excellent system and I think you should be very proud of what they've been able to accomplish in Indianapolis. It's just very well done.

The statements this year included a new entity, the Foundation. We'll talk about that at the end. We cannot separate the entities themselves for financial reporting purposes. So the financial statements are audited with both of them together. And that's because the Auxiliary is -- does own for all intent and purposes the Foundation. It is one entity.

There are legal and there are some business reasons why they have different formation, different legal documents, they file a different tax return. There are some reasons for that. We're going to get into that when we get into the ALA Foundation.

And so they are separate entities legally, but they're not separate entities. For financial reporting purposes, we put them all back together.

So when you see the audit, you will see the whole Auxiliary, not just a piece of it. Now, that's important as well. It is a change this year from what you've had in the past.

What you hire us to do is to render an opinion. And on the first two pages of the report is our opinion. Now, you would think, ‘Why does it take you so long to say all that?’ Well, I’m not real sure. It’s just every time we have a new head of our society, they want to add more language. So now we’re up to two pages to tell you everything is okay, which we can do in a sentence. And it is.

And that’s what we delivered this year. It’s the highest form of assurance we can give you on your financial statements.

Now, let’s talk about why you even have these. You get the financial statements regularly. The -- you know what’s going on on a fairly regular basis. I think Linda is going to talk to you later when I’m done about the budget, how important the budget is and how you stay on it.

Well, then why do you need these and why do you pay us to do this formal financial statement that’s all bound and pretty? Well, here’s why.

First of all, you have a lot of constituents, a lot, not just 800,000 members, but there are a number of donors across the country present, future, potential, contingent. They’re everywhere.

If you want to raise money to help in the mission and purpose, you have to have a marketing statement. Part of what this is is your marketing statement. What it tells a donor is that these folks have been fiscally responsible enough to be able to accumulate \$18 million worth of equity over the years and still spend over 80 percent every year of the money it collects on its own programs. That’s pretty responsible. That’s pretty fiscal. That’s marketing.

And that’s a lot of what this is. It is formal and I know there are some words in there that kind of get a little confusing, but it’s what they expect.

The other people that need this are state agencies which are, as you know, I don’t care what state you’re in, have become more and more active. State legislatures now have passed model legislation covering a variety of topics for not-for-profit entities.

And the word is they’re going to get the same way Grassley’s people are going to get because, likewise, they don’t want these entities in their states who are abusive one way or the other.

Right now state agencies, at least in Indiana, our state legislature is spending an inordinate amount of time in some areas where I have a personal interest. Public television, for example, they’re just slaughtering it.

And why are they doing that? Why? Why do they take these on? Because business has come behind them and said, ‘They compete with us; they don’t pay tax.’ How can that be?

When you turn the television on and you go to the station and one of them is PBS, they say, well, they don’t have to pay tax, we do. How fair is that?

Well, we can go back to a million arguments on charitable, on educational, on religious. There’s all kinds of reasons that public television stations make a lot of sense.

But you can also make an argument and the state legislatures in many states, if I recall the other day, 13 of them are taking issue with that. They can

absolutely strip a public television station of its charter, its not-for-profit charter. We hope it's not going to do that.

And I chaired that board for many years. I've been on it for 13 years in Indianapolis and it's near and dear to my heart, but I understand the argument.

Ladies, it's just the beginning. Trust me. I'm not going to Obama you again. I'm telling you this is the beginning. Open up. It's not going to stop. They're going to come, they're going to come, and they're going to come.

The other folks that love to have these reports -- which incidentally you know about the new 990. I think last year I bored you ad nauseam, at least some of you who were here, about the, oh, my God part of that 990, which is now incidentally thicker. If you're a teaching hospital, I believe, it's thicker than the form 1120 that a corporation files, that the large ones do. It's the largest -- right now my tax partner tells me it's the thickest and the most complex tax form in the entire Code is the new 990.

Well, the taxing authorities as part of that said, oh, incidentally while you're at it, attach an audit. We want to see your audit because the tax return doesn't include a lot of this information. They want to see it.

Why else do they want that? Because they want to know if you've been audited. If you don't attach one, you say you haven't been audited, well, they'll be out to see you.

Four hundred new agents were hired in October of '07 by the Senate Finance Committee. Grassley authorized that solely for the purpose of enforcing not-for-profit statutes. That's it. They're enforcement agents. They're not sit-behind-the-desk people. So those people want to see this audit. That's the other reason you have it.

Lastly, for those of you who've never had the fun of looking online at watchdog organizations, just hit not-for-profit watchdogs in your search engine, and I can't remember what comes up, but it's like 10,000 watchdog organ -- I know there's not, but there's at least a dozen very powerful watchdog organizations that are not-for-profit entities for the most part, but not all.

And what they do is they watch you. They look at all this stuff and they compare you, they compare you, they compare you. They look at information. They say, 'Why are they doing that? and Why aren't they doing this?' And basically what they're doing is they're giving you an opinion, giving the world an opinion of whether they think you're worthy of donations.

Well, we think it was foolhardy. I did. I thought it was a lot of hooey for a long time. Well, most recently I -- one of the endowments we have in Indianapolis, Lilly Endowment, which is, I think, one of the top dozen in the country, Lilly Endowment started using that.

In one of my presentations down there, they actually understood that there was a negative comment on one of the watchdog sites about the entity I was representing and it shook me to my bones. I thought, 'My gosh...they're paying attention to this.'

It is kind of like a soap opera. If you ever want to have fun just reading it, it is pretty -- it's nasty stuff. It's just -- they obviously don't have a life and they're spending a lot of time doing things they don't need.

In your review, your financial statements, you will note these are as of September 30 now, but you were about at \$23 million of assets then. You're down to 20 now. Since September 30, you've lost another three.

I think you bottomed out or I'm pretty sure actually when you look at the mix of loss, I hate to say you're like everybody else, but there wasn't anything extraordinary in there. You didn't have real estate in Bogata or something that went to zero, but you did lose about 40 percent of your long-term investments. They'll come back. It's something. It may not get back to the full amount, but it's going to come back.

Keep in mind, you know, we keep forgetting and the last two or three years when I've been before you, I've said two years in row, well, you made three more million on your investments, you made three more million. And everybody kind of yawned and went back to sleep and said, 'Well, of course we made \$3 million.'

No, you didn't of course; you made \$3 million. I'm old enough to remember where if you broke even -- do you remember when the stock market, the Dow Industrial average was at a thousand? I do. And when it went to 11,000, I thought, 'This is crazy.'

Of course, I'm a borrower. I got a bunch of kids and adopted kids and stuff, so I borrow money, I don't invest it. So all I cared about was the interest rate.

But on the other side, these people who did have money in it, they were getting, oh, my goodness rich. And I was thinking. 'This can't be right--you can't go up eleven times in two decades. That doesn't make sense.'

Well, so part of this is just the big-time adjustment. We're just kind of getting back to reality a bit. It will come back. I'm not sure how far it will come back. It will come back.

Your statement -- so your balance sheet is still strong. Of that \$20 million or \$23 million at September 30, about 20 of it was in equity, which means you owned it. You have very few liabilities. This organization just doesn't -- hasn't had.

Very healthy from a balance sheet standpoint. From an income statement standpoint, which is a statement of activities, it shows you lost your patoots this year. And it's real simple. The market just ate you this year. And that's just the way it is.

Now, most of those are not cash losses. Most of those were unrealized losses. So you didn't sell them and take the loss. You just held them and the loss -- the value went down, because if you lost \$5.3 million, you would wonder Marta's pretty good at running the financial end, but how did Marta do it when you lose 5.3? Well, she didn't because it wasn't real money. Well, it's money, but it's not the kind that you have to spend to pay bills.

So your cash flow management actually ended up being positive 142,000 for the year because most of your loss came in losses that didn't have to be realized. So that's a positive as well. That's how you stay alive when you lose that kind of money.

For those who really were struggling with insomnia and wanted to get through the footnotes last night, they're pretty much standard. The biggest new note that we deal with in these is the long-term lease on the headquarters facility in Indianapolis. And I understand there was a question on the term 'non-cancellable and the answer to that question is yes, it's non-cancellable.

Now, that doesn't mean it can't be negotiated. It doesn't mean that there couldn't be some subletting or the like. But when you sign a long-term lease, it's a contract and that's what you did. It's a beautiful building, great opportunity, but it is an off balance sheet liability and it's disclosed.

Okay. Your net assets, you will see some terms and I'm not going to go all night and try to teach you all to be accountants, but there are three kinds of net assets that is equity. Just whenever you see the word 'net assets' insert the word 'equity.' It's the only way to make it clear.

Three kinds. Unrestricted, that's the bulk of this. That's the money you use and it's not restricted by someone outside the organization. It's your money, if you will, to use to operate the entity and virtually all of your equity is unrestricted.

There's another kind, though, that's called temporarily restricted which is just like a holding tank. If I give you money and I say here is a million dollars, but you can't use it 'til next year, that is temporarily restricted. It's restricted 'til next year and then it frees up and becomes unrestricted. So that's the second kind. You have a small amount of that, timing issues.

Thirdly is what we hope will be the crux of the organization down the road in the next 10, 15 years and we started it this year with the Foundation and that is permanently restricted money. And that's where donors, 800,000 members throw in a buck or two a year into a fund where we can't spend the money. We have to invest it and we take the earnings off of it and we use those earnings to support the entity every year, to provide us with some wealth and stability.

If you look at not-for-profit entities and you look to find what stability do they have financially, virtually every major not-for-profit functional organization has some sort of endowment behind it.

And I think as Linda indicated, I've started six of these now and unfortunately I've gotten this reputation when -- when an entity is in trouble, they say, 'Mike, just go on the board for a few years, beat them up, tell them they need to do a foundation, let's get one started.'

The one at the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, which is the -- I think the eighth largest orchestra in the country, and last year was clearly the most fiscally responsible, no question about it. And lot of you from places like Baltimore and others saw your symphonies go into the tank. Not only is the Indianapolis Symphony not in the tank, before the market hit, they were at around \$150 million in their endowment.

You know when we started that? We started it in '91 with five million bucks. That's how we did it. From that five, we built, we built, we built, we

built. Thirty percent of the symphony's budget every year came from the endowment. That's how they did it.

And you talk about financial stability. It will be there a lot longer than all of us put together, which is part of what you are starting to see grow in here as a result of the changes that we'll talk about at the end of the Foundation.

Those are permanently restricted numbers. That's when a donor says, 'Here's the money; you can't spend it, but you can take all the earnings off it forever.'

This is just a summary of what happened just so you can see it. And I don't want to bore you with it. But last year, you can see very clearly you had total revenues of ten million, total expenses of 7.6, and net income of 3.1. And this year, the net revenues were only three million because you had a loss, an investment income loss of three and a half. So you had a \$7 million flop if you compare this year to last year.

And, again, back to what I said before. It's not real money, but in the long run, it will be.

Here's a little something. I'm going to set you up for my last couple of my comments on dues. When Sarah said this to us, we started looking into some of the other membership organizations we handle. And there are a lot of them.

The public television stations, as you know, are membership organ - - that's a good -- that's probably the closest one to this. They raise dues every year. Now, that's their choice. Some don't. Some do it every three. Some do it every five.

I -- it doesn't matter how you choose to do it, but one thing is for sure. Our costs go up every year at the Auxiliary. Every year, the costs go up. Printing costs go up. The cost of people, health benefits, everything goes up.

And you have not just a good idea, you have an obligation to protect the financial interest of this organization. That's what you're -- you're the stewards.

And so I went back and said all right. In 19 -- in 2004, we got -- we collected 4.3 million-ish in dues. If we use that as a base year, only five years, I didn't go back to '96, I just went to '04, and if we would have just inflated that, if we'd have just raised dues 3 percent, which is pennies, that's all, look what it would have done by the time you get to '08. You actually raised 4.1 million this year. If you had done that, you were at about almost 4.9. Doesn't sound like a lot, but you add up those differences, ladies, and it is huge. It is huge.

And it finally accounts for the cost increases that you've absorbed throughout all these years. So that's just a little something to kind of set you up.

One thing that the watchdogs look at -- this slide might be a little hard to read, so I'm going to try to replace it. One of the things they're all looking for is how much money are you spending to raise it.

Now, you've heard the horror stories. This organization spends 70 cents to raise a dollar and they spend 80 cents to raise a dollar. Nobody likes that. So there's some benchmarks that have been developed. Even the IRS has got these benchmarks published, believe it or not -- excuse me -- and they

are that for the programs themselves, the things that you do as an organization, educational and charitable, in your case, in a benchmark sense, 65 to 75 percent of every dollar should be spent on the people you serve. You're actually at 82.

Who said this last night? That's time for an applause. Give yourself a hand, all of you. That's really important.

(Applause.)

MR. ALERDING: Eighty-two cents of every dollar you collect goes to the people that you're serving. That's the highest I've seen in a long time. That's remarkable.

The benchmark for management and administration, for the people that -- up here who have to run this organization every day, you have to pay all these exorbitant accounting costs and all these legal fees and all that.

In rent, the benchmark is 5 to 10 percent. You're actually right in the middle at 8 percent. So you're right where you should be.

The last one is fund raising. This is the one where everybody gets all worked up. And the benchmark on that, what at least they'd like to see is 10 to 20 percent. You're right there at the low end of that at 10 percent.

That could be good news or not. If you're at the low end, your revenues are going down. I don't need to tell you your membership is dropping and your revenues are dropping. So maybe you aren't spending enough there. That would be the initial reaction. Hmm, if we spend more, would we raise more? Well, you better spend it wisely if you are, but at least that's an initial. If you start dropping below 10 percent, then I think you really do need to look and say, 'Are we making the right kind of choices there?'

So I try to do this for you every day -- every year to at least give you the benchmark and let you know about where you are.

Last year -- actually, go back two years ago, I stood up here and said, ladies, there's a new sheriff in town and it's called the Internal Revenue Service and Senator Grassley that all came out of Enron and Sarbanes-Oxley. That's where this all started. And it's getting pretty bad.

And the first thing you need to do, this was two years ago, is you need to approve the formation of an Audit Committee. I don't have any not-for-profit organizations, even the ones that grossed 200,000 a year instead of eight million, who don't have an Audit Committee now.

Now, they're hard. Oh, it's a pain. You got to get somebody to chair it. You got to get people on it. It's another committee. You got to go through parliamentary whatever. I don't care. You, I understand, are the people who carry the message. You need to carry this message. This message is a minimum standard that this organization has to have is the establishment of an independent Audit Committee. It is important.

And I was telling the Finance Committee the other night I'm not doing this for my health setting one up. I hate audit committees if you're the auditor because they're my new boss. And you never know what you're going to get. I mean, you could end up with all kinds of people who are whacko and I got

problems. I could get fired as a result of this and I know that. But that's not my obligation.

I told Linda before I started my obligation is to this organization, not you and not you and not any of the people up here, but the whole organization. That's my job. And I focus on that and say what is the absolute minimum. That is the establishment of an independent Audit Committee and I want you to have three-year terms with a three-year election term after that at a minimum. Don't put them on for a year and take them off. Worthless totally. You might as well not -- don't even waste your breath. And get qualified people.

These are not Finance Committee. Finance Committee has its own role and it's an important one. But the Audit Committee is independent of that. They have to be independent.

And to give you a quick -- just a quick example how this goes and I think it should be a member of the NEC or whatever the governing body is. So let me set that straight right now.

But there is an organization in Indianapolis that's had all kinds of political problems in the paper. Every time one of the papers gets bored, they run over to this and it's the Humane Society, Indianapolis Humane Society. The poor people, they just love puppies and they just can't seem to get it right.

And I was always a donor. And unfortunately one of my nephews, and when you're an Irish Catholic, you got a relative on every block, they find you, and he was -- he's a partner in a law firm and one of his partners said, 'Who's this Alerding guy? Is that your uncle Mike?' And he said, 'Yeah.' She said, 'Well, he keeps giving us money. We need him.'

Well, at the time, I was on six boards and I said, you know, I've eaten more chicken dinners and gained more weight than I can handle anymore. I'm not eating any more chicken dinners; I'm done. I'll give you the money. I just don't want to deal with it.

Well, then I saw a couple things happen in the newspaper and it really irritated me because they were not fair for this organization. They were unfair.

And what happened, this organization did not have an Audit Committee, didn't think it was necessary, so I volunteered to chair the Audit Committee, but I'm not on the board. I refused to be on the board. I am independent Audit Committee chair and the first thing I told the board or the first thing I told their CEO is there's a new sheriff in town and I'm it. From now on, no one is to talk to the press. You tell them to call me. I'll talk to the press.

We've had that happen just recently. About six months ago, one of these reporters got a wild hair, was bored, didn't have anything to do. They called over there looking for some meaty story that wasn't there. They did the right thing. They said, 'Call him.'

They called me. I said I need in writing your entire set of questions and I want a motive for each one of them. If you don't give me a motive, if you don't tell me why you're asking, you're not going to get an answer. I never heard from him again.

That's the first -- and that's an extreme, but an Audit Committee Chair, their job is to protect you from risk. It's not to check on the auditor's audit fees. They look at this organization from purely a risk standpoint.

What are the things that could affect this organization? One of them that's pretty obvious is if you screw up the 990. You want to talk about affecting. You're gone. How's that for an effect? Your 501(c)19, not to mention your (c)3 with the Foundation, it's gone. You don't think they can do it? You don't think they can do it? Oh, yeah, they can do it and they can do it in a heartbeat.

Remember, under the new 990, you've got to effectively reapply every year. One of the questions I was mentioning the other night that's a killer question for this organization, 'Have you amended your bylaws ever?' Well, I suspect that the answer is 'Yeah.' They'll probably be out to see you, because people who -- here's why.

When you filed your original -- I don't -- we've decided you never filed one, but when you should have filed your original 1023 back in -- 90 years ago to get your exemption, you have to file this ugly form that's called 1023. And for those who have done it, they're all going 'Ugh' because it's ugly.

Once you do it, the IRS leaves the 1023 and goes, okay, I understand what they're about. We approve you as a not-for-profit entity that's in the charitable or educational, whatever you're doing. Congratulations. Don't change it without telling us because we approved it based on this.

The question they ask in the 990 is, 'Have you changed that? And if you have, we'll be out to see you.' I mean, I'm telling you. I know I'm crying wolf and, you know, if we don't get someone out to see us in the next two years, you're all going to be going 'You said they'd be here.' Patience, ladies. Patience. They'll be here.

Let's get some of this stuff started now. An Audit Committee, that's one of the first things they're going to do is they're going to address this 990 and they're going to say what can we do to make sure we minimize risk, we mitigate it, not solve every risk. There are others.

Please go back to your state representatives, is that correct, and get this thing passed. For some reason, it didn't pass last year. I don't want to know all the reasons. I just want to step outside with whoever caused this because it is in your best interest. It's not for me. Again, I don't get anything out of this. I'm telling you. This is a minimum standard. I've said enough or I'm just going to get in more trouble.

Next subject: governance. Governance is something that every not-for-profit struggles with and you struggle with it as well for a lot of reasons. You are a huge grassroots organization. You come from the very bowels of this country, all the way up to the top. And I'll tell you, you've got so many people. When you look at governance, you are not right sized.

You're coming from the bottom up, but the top has never been the focus of this organization. It's never really been the focus and for that reason, governance has not, in my view, and I've only been around three of your 90

years, but in my three years, it's not been a priority. I'm here to tell you it should be. It needs to be a priority.

Governance is the establishment of policies and a continuous monitoring of those to make sure that they've been implemented by whoever the members of the governing body are.

I just wrote an article and the paper at Indianapolis, they called, wanted an opinion. And I let everybody on the board in Indianapolis have it. I just let them have it because they're not governing. They think it's a club. They think it's a good résumé builder. They think it's a nice thing to be able to say, 'Oh, I'm on the board.' That's not why you're on the board.

And if you have a great passion for animals and you want to be on the Humane Society board, that's the only passion you've got, get off. If you want to govern, get on. The passion is secondary to the willingness and ability to govern because govern is not managing. Govern is not doing. Govern is to govern. And that's something that you're suffering from.

Those who govern set policy. They establish goals. They receive feedback and then they evaluate performance. I know those sound like some teacher giving you a list that's going to be on the test Tuesday. But if you look at each one of those, that's what they do.

Those who manage--Dubbie, Marta--those are the hired people who manage the organization. Their job is to carry out that mission delivery. They implement the vision of the board and they are accountable thereto so that they're not the same. They're different.

What does it take? What are the elements? If you're going to close your eyes and say, 'Here are the people I want to govern my organization,' then over the years, this is my experience on the kind of people you want to govern, whether it's a board of directors, whether it's an NEC, however you structure down the road, you get a governing body that's a functional governing body, not just representatives, but a functioning governing body, here are the kind of things you want in that body.

You want people with expertise, who have some form of expertise in governing. You want someone who's a leader, who understands what leadership is, someone with experience that could be experienced in a lot of things, the gray hair stuff, the thick skin. You want someone with holistic views rather than their own agenda views, their own state of X, Y, Z views, but people who are holistic.

You want people to have a passion for the mission and the purpose of the organization, so you don't want someone who doesn't care about animals if you're with the Humane Society. You want someone that's willing to govern because, ladies, it's hard work. It's tough work to govern.

And if you think it's not, sit on a couple of these boards and I'll tell you what, you don't get to be 5'6" when you used to be 6'5" by not being on boards. And I've been whittled down for years.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: The last thing you need is wisdom. Wisdom is -- here's what my father always says and he raised seven kids, so -- and we're

all pretty active. He was very, very active with the community and he raised us by himself. My mother died when the last one was born. And he said to us for many, many years, 'There are three kinds of people on every governing board and they're the three Ws: They're the workers, the wisdom, and the wealth, and each board ought to have about a third of them.'

And we keep asking -- I'll be 60 on St. Patrick's Day and I was with him Thursday. And I said, well, I'm going out and I'm going to be talking a little bit on leadership. And I say, 'Hey, when can I get to the point I'm going to be 60, Dad, I've been doing this a while?' He's 89, and I said, 'When do I get to the point where I'm no longer a worker bee and I finally get to be called the wisdom guy?' He goes, 'You're getting there; you're getting there.'

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: The other one I put on here, I was -- I'm kind of partial to. I left it off this time because it is important and it's really more important for the Foundation, but it's always important. The last one that's left off is wealth.

There are certain people you put on boards and you really don't care whether they can govern. You don't care whether they show up. Get their money, tell them thanks, name a chair after them, whatever. I don't care what you do. Just get the money. I didn't put that on there, but that's kind of the -- if we could find one of those.

I put it on there because, again, work, wisdom, wealth. Get a third, a third, a third on your boards, trust me, you'll be just fine.

There's a mandate for change in governance. There used to be social- and passion-driven board members. They are no more, not alone.

The problems with Enron were not management problems. They were not because people weren't passionate about selling oil or gas leases. The problem with Enron had nothing to do with the accounting people who ended up getting fired and going to jail.

And Arthur Anderson who crumbled, if you read the book and you've done the research, you will find the board didn't govern. The board said, here, go ahead, take this thing, and we're going to -- we're going down to Florida. We're going to party for a few days. That's what really happened. It was a lack of governance.

Well, Congress said, 'Well, we've had about enough of this crap. It's going to stop and it's going to stop now.' And SOX came into being. Other than an act of war, the fastest legislation that ever went through Congress in the last 25 years or 35 years was Sarbanes-Oxley. It went through so quickly, no one looked at it.

I can remember when it came through, I thought, 'This is a joke.' When I first heard it, I thought, 'Well, this is a joke. This can't be serious.' Well, it's serious and it's still with us.

As a result of that, that trickle-down effect went into Grassley's brain. And the folks from Iowa that are here, God love you because he's a piece of

work, that's for sure. He's a piece of work. I guess he runs unopposed; is that right? I assume because --

VOICE: No.

MR. ALERDING: Oh, my God, somebody ran against him. Okay. And they didn't win.

Anyway, he is quite the charming man and he basically said 'I want these not-for-profits. I want them on a stick. I'm done with them.'

It all started -- a lot of it started with the Evangelists and a couple of the bad things that happened eight, 10 years ago. Some things really got ugly and he just said, 'Why are we allowing these people to give money to these and taking a deduction because there's very big money, hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions, that are not tax dollars now because they're being deducted by people giving in his view donations to organizations that don't deserve it?'

So as a good Congressperson will do, there's money in them there hills. Well, he couldn't get it through Congress. And if you ever followed this thing, he put a lot of legislation on the table. Couldn't get it through. This little thing, little skirmish in Iraq got in the way and this little hurricane we had down South kept getting in the way. So nobody wanted to take on in an election year the not-for-profit industry. Wise, I would think. I mean, who wants to vote to cut the not-for-profits down?

He isn't going to stop, so you know what he did? He did the smart thing that all politicians do. He called the IRS. He said you know what, guys, there's money in them there hills and there's a lot of people who are taking a lot of deductions that shouldn't. And the IRS chief in his testimony said, 'By God, you're right.'

He also said when is the last time you updated your form, your form 990. He said I think it was 1956. They said, well, you know what, it's about time for a change. And you know what? They did. And you know what? It's a pain. It is an enormous form. It does things that are governance sensitive.

If you read through, just read it, if you're really bored to tears, read it. Sixteen sections and one of the sections, I believe it's Section 6, has 37 questions--37--all of them are yes/no.

Now, my oldest son is a constitutional lawyer. The first thing he said was that's a Fifth Amendment issue. You can't make them do that. And I said, 'Oh, yeah you can, because, remember, if there's no statute and there are no regulations, but the IRS issues a form, guess what? That's now law in this country.'

In the absence of legislation, in the absence of statute, the absence of formal regulation, the next one down the line is form 990. Form 990 is now law. We don't have to like it. You don't have to argue about it. It is and it will be and those questions are going to get it.

Those not-for-profits that do not move to true governance, not the country club stuff and not the tea parties and not the social club, which I've got a couple of them back home that are social clubs, those who move to governance,

if they don't move to governance, they will be thrown out. They will lose their privilege and that's all there is to it.

I don't think there's any doubt about this. And there are a lot of them out there who are just summarily ignoring the new form 990 and they're going to get it. This is a serious issue. So, please, I beg of you, if you don't mind, go back and kind of kick somebody. If you need help, call me.

Next subject, couple more, and then I'm done. The organizational structure is seriously outdated in this organization. Ninety years of doing things the same way, congratulations. I love you dearly.

Now, I'm speaking a little bit about The Legion, too, so I'm not just picking on you. It's got serious structural issues because it's almost impossible to effectively govern under the methodology you've got. I guess it could be done. I can't figure it out. I don't know how you can do it.

The current model is -- doesn't fit an organization with 20 million-plus in assets and 800,000 members. There's a better way to skin that cat. I want you to think about that. This is the beginning. I understand there's going to be some structural and governance committees formed. I think they're necessary. It must protect the grassroots nature of your organization.

Your strength comes from the states. Your strength comes from the grassroots. That's where you really get the support, but you can't govern that way. You have to come up with a way where governing takes precedence over some of the cultural and historical structural issues you've had.

And it's not that I'm making this up because I happen to like new structures. Again, my focus is on what's in your best interest and you need to hear it from someone.

I asked Linda before here if you didn't mind, by the time I get to this part, you better put chicken wire up. If you ever saw the Blues Brothers. I guess you didn't. Okay. Well, it's a good movie.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: Chicken wire because you're probably not going to want to hear this because it hits to the core of your culture of your organization. And the core of your organization is you're outdated. You need a new look and you need it pretty quickly. And if you don't, you'll be gone. You won't make it, not in this world.

Without 990 changes, without Grassley looking over you and without the mandates for governance coming out of everyone including donors, you could survive and that's why you did for 90 years. Not in this new environment. You're not going to make it.

You've got some time. This isn't tomorrow morning. But what it is, we need action. We need to move. We don't need to talk. We need a few people who are really interested to get this thing moving and get some decisions. And even if they're not the right decisions right away for all of you, it's the old theory you take them and you pitch them up on the board. You stick them up there and say what do you think.

Well, now you can modify from that. But the focus is on change, not on yacking. Too much yacking. We've got to get change. This one needs it and it's going to need it pretty soon. And I just puked my little thing.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: I was really -- I was rolling, too, and then it just kind of killed me, didn't it?

Okay. Okay. Legislative mandates, I think I've been through these. Enron started it. Grassley continued it. Grassley is still in Congress; is he not, Iowa?

VOICE: Yes, he is.

MR. ALERDING: Oh, he sure is and we do enjoy him. He provides some comic relief for some of us every so often.

I think I just went through this. Okay. I can't get it to go. Hit it. Yeah. Okay.

Lastly, I know it's always good because I usually get applause about this time and, yes, he's finally done. Actually, I'm not completely done, but I'm close enough. I'm going to talk about the Foundation for just a moment.

Dues increase, I already talked to you about that.

I want to make a couple of points here that are very important. You have a responsibility to your membership to keep it fiscally responsible. If you continue without some form of dues increase, some way to get this thing moving in the right direction, you will not have to worry about whether or not you're fulfilling your fiduciary duties because you won't have an organization. Inflation, costs, the stock market will eat you alive.

Okay. Here's what I think makes sense and this is coming from me. Nobody in this organization has done this. It's one of those things you didn't ask me for this opinion, so I'm going to give it anyway. You probably did pay for it, though, so pay a little bit for it, but not much.

Here's what I think. The NEC, that's you, with guidance from Finance and other committees, governance and the like, should decide on a dues increase that is responsible, provides financial stability in the long run, and I think a portion of those dues should go to the Foundation directly.

I think when you go to your membership, you go to them first and say, 'We haven't raised dues since '96.' Secondly, we're trying to get this Foundation funded so we don't have to keep your dues up. We don't have to pass every cost along. We don't have to worry about a year when the stock market goes down 40 percent because if we stabilize this thing through the Foundation, it will long-term stabilize your dues.

When I'm talking long-term, I'm not talking about six months. I'm talking about 10 years, 10 or 15 years.

Membership periodically increases to account for inflation. After you've set up the dues increase, you increase it somehow, whether it's every year, every three years, whatever. That will be for you to decide.

Okay. Here's my example. This is an example of what would happen. And I had to come up with something, ladies. This is one of those you take it, you throw it against the wall, and let's see if it sticks.

I can't dictate what you do. I think this is a consideration. What I said was let's increase dues four bucks a pop. They're five now. Let's make it nine.

Remember what I had showed you before. It should have been a lot larger than nine if we had just been increasing it. But for giggles, let's take it to nine.

Two of that goes to the Auxiliary directly to support daily operations and to give you the amount of money necessary to get out and do things. Two of it goes to the Foundation directly. Two bucks gives you 1.6 million if everybody contributes, and they will, in the Foundation to give it a start. It kicks it into gear. We start permanentizing this organization. We start putting it away so that it can't be spent on operations. Only the earnings can, but the earnings would be 80 grand a year. That's in year one.

Next year when two more dollars go in, it goes to 3.2 million. The next year, 4. -- you can do the math with me. At the end of five years, you stop doing that. That two bucks going to -- you're done. Now you've funded the Foundation. Let it run and let it start cranking. At the end of five years, instead of 80,000, it's going to crank 200 and some thousand, about 400,000 in there every year.

Now, I'm not making this stuff up. This is just my idea. I'm not married to this at all. It actually has nothing to do with me. What it does have to do with is you need to be responsible fiscally and do something.

So it's my old theory. I'm going to throw something on the wall. If you don't like it, that's good, but work with it, do something because, if not, I fear that this organization is going to start dropping its ability to continue.

Now, this really is the last subject, so now you can cheer and get out of here. And it did get cooler, didn't it, ladies? I feel better.

Foundation. There were two reasons why we have a Foundation. It was set up for two primary reasons. The first reason -- well, first of all, let me go back three years.

When I first got here, I sat down. Marta was in the room. Pam was in the room. And I looked at your financials and I said where's your permanent -- where's your endowment. How could you be an organization this -- that's been around this long and you don't have a Foundation. Come on. Come on. Where is it? Is it in a different entity? No, we don't have one. I said, well, you can do your own research and I hope you do, but you go out and look at organizations that are this large, this big, virtually all of them have some form of permanency where the money is set aside.

That was my driving force. And two years ago at this meeting, I said that. One year ago, I said it more forcefully because you were in the process of establishing it. You did, in fact, establish it over the year. I congratulate you for the movement. There were some people who really put their necks out to get

this done. And the board of that Foundation should be congratulated for getting this done. It is really a big step forward.

But that wasn't the only reason. That was my driving force, but there was another reason that I was not aware of. You are a (c)19. Now, that's about as -- that's an odd duck. Virtually no one knows what a (c)19 is.

My tax partner is almost my age and she's been almost all in not-for-profit. And I remember the first day coming home and I said, you know, this Auxiliary is a (c)19. She goes what the heck's a (c)19. I said I'm not real sure and that's why I'm asking you. She said, well, let me look it up.

Well, we sat down and we went through the little patriotic deal and we read it all and we went, okay, kind of looks like a (c)3, kind of smells like a (c)3, it's got all the little bells and whistles, it's kind of like a (c)3, but it's just so focused on patriotism and patriotic acts and the like. This is good. This is good.

So they can raise money like a (c)3. Well, I was a bit naive. I found out that's not the case. A lot of corporate donors, a lot of other foundations, and a lot of big wigs for whatever reason, they never really carved you out as being akin to a (c)3 and, therefore, they will only give money to a 501(c)3. Crazy, I know. You're going what. That doesn't make any sense. Well, it does. Why? Because they want to make sure their board, their Foundation, their company wants to make sure if they pass the rigorous test of the IRS to, one, become a (c)3 and, two, maintain a (c)3 status in the view of this new 990, they don't have to do their due diligence. That means they don't have to run their lawyers out there to double check.

So what they decided for efficiency reasons we're going to have the IRS do our due diligence. If you are a (c)3, they said you're on our list. If you're not, you automatically are off our list. I was not aware of that.

When we found out that, we said, wow, the (c)3 has got another reason to come into being because now we can solicit to that organization if it's a (c)3, but it can't perform any programs because of the tax law and the legal ramifications of this with a couple of problems, public support test and the way funds are directed, there are some reasons why it cannot directly do any programs.

So what we did is we said, well, if it can't do the programs, but it raises the money for charitable and educational purposes, why couldn't we have the Auxiliary do that. You know, if you've got something that you want done and you don't do it, you go hire another entity to go do it for you and then you report. That's what we've done.

The Auxiliary Foundation, you could use whatever term you want, we call it a captive Foundation. It ain't going anywhere. If you want to feel safe, here's the safety factor. We went through the scenario.

What if the Foundation -- what if ALA goes out of existence? Where does the money go? Anybody know? The Auxiliary fell off the end of the earth or it's got its (c)19 yanked. It goes to The Legion. By regulation or bylaws, it has to go.

What if, God help us, The Legion and the Auxiliary are both gone? Then what? A patriotic organization that the language says akin to or similar to your organization. If there are no more patriotic organizations left, then we're in bigger trouble than we think anyway.

So it doesn't really matter. The point is it can't go anywhere. But it also cannot perform any direct programs. Because of this direction of funds thing and the other issues, the lawyers, the bean counters, my tax partners have all been going no, no. And, Phil, who isn't here come to think of it -- I thought Phil was going to be here -- Phil went -- you know, he lost a couple of fuses over this thing. So we got him settled down. We got my tax partners settled down. We got everybody settled down. We said, well, this is real simple.

As long as you raise the money to do educational and charitable purposes and patriotic of that organization, bring it into the Foundation, shoot it out to the Auxiliary, have them do it, bring it back, and report back to the donor.

There will be many other things that won't even go into the Foundation. They'll continue to be paid directly to the Auxiliary. Many. And those are just differences in the nature of the program.

But at the same time, the Foundation can permanently invest this money that's restricted from the outside and start building earnings that every year those earnings are taken and they're given to the Auxiliary.

I don't think I'm going to go through -- there are mechanics that I think are -- I just kind of explained the mechanics. But there's a lot of grantee/grantor stuff and the bean counters are going crazy over this because we get to keep track of all this.

But it's coming in to one entity, going out to the other. The other entity reports back and you get back to the donor. We're following the law. We're following the basic concept of business and there is full disclosure to every donor on the front end as to how this is going to happen.

I understand from listening to the development people at the Auxiliary this makes a huge difference in the amount, the number of people that it can touch now for donations. And your corporate donations as you saw in the financials dropped markedly again.

Something has to happen, ladies. Dues increases need to happen. Corporate donors need to happen. You can't control the stock market. And I'm afraid that that's just something that hit us, but it hit us in one year and now we're going to have to make some changes.

Questions? Told you that was the last one. See how clear that was, Linda? I told you.

If there are questions, I'll be around for a little bit. I do want to thank you again first of all for giving us the chance to work with you. And I'm very sincere and I mean this, I thoroughly enjoy this organization.

The only time I really didn't like you people was two years ago when I lost my ID here in Washington and could not get on a boat, could not get on a plane, could not get a rental car. I couldn't get out of here.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: I ended up getting a client of mine to call a buddy of his who lives in Arlington who drove over, didn't know me from Adam, rented a car, kind of went like this (indicating), gave me the keys, went back home. I drove a Ford something that was about this big (indicating) all the way home. Had a hundred and four fever when I got home because I -- it turned out I was sick. And never again, ever again will I be without my ID. That was the only time I didn't love you all very much.

(Laughter.)

MR. ALERDING: But I did. Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Thank you, Mike, very much.

Okay. So this is the part where you get to take action, the NEC, is we need to adopt the audit that you were given to review. So we need an action from the NEC to adopt the audit, the FY '08 audit.

VOICE: (Unintelligible) from Department (Unintelligible). I move that we adopt this audit.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Okay.

VOICE: Second.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Okay.

PRESIDENT STOY: It's been moved and seconded to adopt the audit.

All in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Motion carried. We have adopted the audit.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Thank you very much.

Okay. So just to sort of give you the Finance Committee perspective of some of the action items that Mike talked about to let you know, you know, based on recommendations from Mike and other experts what we're going to do.

In terms of the Audit Committee, you know, that resolution failed at the National Convention last year and the Finance Committee will be resubmitting it this year. And you heard Mike and you -- and I'm going to say the same thing is we need this to happen. And we need you to take that message back to your departments to educate them about the importance of it.

So when we have discussion on the convention floor, they will be more educated about why we need to do that. And we'll try to in the resolution package, the bullet points for why it's needed, we'll try to expand that a little bit so that you have a little bit more information, a little more sales point to do that. So please do that.

And just sort of a reminder about the governance issue, that Mike has been telling us that for a couple of years. Other people have been telling us that. There is some internal desire for that to happen.

And just a reminder that your National President has set some goals and has made some assignments this year earlier that were made. So there is

some action going on and that's part of the strategic plan. It's a strategy under the strategic plan to review the governance. And so there is some work going on about that so that you know that to watch for some information to come out about that and some suggestions.

Okay. The hard one, the dues increase. The Finance Committee is going to propose a resolution for this National Convention for a dues increase for 2011. And we are going with the \$4 and 2 will go to the Foundation. There will be a 75-cent increase proposal for the Juniors. So that's what we're going to include in the resolution with some sales point.

I wanted to tell you that the entire Finance Committee has voted yes for this. It was unanimous to -- well, pretty unanimous to pass a dues increase. But, you know, we're all -- we know that it needs to happen.

And even though there was some hard decision making and some -- I mean, very frank and honest talk, we did -- when we left that room, we agreed that we would support that.

So here to sort of give you their perspectives, I'm going to invite each one of the Finance Committee members to come up and they'll give you a sales point. Okay?

So we'll start if maybe you guys can come up. And we're going to start with Linda Newsome and then Carol Van Kirk and then Phyllis Bachman and then the Vice Chairman, Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan.

MS. NEWSOME: Thank you, Madam Chairman...I think.

You just heard Mike give you a very detailed presentation. I have a question for you: How many of you attended the 1995 National Convention which is kind of dear to my heart for some reason?

(Whereupon, there was a show of hands.)

MS. NEWSOME: All right. Do you recall that you paid a dollar nine cents for a gallon of gas, a dollar five cents for a loaf of bread, and 87 cents for a dozen eggs?

Do you recall that at that convention, we very seriously and honestly put through a dues increase, the first since 1978? And we said we wanted not to have to do it again for many years.

Well, ladies, don't you think we kept our promise? Don't you think 15 years is many years? I guess the time is now.

(Applause.)

MS. VAN KIRK: Good evening. I have the privilege and the honor of representing the Finance Committee and the Foundation board as well. And I want you to be assured that you have an outstanding board serving you.

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce Carol Moye -- are you still here, Carol -- as President of that board. So thank you for being here, Carol.

(Applause.)

MS. VAN KIRK: I think, you know, we are in charge of the fund raising part and we want to be a fund raising arm for the American Legion Auxiliary and help to promote our programs and finance our programs.

So I think this is an exciting, easy way to jumpstart the funds for that Foundation. So I hope that you realize that the two dollars, two of the four dollars, as Mike explained to you, would be going to the fund raise -- to the Foundation and how quickly that would help get it off the ground.

So I think it is a great way to get that started and I hope that you all agree with us.

(Applause.)

MS. BACHMAN: Good evening. The per member cost of running the National organization has risen to almost \$8. Now, this encompasses the cost of publications, dues notices, Web site maintenance and enhancement, and meetings and conventions, and much, much more.

However, we have been taking in only \$5 per Senior member for one and a half -- excuse me -- yeah, for one and a half decades. The discrepancy between those two figures to me speaks volumes for the need of a dues increase.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE CHAIRMAN PULVERMACHER-RYAN: As we all know, reading the paper, watching television these days is not exactly a particularly exciting event when the Dow keeps going down and down. And so we all know what the economic times are at this particular point in time.

We have not been -- we have been involved in that as well. We have been hit very severely by that. The Finance Committee some years ago decided to go with an outside financial advisor, that we've invested very wisely through the years, thanks to those ladies with the foresight to do that some years previously.

But the last -- this last year has really put us in a bind. And in all of my years of experience with the finance in our Department, in talking with auditors and accountants, we've been always told that one needs to have at least two years of your annual budget in reserves. And that's about where we are now unfortunately because of this loss in the market.

Everyone keeps saying it's going to come back. We don't know when, where, how, or why. No one has a crystal ball, I wish I did, to help everyone out, but none of us do. And if you listen to the economists, everyone has a different take on it. And what caused it and why is not what's important today. It's here. We have to deal with it.

So we feel that it's important at this time to raise those dues. We cannot keep looking to investment income as the only return for us. We've done that for the last years. The Finance Committee has done very well with those investments through the firm that we're dealing with. And now it is the consensus of the entire Finance Committee that we would be fiscally irresponsible if we did not do something and that something is to raise dues.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Thank you, Finance Committee. I didn't want to be up here by myself, you know.

Okay. So let's -- so just -- that's a warning. You need to go back and take action in your departments and discuss that and be prepared to -- and we'll -- you know, that will come out in the package, in the resolution package. And you'll need to start thinking about what you're going to do and how you feel about that.

Personally is that -- go ahead.

VOICE: One clarifying question.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Uh-huh.

VOICE: You say that the \$2 was needed for three years. Are we supposed to include that in what we project?

CHAIRMAN BOONE: The dues increase that we're proposing is \$4.

VOICE: I understand that.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: And \$2 will go to the Foundation until it's -- until we have a finish date.

VOICE: Okay. And but he had --

CHAIRMAN BOONE: It doesn't matter what Mike said. It matters what --

VOICE: Okay. So --

CHAIRMAN BOONE: -- the Finance Committee is proposing.

VOICE: So are we saying to them, to our departments, though, that we -- this will end the two -- but it will still --

CHAIRMAN BOONE: No, no.

VOICE: It will still be \$4?

CHAIRMAN BOONE: No. It will not end.

VOICE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: It's a \$4 dues increase.

VOICE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BOONE: And we intend to allocate a -- allocate \$2 to the Foundation. And just to tell you that we have not decided whether we're going to put an end date on it going to the Foundation in the resolution yet like five years and then it would -- you know, we haven't finished that part yet. Okay?

But it's -- and the next dues increase will be \$4 plus something else, you know, at some future date. But right -- so it's going to be \$4. We won't roll it back. We won't be like Wal-Mart.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN BOONE: I mean, unfortunately, that's just the way it ends up. And I don't mind because -- I mean, personally, I mean, I'm retired now, too, and it's a really good thing that we do. The things that we do are such wonderful things to help veterans and their families. And I feel privileged to be able to participate in that and in an organization that that is their primary mission.

And I for years have thought we've undervalued ourselves on what people will pay to be a member. So that's just a personal thing, but I think we can all get on board, that we want to continue our mission.

Okay. The next step that I'm responsible for is making sure that you know where we are in the budget that you adopted in -- at the Convention. So as of January 31st, I'm going to give you some budget numbers in terms of revenue and expenses and where we're at.

This is year to date. As of January 31st, we anticipated having about \$4.4 million in revenue. Okay? And to date, we have \$3.8 million in revenue. So we're under what we anticipated.

The expenses year to date, we expected to have spent by now \$2.6 million. And in -- and actually we have spent 1.7. So we are -- currently our net is that we are 200 and -- in terms of where we're at, we're at \$285,000, you know, to the good.

Okay. So to -- I want to just talk a few minutes about -- a couple seconds about expenses to let you know what's going on in terms of trying to control the expenses because revenue is not coming in and, you know, as we anticipated.

But the National President from before she was a National President, when she was working on this budget with the staff has been very conscious of being a very lean year and has given instructions to staff and Committee members about controlling expenses.

So there is -- that is coming and the staff has done a really good job of controlling expenses, verifying things, asking questions, trying to figure out ways to do things.

So I think that you can -- you should feel reassured that there isn't, you know, just, okay, well, we got the budget, so let's go spend the money. It's not that. It's -- they're keeping very close watch on the fact that just because it was in the budget doesn't mean we can spend it because the revenue is not coming in. So that's happening and I -- you should feel comfortable that, what is being done to control that.

In terms with the income, you know, we talked about investments. I mean, that's just one of those things. Who would have known? But I want you to feel really good about the decision.

And Jan talked about that, you know, that this organization hired a financial advisor firm and they have been very good in helping us diversify our investments so that, you know, the plan has always been that if one thing goes down, then something else might go up or stay steady.

Unfortunately, a lot of different areas have been hit in this economic downturn. So we have -- we -- it-- the diversity still has helped us, but not as dramatic as we had anticipated.

But we have a policy that you all adopted, the NEC has adopted. We have a policy about our investments and on how we put them, you know, mix them up so we can be diverse and we're following that policy.

And sometimes it's a little hard to do not to get emotional and react, ah, ah, ah, you know, but -- because it's such a dramatic change. I mean, I never thought that I would say -- stand up and say we lost \$6 million. I mean, that's just shocking.

I mean, it's just -- I mean, I almost started hyperventilating when I was listening to that information for the first time or seeing that information for the first time. I mean, it was just like, ah, ah, ah, oh, my God, you know, what are we going to do.

But we're in it for the long term. We're a healthy organization and we have -- our diversity comes. We have bonds. We have stocks. We have real estate. We have timber. And so we're trying to do those things and we have international funds so that we can have that diversity. And I think it was a good move and like everyone else, we're going to have to ride this out.

So that -- on the -- also on the income side is the development and right now we don't have a full development staff, but I want to report to you that the direct mail piece that was sent in December is outperforming previous ones. So we're doing good on that.

We've gotten some corporate sponsors which we've not done a very good job of that in the past. And we are having some corporate sponsors.

As you know, AON, which is the group that provides us with member benefit packages and things, they're contributing \$5,000 for the Public Spirit Award luncheon.

The breakfast tomorrow morning is sponsored by GloryBe Collectibles, so come and get your bears in the morning and have a little breakfast.

And the Medal of Honor film viewing is sponsored by Quadriga Art which produces incentive packages for donors.

And the development staff is working on a large donation of \$25,000 from a potential donor for the States Dinner sponsorship.

So there's some really good positive things happening in terms of income. And we're going to try to keep that up.

Another thing that the Finance Committee spends a lot of time on is developing policies and procedures, not because we like to do it, because it's like our least favorite thing to do, but those policies and procedures help diminish our financial risk because we have processes in place and it shows that we're following them. And it helps if anybody is going to come in and audit us or inquires about how we control things, we have those in place.

And we just reviewed about six or seven policies at this Finance Committee meeting we had for the last two and a half days and will -- we're revising some policy and procedures and we will be including that in the pre-convention NEC meeting. You will be getting some policies to look at and to make decisions about.

So just so you -- to give you sort of a warning, a heads up. But it's one of those necessary things, but it takes a long time. It takes a long time to do, but it's a risk enhancement or diminishment.

Some other projects that are financial impacts are things that you voted on in the budget. One was to fund a redesign of our Web site. And that contract has recently been signed and the target is to have a new Web site demonstration available by National Convention.

And you know that one of the things it's going to have to do is interface with the new membership database system that is also going in that you -- that we put a million dollars in reserves for, you know, with the budget this last -- in August.

And so that membership database implementation schedule, I thought I'd just give you a brief update on that and that the software name is called iMIS. So if you hear iMIS, that's our membership database. It's a little bit more than membership, but primarily membership.

The National staff started getting involved and everything. And in October of 2008 started actually working with the iMIS team. And the -- they have been collecting data from staff and from departments. And the next phase is the design phase on the system and its processes to meet all those needs that the staff and the departments outline.

And the idea is to have target -- it is to have the National organization live in the fall of 2009, so pretty soon. And then there will be a set of pilot departments that will go live in the spring of 2010 and then everybody in the winter of 2010. So that's the current schedule on that.

Okay. Another thing that the Finance Committee took action on at this meeting was a travel accident insurance that it has been offered for a number of years to the departments to cover travel of their Department President, Department Secretary, and the NEC. And the price has been, I think, \$75.00 for a year's coverage.

And the National Headquarters is no longer going to be involved in processing that or making that available. We'll give you the name of an insurance carrier where you can do your own negotiation with them. We were -- ended up being a middle man that really isn't cost beneficial for us to do that.

So the staff will be notifying you about that and, you know, what you'll be able to do. So you need to take -- make sure your Department secretaries know that and your Department finance committees, I assume, need to know that.

About 30 departments took that policy, and I don't know which ones they are. We don't have information about which ones do that.

Okay. And the last topic I wanted to cover is another part about member benefits because it's a revenue stream for us.

Steve Dammann who represents AON is at this conference and you'll be seeing him. But I wanted to tell you for the -- that for the first time since AON has been providing opportunities for member benefits for us for the insurance packages and a variety of things, the royalties to the American Legion Auxiliary went over \$400,000 in year -- the calendar year 2008. So that is really good and that it's projected that it will even -- you know, it's going to grow significantly over the next couple years by some new products that they have -- they've offered for our members. So that's a really good thing. So tell Steve thanks--thanks for the money if you see him.

And then I wanted -- and there's a couple of new programs that are going to be coming out that you'll be hearing about through the normal process.

And then I just wanted to tell you about a new feature of ScriptSave which is the prescription drug benefit plan. And it continues. We are at like \$9.4 million saved by the members using that.

But if you buy over-the-counter medicines, they have some coupons on their Web site that you can use. So you might want to look at that before you go buy anything, you know, over the counter, at their Web site. And the Web site is just scriptsave, S-C-R-I-P-T, save, S-A-V-E, dot com. So clip those coupons.

Okay. That's basically the report from the Finance Committee. Are there any questions that you'd like to get answered at this time? Any explanations or anything?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

CHAIRMAN BOONE: Okay. Well, if you have them, don't ever hesitate to email or call me or stop me around if you see me if you have any questions.

Thank you, Madam President. That concludes.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Linda, very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: And thank you to the members of the Finance Committee for their moral support, too, as well.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: As Linda told you, tomorrow morning the NEC breakfast, we have a corporate sponsor, GloryBe Bears. And President Steve Bolt will be with us tomorrow morning, so you'll be receiving an Auxiliary bear. And then Steve would like the opportunity to talk to you a little bit about the fundraising opportunities of his program. So tomorrow morning, please be sure to thank Steve and show our appreciation of his corporate sponsorship.

VOICE: Where?

PRESIDENT STOY: At the NEC breakfast in your packet.

Now -- okay. So we'll -- under announcements, I'll ask the National Secretary to tell us where that's located because I don't have it at my fingertips.

VOICE: Renaissance West.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you. Renaissance West. Thank you.

There were some items on your chairs. Referring to the NEC, there were some items on your chairs, so you have a little bit of homework. You want to make sure that you review those so that tomorrow that you will be prepared for action.

The Chair calls upon the National Secretary for any announcements.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: Thank you, Madam President.

One of the first things I learned coming to this organization was that the National Officers have a tradition of falling and breaking something, generally a bone in their foot. I just want you to know that I'm ahead of the curve and I did it before I got here.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY BUCKLER: So for those of you who are wondering why I kind of limped up here, it's because I'm kind of limping up here.

We have announcements and these are in no particular order.

Oklahoma has one chicken luncheon ticket for sale and one Arlington Pentagon bus trip ticket for sale. If you're interested, call Deborah Densmore. And I'll have a phone number up here in case anybody wants that. I can read that for you.

Michigan has a luncheon ticket. If interested, see Pic Webster.

The Poppy Committee is asked to meet with Vickie Koutz. Am I pronouncing that correctly?

VOICE: Yes.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: Vickie, raise -- okay. Vickie.

We have two committees wanting to meet at the back of the room. So Vickie is positioned over here. If you're on the Poppy Committee, please corral at the back of the room immediately upon adjournment.

For anyone who arrived late, would you please be sure to mark your attendance on the attendance roll sheets?

Those who have registered for the Arlington National Cemetery and Pentagon Memorial tour tomorrow should be sure to locate your ticket, which was included in your registration packet. We will begin loading the buses promptly at 11 a.m. outside the Ninth Street exit of the hotel. And as you come up the escalators, once you get to the top of the escalators, that will be the door to your right.

Please dress accordingly for the weather. The buses will return to the hotel no later than 4:30 p.m.

All National Executive Committee members, National Officers, Past National Presidents, and National Chairmen are invited to the breakfast tomorrow morning from 7 to 8:15 in the Renaissance West. That is by invitation only. And, again, we thank our initial sponsor for this, GloryBe Collectibles. Steve Bolt, president, will be president -- present.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY BUCKLER: We also want to thank our sponsors for the opening session, Quadriga Art, and we want to thank the sponsors for the Public Spirit Award luncheon, AON Associates and The Hartford.

And, last but not least, there will be a Past National Presidents club meeting in the back of the room immediately upon adjournment.

Madam President, that concludes the announcements.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Dubbie.

The National Executive Committee will recess until 8:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

(Ringing of the bell.)

(Whereupon, at 9:23 p.m., the above entitled meeting was recessed.)

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD AT

**RENAISSANCE WASHINGTON
RENAISSANCE EAST BALLROOM
999 9TH STREET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001**

ON

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2009

FROM

8:26 A.M. TO 9:37 A.M.

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PROCEEDINGS

PRESIDENT STOY: Good morning. This National Executive Committee will now reconvene.

Please rise for the Invocation by the National Chaplain, Cherita Potter.
(Ringing of the bell.)

CHAPLAIN POTTER: Let us pray.

Good morning, Lord. We thank you for the enthusiasm in our hearts and for all the gifts you have bestowed upon us, two ears to listen, two eyes to see the need, two hands to give a gentle touch, two arms to pick another's load. Thank you for giving us exactly what we need to be of service.

Help us to keep our promises to our veterans, our communities, and our country.

We ask your blessings on the members and officers assembled here today. Help us to fulfill our duties with determination and loyalty. Fill us with grace and wisdom as we gather information to improve our programs of service.

Lord, we ask that you protect and provide for our troops wherever they are and bring them home safely.

These things we ask in your name. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Please be seated.

Last evening, I had the opportunity to introduce the head table, but Nancy Jordan wasn't with us. So I would like to take a moment this morning to recognize the Southern Division National Vice President, Nancy Jordan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: The next item on our agenda is a series of reports from our Divisional National Vice Presidents. I have asked them to highlight for you two or three of the best things happening in their divisions.

So without further ado, it's my pleasure to call upon Virginia Kodl, the Central Division National Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT KODL: Madam National President Desi, Past National Presidents, National Officers, Department Officers, Chairmen, and guests, all of the Central Division states have been working very hard on renewing our promise every day.

And this is probably most prevailing in membership. Eight of the nine states in the top -- are in the top 20 of the nation.

All of the departments continue to serve the veterans and their children. They have set goals with the benefits to be reaped by the veterans and their families, the children and their communities.

I have visited four of the states and have been warmly welcomed by The American Legion Family. All of the states report visiting the VA hospitals and helping with Christmas gift shops, conducting Girls State sessions, and helping the families of deployed soldiers.

Illinois has contributed \$4,400 to Creative Arts, \$10,000 to the Children & Youth programs, \$3,100 for Americanism, \$2,700 for National Security, and \$16,000 for the department's special project.

Indiana has contributed 7,600 to the AEF, \$1,000 to Creative Arts, 5,400 for the Special Department Project of Leukemia, 10,000 for the Indiana veterans' home for diabetic equipment, and \$9,300 to remodel the Knightstown town home for children, which is an American Legion Family project.

Iowa is still leading the pack in membership. They have chartered a new unit --

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT KODL: -- and have been getting the message out about what the Auxiliary has to offer and how to become a member.

Kansas has collected \$300 to help replenish the AEF and is in the process of chartering a new unit. And they're redistributing the units to support the VA hospitals more equally.

Michigan has collected over \$4,000 for Operation Military Kids, \$3,000 for AEF, \$375 for Creative Arts, and \$900 for the Chapel of Four Chaplains. One thousand dollars has been raised for the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy and \$300 for Children & Youth.

Missouri has been traveling the state. The format for the fall conference was changed and met with good comments. And they are doing a new Fisher House.

Ohio has collected \$250 for Spirit of Youth, \$500 for AEF, and \$500 for Creative Arts. Thirty thousand dollars have been spent to provide comfort for veterans at the VAs, \$10,500 for the gifts to the Ohio VA facility for various needs. Five thousand dollars have been donated by the units for special projects to the homeless veterans and homeless teens. Their Juniors have collected 333 blankets and 278 comfort bags for the homeless.

West Virginia held its first ever Junior Auxiliary meeting. Over \$1,600 have been collected for MS.

Wisconsin granted \$4,200 for AEF, collected \$3,700 for the Spinoza bear, and \$1,600 for heart pillows. Eleven thousand six hundred dollars was presented to the VA hospitals for special needs. With 3,500 Guardsmen being deployed from Wisconsin, we'll help bridge the gap for service members and their families in Wisconsin.

Madam President, like I said, all of the central states are working hard to honor our promise every day.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Virginia.

Mary Ann Ventulett, the Eastern Division National Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT VENTULETT: Good morning, members, officers.

The Eastern Division is very much like all other divisions, serving the veterans, their families, and the nation. Their focus is on remembering the promise given by the World War I veterans when they started this organization.

While traveling through the departments from Maine to Pennsylvania, Maryland to New Hampshire, I've met the members in action at the VA hospitals, the bedsides, deployments, and the members welcoming returning troops, at the memorial services, ceremonies to name a few in each Department.

I have traveled the highways and byways and walked in freedom walks and watched the members of the American Legion Auxiliary raise funds and spend dollars for the veterans and their families throughout.

I have traveled in a motorcade on the New Jersey Turnpike that would beat even Barack Obama's CIA.

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT VENTULETT: I thought we'd never get to that post that we were going to.

The departments are supporting the families and veterans by buffering the pain of separation, by going out and meeting the families in the communities and helping them wherever they can.

The Auxiliary members' hands joining across America with other businesses and corporations helping to send packages, defray the expenses of postage, and continuing the Pocket Flag Program.

Phone cards were sent and personal care items and dollars to support the Comfort Troops Program in the hospitals.

The Christmas gift shops, they were an annual affair that we always look forward to at the wintertime of the year. And D.C. had their first Christmas gift shop in the VA Medical Center. And they gave over 4,000 gifts to the families of the VA veterans in that hospital.

I was able to tour that hospital and meet the head of the hospital. And while we were there, the new head of the VA was there and his CIA and entourage were walking through the lobby when we came in. And he's a little bitty thing, about this big (indicating).

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT VENTULETT: But I'm sure that he's going to do a good job. I don't know if we'll hear from him this weekend, but I'm sure he's going to do a good job.

I spent many days going to different posts and units and celebrating with them their typical thing they do when the divisionals come into their department.

And that's one of the things I wanted to highlight because to me, it's important how the personalities of each department and unit accept what we do every day. They have a pattern that they follow because that's part of their personality and each one of us is a unit member. And that's what we have all together. We're members whether we're here, out there, or in our homes. We do the work that needs to be do.

And there's one lesson that I have learned since I have been traveling, is that the bonds that we make and the work that we do is very important. And the surprise that we give to the citizens and American people when we do

our job is second to none. We are the examples set and they look for us for guidance.

Students that were recipients of scholarships and Girls State program were very much a success in the Eastern Division for adding new attendants and new sponsorships, going out into the community and asking for help with that so we would not have the Girls State program go under.

One department reported that their Girls State was not able to function last year and they were bringing that back this year.

Juniors were intent and set fall conference and winter forums. They were taking leadership roles.

New members were taking upon state chairmanships and they were creating new ways to share their ideas and pump up all of the membership in their departments.

Also sharing the Juniors in the senior programs, it was evident that the Juniors are alive and active.

I have been welcomed with warmth and the opportunity to see many historic sites and traveled through the post homes and units throughout.

The best part of our travels is meeting the members, you, and I've enjoyed it all.

Thanks so much and I enjoy seeing you and I look forward to seeing the rest of you on my continued visits. I will continue the legacy of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Mary Ann.

Thelma Fueller, the Northwestern Division National Vice President.

Tootie.

VICE PRESIDENT FUELLER: Good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

VICE PRESIDENT FUELLER: Madam President Desi, national officers, Past National Presidents, and honored American Legion Auxiliary members all, the Northwest Division is alive and well.

Membership is very important to us. All seven departments in our division, North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota, and Nebraska, are trying hard to reach our goal and also to stay on top in our membership standing.

Fall conferences have been a real learning experience. I have been fortunate to attend these and the chairmen really do a great job explaining their programs. It was good to see the information that was distributed at the Presidents & Secretaries conference was being shared and referred to at these workshops.

The departments in the Northwest Division are working very hard with projects that benefit the VA hospitals and homes in their areas. The work our members do is truly amazing.

Our hard-working members contribute many hours at the facilities for veterans and they also donate baked goods for lunches and parties, collect

books, make lap robes, purchase and contribute items for holidays, assist in getting patients to medical appointments, and present interesting and educational programs.

Departments raised hundreds of dollars to assist with a variety of things at the homes and hospitals. With our financial contributions, we have provided activities personnel to provide outings, needed items for different areas, shopping for holiday gifts, treats for parties, and decorations for special events.

The Legion Family provides a generous service to our well-deserving veterans.

I would like to say thank-you to the departments I have visited. Your hospitality, kindnesses, and friendships have been wonderful. I know the rest of the visits will be a memorable time too.

I hope you will continue the good work you are doing. We need to keep our organization secure for future generations. Membership is key to our organization and we hope to reach the goals. My hope is that when the year is over, we will still be number one in membership.

We need to work hard on our five-year strategic plan that was implemented in 2008. Times are changing and we need to move on for the best interest of the Auxiliary, our youth, the veterans, our communities as we continue to serve God and country.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Tootie.

Nancy Jordan, Southern Division National Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT JORDAN: Madam President Desi, Past National Presidents, department officers, NEC members, and other Auxiliary members, the Southern Division has been working on many projects to honor our promises every day. We have been dealers of hope.

We have accomplished our many projects of hope by first honoring our leaders and our members, second by having optimism and seeing the opportunity and not the problem, third by having perseverance and maintaining commitment and enthusiasm even when things get tight. Last, we will encourage our members by always approaching interaction with an attitude of encouragement.

The Southern Division is constantly working membership, trying to recruit new members as well as retain our current ones. Three departments made the first target date of 50 percent while all but one department reached the second target date of 75 percent.

The Southern Division will strive to achieve 100 percent goal departments. As we all know, without membership, we could not accomplish all the wonderful goals set forth by our national president this year.

The departments in the Southern Division have high hopes for a year of working many programs under the Auxiliary. Departments have been busy raising funds to help veterans and the many VA medical centers, the nursing homes, the homeless veterans, and those still living at home.

Departments reported that Christmas gift shops a huge success.

The departments in the Southern Division are having workshops and are disseminating materials passed to the departments from the national level to the unit level.

Poppy corsage contests were held at many departments to help raise funds for the Creative Arts Festival.

One department recently had a ribbon cutting for their new department. What hope this shows for a bright future of our organization.

The department presidents have reported many worthwhile projects from raising funds to help the USO, sending electric blankets to the wounded soldiers in Afghanistan, increasing awareness of PTSD and traumatic brain injury, assisting their local National Guard units, helping with sendoffs and homecomings, raising monies for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, and Educating Children of Warriors, and the list goes on.

I would like to personally thank those departments that I've already visited and look forward to my future visits.

I know that the rest of the year will be filled with much excitement and the Southern Division will continue to accomplish the goals set forth by our national president.

With hope, amazing things will happen in the Southern Division and we will be able to honor our promises every day.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Nancy.

Josephine Keanu, the Western Division National Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Madam National President Desirée Stoy, to our Past National Presidents, to fellow officers of the American Legion Auxiliary, and members of the National Executive Committee, aloha.

VOICES: Aloha.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Love, caring, and sharing. Following the National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, with the desire of H.O.P.E., honoring our promise everyday, plans were soon made to visit the Department of Arizona of which President Vickey Zwall conducted midwinter conference in Tucson with the most enthusiastic members of the units.

Great participation was made in keeping with their theme, no beginning, no end in service to our veterans and their families. All plans began with pre-conference committee meetings with the outline of Plans of Work activities.

The department's special project is JROTC, a National Security program in offering guidance and support to the youth of tomorrow.

The carousel motif and the circus theme prevailed during its entirety with happy smiles and laughter and grateful spirit with a big ta-da to the Department of Arizona.

The gathering of national officers and chairmen in the mid-October to the Presidents & Secretaries Conference in Indianapolis, to begin the year to go

over potential and implement the objectives of the national programs with the greatest participation.

Special speakers to elaborate on programs and more public relations with media should be made for media knowledge of this great organization of women of service.

The visitation to meet and greet employees of the National Headquarters was really a highlight of the conference.

The visitation in mid-November to the Department of Idaho with President Pearl Bentley and the gems to participate in the greatest food convoy in the state of Idaho to our veterans hospital.

The generous members of posts and units participated in gathering over six months' period -- of over a six-month period annually of nonperishable and perishable, sorting, loading, and unloading.

Likewise, the department held their brief meeting of officers to show appreciation to the veterans hospital and to the coordinator for numerous volunteer hours of service.

All post and unit members were hosted to a most delicious lunch prepared and hosted by the staff of the state veterans hospital in acknowledgment of generosity of giving, followed by a tour and patient visitation of this facility.

The other greatest episode of this visit in community service was sightseeing and bazaaring to all towns within and out of city limits. These gems are showing their colors of the ladies Auxiliary to the Legion who have established very excellent community relations.

Keep up the good work in Children & Youth and education of youth, in Junior activities, likewise public relations, to the local media, and to all on all topics. Keep up the renewals of the gems to make it to the top with great service in being done.

Plans were made in the latter part of November to the Department of Utah and Washington to prior -- to again -- prior to the opening of the veterans hospital Christmas gift shops. These volunteers -- pardon me -- volunteers gathered many items to be used at the gift shop for veterans to choose, wrap, and send to their children and spouses. Much service hours were dedicated to these shops.

While in Utah, we visited two shops and veterans who are most appreciative of gift items available and in service by the Auxiliary volunteers.

The members of the unit in -- units in Seattle have also an ongoing program at Fort Lewis, traditional facility to receive and aid, welcome home veterans.

Home-cooked dinners weekly and a show, a bit of musical entertainment and the joy of the arts. The volunteers strived to serve, to service, and their promise is rewarded.

Great membership and participation and workmanship. Keep up that good work and make it all count as you recruit and renew membership.

Following my return to Hawaii to greet our National President Desirée and her husband Timothy Stoy, upon the return from the Far East, Guam, through Guam via the Philippines, the local plans were to visit the USS Arizona Memorial Ceremony early the morning of December 7 for the honoring of the Pearl Harbor survivors in memoriam of the 2,500 casualties that occurred on the attack in 1941.

Visitation to the USS Missouri and the Pacific Aviation Museum and lunch to conclude the day. Plans to sink back for a debriefing as well.

The department hosted the guests of the National Commander David Rehbein, and the SAL Commander, Tommie Cisna, to dinner at the local hotel.

The entertainment of Hawaiian song and dance by dependents of military spouses and children from Hickam Air Force Base.

Bulletins were prepared in the month of December and mailed out to the departments encouraging membership and updating visitation schedules.

Plans also after the new year with a visitation to Ridgecrest, California, for the Department of California's DEC meeting. Many plans had gone into the meeting for all district members to attend the great support from the department and district units of California.

President LuAnn Capazzi asked that all chairmen promote their programs for better understanding and service.

Child Welfare Foundation fundraisers were also carried out. Incentive awards were presented and offered membership encouragement in achieving those goals.

The theme for the year, "Charting A Course to New Horizons," the flagship sails as the Admiral guides. Her shipmate over the obstacles of achievement in all programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. Hoy, hoy, mates.

The visitation to Albuquerque, New Mexico, likewise with weather, with a southwestern hospitality on February 13 through 16 to attend the ALA midyear conference of the districts and units, the hometown of our National Vice President, Rita Navarreté, much enthusiasm was shown in support to the programs of Children & Youth and Junior Activities and veteran service. President Cathy King is soaring with eagles for the activities and for the veterans, children, and community.

The Blue Star bulletin prepared and mailed to members with great communication skills are reaching out with information. Great district and unit support has been received by keeping in touch with our programs. Operation Wounded Warrior has always been well supported.

Visitation to the VA hospital on this Valentine weekend, giving cheers and sweets to our hospitalized veterans was a highlight of my visit. Unit volunteers are giving many hours of service and gifts as well.

The other secret has been told is The American Legion Children's Home in Ponca, Oklahoma, established in 1928, of which they have received a grant from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, this group of individuals led by Ms. Kerri Bowman who spoke on behalf of the children's

home. She expressed great appreciation in reference to receiving a grant from the ALCWF in 1994. They are proud to be associated with this great organization for service-connected members.

The dinner banquet hosted by The American Legion of the Department of New Mexico, I also met my counterpart, Western Division National Officer of The American Legion, Mr. Harley Ray, of the Department of Oregon.

Plans are being made to complete my visitations to the Department of Oregon and Alaska and finally end with Hawaii in the summer of 2009.

The honor and appreciation to this organization in giving me this privilege to encourage membership for the future, we need to build on great accomplishments and sound that tune in dedication of service.

With this, I say aloha with love and caring.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Josephine.

Thank you to each of our Divisional Vice Presidents. It's exciting to hear what's happening; the wonderful things in each of the divisions. And I appreciate your dedication to assist each of the departments under your leadership. So kudos to each of you.

Because of the many business items on our agenda these two days that we're here, I have asked all the national committee chairmen to prepare a written report for you and two of our national chairmen to bring oral reports this morning.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation is so relative to our mission and this national president is extremely happy with the efforts of your national chairman. Her commitment to our organization speaks volumes.

Please welcome to the podium Carlene Ashworth, national Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation chairman.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN ASHWORTH: Thank you, Madam President Desi.

The mission statement of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program states in part, "We endeavor through our efforts to help ensure those who need assistance can restore and/or transition to a normal, functioning life physically, mentally, socially, and vocationally."

With the combined efforts of President Desi's theme of honoring our promises every day and the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation mission, this committee has challenged our members to pick up the pace in serving our veterans.

We must aggressively seek out those not just in the VA medical centers but also in our communities through activities that will provide assistance in their homes as well as other facilities where they reside.

Small communities and rural areas where so many of our veterans feel they have been forgotten are of special concern and need our attention.

A new initiative this year is the request for every department to recruit at least 17 new regularly scheduled volunteers who have had the hospital

orientation and are logged into the VA system and regularly volunteer as little as two hours a month in a VA facility.

With support from President Desi, this committee has offered the opportunity to help you recruit volunteers with assistance from the VA&R Grant Program.

The Department of New York has put a plan in place and taken advantage of this opportunity and has been awarded a grant.

Several departments have accepted the challenge and through their own efforts have had great success in recruiting new regularly scheduled volunteers.

And one such department is President Desi's own home state of Ohio where they not only reached their goal of 17 but also in one hour signed up 30 new volunteers. Kudos to Ohio.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN ASHWORTH: They put a plan in place and they worked their plan.

Delaware has also reported 27 new volunteers and New Mexico has reported 15 new regularly scheduled volunteers. Give them a hand. They deserve it.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN ASHWORTH: I know that many other departments are also working toward their goal.

Field service volunteers have also had a great increase within Montana, South Dakota, and Arizona reporting a total of 149 new field service volunteers.

The details of the midyear reports from 36 departments are in your VA&R handout. Our members continue to honor our veterans and their families with thousands of hours and dollars being spent caring for them in the VA facilities.

Field service and home service activities make a huge contribution and thanks to the volunteers who knit, sew, cook, and provide transportation for those on our watch.

I am positive, however, that there are many hours not being reported and this committee encourages you to hold hospital and field service orientations at every opportunity and make sure the hours that our members are serving are counted on your year end report.

If you are volunteering in a VA facility of any kind on a regularly scheduled basis, your name should be on the VA rolls.

Many Auxiliary volunteers participated in special activities during MLK Day on January the 19th and I thank you for reaching out to our veterans on this special day of service to our communities.

A very successful Creative Arts Festival was held this past October in Loma Linda, California. Many Auxiliary members donated their time to help make this event a memorable one not only for the veterans who participated but also to the volunteers who were there to help in whatever way possible.

The VA & R committee, Eastern Division Chairman, Carol Johnson, stated I wholeheartedly support this yearly festival. Anyone who has

the opportunity really must go. You will come away with a much better understanding of our hospitalized veterans and how these festivals have turned their lives around.

Western Division Chairman Phyllis Parent said what an experience it was to be part of the Auxiliary team. The week was a fun-filled experience. Seeing is believing.

And from Northeast -- Northwestern Division Chairman, Susie Clyde, there is just no way to give this event and the people involved with it enough praise. This is like nothing I have ever attended.

And from one of the veteran participants who said this week has been beyond my wildest dreams and expectations, probably my very best week since coming back from Vietnam.

The 2009 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival will be held in San Antonio, Texas. We need your continued financial support to reach our \$100,000 or more. Donations received to date are \$16,558.

Departments, please send your funds in as soon as you receive them from your units and your members and encourage your units to do likewise. Donations of \$1,000 or more qualify for one of the plaques given by the VA.

Auxiliary volunteers also recently participated in the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans by serving refreshments and handing out valentines to more -- our more than 98,000 veterans who are cared for every day in our VA medical centers. And we thank you for your caring hearts.

In addition to those activities already mentioned, we continue our work with the VA Homeless Veterans Program and the VA MCs' welcome-home celebrations, which are similar to stand-downs except that the entire family is invited to attend. There are many ways that our Auxiliary members can help to make these affairs a success.

We ask you to continue your support of The American Legion VA&R legislation efforts that support programs for the betterment of our veterans.

And I'm sure I need not remind you to recognize and celebrate the important work our volunteers do on behalf of our veterans. You should thank them every day but especially during National Volunteer Month in April.

When you return home to your departments, I ask you to carry this message: Ask your chairmen, your department chairmen to review the national Plan of Work for the committee they are charged with. It is not too late to get on track in making these programs a great success. Every department chairman should be able to thoroughly explain the program that she is involved in and be familiar with the awards given for the accomplishments they have achieved.

As a leader in your department, I ask you to make sure you are also familiar with all aspects of our programs.

Madam President, may I have your permission to recognize the very capable members of this committee?

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes, please.

CHAIRMAN ASHWORTH: Vice Chairman Judy Twete -- I know they're not all here, but I'm going to call their names anyway because they have

really done a great job. Vice Chairman Judy Twete from the Department of North Dakota; committee member Charlane 'Charley' Dew from the Department of Texas, stand up; committee member Gwen Schroeder-Zulch from the Department of Ohio, back there; Central Division Chairman Bev Cople from the Department of Iowa; Eastern Division Chairman Carol Johnson, Department of New York; Northeastern Division Chairman Susie Clyde from the Department of South Dakota; Southern Division Chairman Pat Lambert-Knight, Department of Virginia; Western Division Chairman Phyllis Parent from the Department of Oregon.

Let's give them a big hand. They've done a great job this year. I'm very proud of this Committee.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN ASHWORTH: Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Carlene.

The national Children & Youth chairman is a key appointment in each administrative year, and the 2008-2009 chairman brings a plethora of skills to the table.

Please welcome Kris Nelson, national Children & Youth chairman.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: Thank you, Madam President Desi.

One of the highlights of the Children & Youth appointment is reading the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award nominations. These stories are both heartwarming and life changing. I'd like to share some of them with you today.

Steven Duban of Wisconsin was riding home on a school bus that was rear-ended and the collision caused the bus to burst into flames. Steve's injuries included a broken hip; yet this did not deter the 13-year-old who is credited with saving many of the younger children's lives by pulling them out of the bus that was on flames.

Eleven-year-old Joey Lane of Illinois was in a car with his mother when coffee spilled on her lap. She left the car to change clothes thinking that she had put it in park. She hadn't. The car rolled over her. Joey was able to stop the car and call 911. Joey's mother suffered from a fractured rib, a punctured lung, but he was hailed a hero for his rational thinking, saving the life of his mother.

Five-year-old Tyler Leone of Pennsylvania was at home with his mother when his baby brother started choking. His mother asked Tyler to run next door and get help. When Tyler found the neighbors were not home, he used his mother's cell phone to contact a neighbor who was a paramedic. The neighbor sent an ambulance which arrived on time to save the baby's life. Tyler did this without his mother's knowledge. Tyler's story shows each of us that we need to teach children emergency actions at a very young age.

Ten-year-old Hallie Huffaker of Washington learned the Heimlich maneuver at a church first aid class and the very next week was able to aid her 2-year-old sister who was choking on a small object.

Nineteen-year-old Danial Muckel of Michigan revived a 6-year-old girl who nearly drowned at a campground swimming pool. He revived her using CPR. He had been playing basketball with friends when he heard the mother screaming for help, jumped a fence, and performed CPR on the young girl.

Six years ago, Tyler Hernandez of Louisiana swore an oath that included helping people at all times. While on vacation with his grandparents last summer, his pledge was put into action when he retrieved a 9-year-old boy from the bottom of a swimming pool. He credited his Boy Scout training of life-saving techniques for saving this child's life.

Another Boy Scout, 12-year-old Joshua Snider of Utah, was mountain climbing when his dad suffered from heat exhaustion. Joshua climbed a waterfall, found a spring, filled a canteen, and returned with fresh water, applied first aid to his father, and helped carry him down the mountain.

John Robinson, a first-grader from Utah, suffered second- and third-degree burns on 20 percent of his body, the price he paid for saving the life of his young brother from the same fate. John saw his little brother open the oven door and try to climb up where water was boiling on the stove. John rushed across the kitchen, pushed his brother out of the way before the oven toppled over, pouring the water on him.

Four Boy Scouts in Ann Arbor, Michigan, helped save a family from possible drowning in the white water river rapids after a thunderstorm. None of them could swim, although they had life jackets on. The Boy Scout training allowed them to save this family's life.

Three New Hampshire youths were given Good Deed Awards for their quick thinking. The children were playing in a neighborhood and heard a smoke alarm going off and called the fire department. The children were credited for saving the life of the family dog and the family home, which has little damage due to their quick thinking.

Seven-year-old Russell Drier and his 5-year-old brother, Nick, emptied their piggy banks and donated their entire life savings of \$132.35. This money helped 113 area veterans to see the National World War II Memorial. The boys included with their life savings a handmade card that thanked the veterans for their service. These boys were presented a Good Deed Award thanking them for their exemplary community service.

In Nebraska, a Good Deed Award was presented to the Ainsley Art High School students who took it upon themselves to paint a beautiful mural which enhances the Memorial Wall on Main Street.

Youth Hero Awards are for physical acts of valor, so Good Deed Awards were created to recognize kids who do other great things. When these awards are presented in person at school, they present an opportunity to reinforce and encourage noble behavior as well as to raise awareness of the Auxiliary in the local community.

Don't these stories make you proud of our youth?
(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: There are many other opportunities in the Children & Youth Plan of Work. These are being embraced nationwide. Please refer to my written report that highlights some of the success stories in the departments.

Madam President, may I have permission to --

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes, please.

CHAIRMAN NELSON: In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the members serving with me this year on the Children & Youth Committee: Vice Chairman Laura Clark from the Department of Louisiana. Stand up, Laura.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: Committee Member Diane Spencer from the Department of Kentucky was unable to attend because of a work conflict this week. Central Division Chairman Rose Wenger, Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: Eastern Division Chairman Edwina Koman from the Department of Pennsylvania, back here.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: Northwestern Division Chairman Norma Tramm, Department of Minnesota.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: Last night, you appointed our Southern Division Chairman, Madeline Vuncannon, Department of Mississippi. Welcome.

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN NELSON: And our Western Division Chairman, Cary Fisher, from the Department of Utah, had a death in the family and was unable to attend.

Madam President, this concludes my report.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Kris.

And now we have other work to consider. And to do that, I've asked the national secretary to come to the microphone and present.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: Normally that's not a two-step process.

Thank you, Madam President.

And first I would like to say to all the leadership in this room I thank you for electing me your national secretary. I look forward to serving. I look forward to meeting all of you. And I indeed look forward to advancing the mission with a very outward focus. So I thank you for that.

(Applause.)

SECRETARY BUCKLER: We have a unique kindred spirit up here. I'm interested that we have so many people with unusual nicknames. I feel like I have many kindred spirits. Some of them right here on the dais.

We have two items of business that I would like to bring to your attention for consideration.

One, a documentary is going to be produced. Jonathan Goodman Levitt is working with conjunction -- in conjunction with The American Legion and they have asked us to participate, the American Legion Auxiliary, to produce a documentary on Boys and Girls State.

So it will be informally referred to as the Boys and Girls State documentary. It will probably have a more glamorous title, something like "American Leaders in Waiting" documentary.

So without further -- I think that's a pretty clear matter to bring before you. So, Madam President, I, therefore, move that the American Legion Auxiliary in cooperation with The American Legion enter into a joint contract with producer Jonathan Goodman Levitt to produce a marketing video for Girls State and Boys State tentatively entitled, "American Leaders in Waiting" documentary.

PRESIDENT STOY: You've heard the motion. Is there a second?

VOICE: Second.

PRESIDENT STOY: It's been moved and seconded to enter into a contract with The American Legion to produce the documentary for Girls State and Boys State.

Is there any further discussion?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Are you ready for the question? All those in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: The motion is passed. Thank you.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: Thank you, Madam President.

The second item of business was circulated and that's a resolution to allow the transaction of National Executive Committee meeting business by mail or electronic or telephonic means.

Now, we have just a slight -- I'm going to -- the version I'm going to propose has a slight amendment to what was circulated.

We consulted four parliamentarians and we got three opinions.

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY BUCKLER: So in deference to what was circulated in advance, we are going to go with the two opinions that were consistent and those two opinions said that we did not need to amend the bylaws. So the version on your chair references the need to amend the bylaws.

We are going to operate on the advice that we have been given that a resolution has the full effect of policy and procedure for the organization without amending the bylaws. So rather than doing that, we're just going to do it by resolution.

So if you have that information in front of you, what we are -- what I'm going to propose will be if you will look down, delete the fourth whereas and

that's the whereas that upon updating the voting rules and policies. This will be a precursor to appropriately amending the bylaws, et cetera, et cetera.

We don't -- we're going with two of the four opinions that we don't need to amend the bylaws. So we're going to delete that whereas and that will make it, therefore, appropriate to delete the final resolved. And be it further resolved that a resolution to amend the bylaws, we're going to strike that.

So the essence of what we're trying to accomplish will remain. Is that as clear as mud? Great.

Okay. Therefore, to the leadership assembled in this room and Madam President, the resolution would read as follows:

Whereas, the policy of the American Legion Auxiliary is to allow the National Executive Committee to vote by letter per carried motion at the National Executive Committee meeting, and that was passed in October of 1922;

And whereas, this policy requires updating to accommodate telephonic and electronic technology and the American Legion Auxiliary by -- we can -- and we're going to strike that, I'm sorry, strike the second sentence there. I do apologize.

So the second whereas would be...Whereas, this policy requires updating to accommodate telephonic and electronic technology.

Then we'll go to the third whereas, and Whereas, updating the American Legion Auxiliary's National Executive Committee voting rules and policies will be consistent with the policies of The American Legion, which allow for the transaction of their National Executive Committee business by mail, e-mail, or telephone per Rule 12 of their Rules of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion revised May 7th through the 8th, 2008.

And therefore be it resolved that the American Legion Auxiliary at the midyear National Executive Committee meeting March 1st, 2009, revises its policies and rules on voting to allow the National Executive Committee to vote by mail or other telephonic or electronic means as follows:

The National Executive Committee without meeting together may transact business by mail, telephonically, or electronically. The conduct of such business requires that circulation of the proposed resolution or motion be conveyed by mail, electronically, or telephonically to the National Executive Committee by the national secretary with the approval of the national president.

Thirty days shall be allowed for the return of the votes by mail, telephonically, or electronically to the national secretary. Voting shall be considered closed at the end of the 30 days and an affirmative vote shall be recorded by a majority of those casting their votes by mail, telephonically, or electronically.

Outcomes of voting by mail, telephonically, or electronically shall be confirmed by the national secretary and the national president shall notify the National Executive Committee of the action taken.

And, therefore, Madam President, with those amendments to what was previously circulated, I recommend adoption of this resolution.

PRESIDENT STOY: Can I have that book back?

SECRETARY BUCKLER: You can. I'm sorry. Would you like your script back?

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes.

Okay. You have heard the motion regarding the resolution to allow the transaction of National Executive Committee business by mail, electronic, or telephonic means.

Is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT STOY: It's been moved and seconded. Are there any further questions?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: All those in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Question. I'm sorry. Excuse me. The chair recognizes the NEC from Oregon.

MS. DAHL: Cyndi Dahl from Oregon.

How will the question, the discussion be conducted on -- how will the discussion be conducted in -- between the NEC members regarding a resolution?

PRESIDENT STOY: So you're -- the question is --

MS. DAHL: Like what I'm doing right now.

PRESIDENT STOY: Okay. So by telephone, by telephone conference call perhaps or e-mail conference call. We would employ technology to have that kind of dialogue.

MS. DAHL: Okay.

PRESIDENT STOY: Are there any other questions?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Okay. Now I will call for the vote.

All those in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you. The motion is carried. Thank you so much for adopting the resolution.

And thank you, Dubbie, for your work and research on trying to perform this business correctly as well.

Okay. Other business to come before us, there's been many questions regarding membership and the Department of the Philippines.

So, Marta, would you like to come forward and report what you've been able to find out.

TREASURER HEDDING: Thanks, Madam President.

As Desi said, prompted by several inquiries about the Department of the Philippines, the national president requested that National Headquarters conduct research. So this report attempts to address some of those inquiries.

The first question was, does the Philippines have enough members to remain a department?

The Department of Philippines was chartered in 1967 with 1,078 members. Article 7, Section 1 of the Constitution and Bylaws states that to issue a department charter, a minimum of 500 adult members shall be required.

However, National Headquarters could find no reference about the number of members needed to maintain a department.

The second question. Has the Department of Philippines been in compliance with Standing Rules?

Section 8 of the Standing Rules states that the names and addresses of all elected department officers must be sent to National Headquarters no more than 30 days after department convention and that the names of all department chairmen with correct mailing address must be sent to National Headquarters not later than September 1.

The Philippines department president reported via e-mail that the list of officers and Committee Chairmen was sent to the National Secretary on June 6, 2008. That list has not been located.

National Headquarters has sent numerous e-mails to the Department of Philippines requesting their list of department officers and chairmen. E-mails have been sent consistently to the same address from which National Headquarters has received e-mail from the Philippines department president. National Headquarters has not received a response to our request.

During your visit to the Department of Philippines, National President Desi learned that the department has elected officers for 2009.

Philippines department president reports that the department has e-mailed requests to update the Red Book. National Headquarters has no record of receiving such e-mails.

Third, do Philippines members receive membership renewal notices and the magazine?

Since 1998, Philippines has been coded on our system not to receive national renewal notice.

It says while the system contains no references to why, it is believed that the Philippines members reported for several years that they weren't receiving the notices and to save expense, the national secretary directed that they no longer be mailed to the Philippines. The magazine is mailed to all active members of the Philippines.

Question four. Why isn't the Department of Philippines classified as a foreign unit and why are they part of the Western Division? Is it because the Legion is set up that way?

National Headquarters' research to date has not produced answers to these questions, but we would have you know that the Legion does have a Department of Philippines.

Question five. Why was the 2009 membership goal of the Department of Philippines set at 790 when their 2008 membership was only 18?

(Laughter.)

TREASURER HEDDING: At 30 days prior to the 2008 National Convention, National Headquarters' records did show that only eight -- that the

Philippines had only 18 paid members at that time. All of those members were VIM members.

However, in September 2008, the Department of Philippines did transmit dues for an additional 257 members. With those additional members, the Philippines ended the 2008 membership year with 275 members as recorded at National Headquarters.

As of the last published membership report, which was last Thursday, the Department of Philippines has 18 active or paid members for 2009. All of those are VIM members.

It appears that the 2009 membership numbers reflect the same information lag as we experienced in 2008.

The Philippines department president reports that due to the high cost of mailings, they do not transmit dues weekly, or monthly.

(Laughter.)

TREASURER HEDDING: I'm sorry. That was -- question six. Sorry. The Western Division National Vice President said that she does not receive responses to her correspondence with the Department of Philippines. She questions their membership numbers and whether they are compliant with Standing Rules and, if not, what actions should be taken.

It seems that communication with the Department of Philippines both to and from National Headquarters and to and from the Western Division Vice President and from the Western Division Membership chairman is an ongoing problem.

Research done over the last few weeks by National Headquarters does confirm that the Department of Philippines has a recent membership of 275. The Constitution and Bylaws specify that a minimum of 500 members are required to charter a department, but are silent on the number of members required to maintain a charter.

There are other departments with fewer than 500 members in good standing.

Therefore, because there's no conclusive findings regarding the accuracy or the receipt of communications and reports and also because there is no bylaw requirement for a minimum number of members to maintain a department charter, National Headquarters believes that further research is needed before offering a recommendation.

Madam President, that concludes this report.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, National Treasurer Marta.

The chair would certainly entertain a motion of what you wish to do in this particular issue.

The chair recognizes the National Vice President, Rita Navarreté.

VICE PRESIDENT NAVARRETÉ: Madam President, I move that the National Headquarters conduct further research regarding the status of the Department of the Philippines including membership requirements for maintaining a department's charter and report findings and recommendations to the national president.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Rita.

You have heard the motion. Is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

PRESIDENT STOY: The motion has been moved and seconded for further research by National Headquarters on this matter.

Are there any further questions?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: All in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you. The motion has passed.

And thank you, Marta and the staff at National Headquarters, for your due diligence in researching this item for us.

I think it's relevant to say at this time that the documentary -- the recommendation that we had to participation with The American Legion on that documentary had no financial impact. So in case you were wondering about that, I thought I would clarify that. That was just permission to enter into that contract with that producer.

The chair recognizes the NEC from Arizona.

MS. MATTESON: Madam President, being a member of the Western Division, I would like to make a motion that the -- for the Department of Philippines be excluded from the standings from the Western Division until the issue is resolved.

VOICE: I second that.

PRESIDENT STOY: It's been moved and seconded to remove the Philippines from the standings. I assume you refer to the membership reporting standards and -- so what would that entail?

And, Marta, is that even possible from a --

TREASURER HEDDING: I'm sure it is possible for a cost. We'll have to pay the Legion to do significant programming to change the reporting.

PRESIDENT STOY: So that would have a financial impact on the organization and would need the Finance Committee's action.

VOICE: Want us to run out and vote?

PRESIDENT STOY: The -- it was the intent of the earlier motion to delay action until further research should be taken. But certainly the chair has entertained the motion. It has been seconded.

So is there any further discussion on the matter? Any further questions? Certainly the Finance Committee has voice at this meeting if they care to offer anything.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Madam President --

PRESIDENT STOY: Uh-huh.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: -- Josephine Keanu, Western Division National Vice President.

I feel that it is time to implement that motion. It will be pending after the research. I think the determination after the research would then determine the status of the Philippines.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Josephine.

Anyone else with a comment --

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Maybe I should amend that motion pending the results of the research. That should be considered.

PRESIDENT STOY: That should be considered. You have the opportunity to amend it or just the fact that the NEC, the voting body has the opportunity to respond to her comments. So either way. Just if you want to amend, you have to do that.

The chair recognizes the NEC from Arizona.

MS. MATTESON: Madam President, in reference to the financial burden that would cause the national organization, I would withdraw my motion. But I still feel that we should not be burdened with that department.

PRESIDENT STOY: Okay. Motion taken.

So do you wish to comment?

So the question is the proper action for the chair at this point. We had a motion and a second and then a move to withdraw.

VOICE: Second.

PRESIDENT STOY: So do we have a second -- is the second withdrawn?

VOICE: Yes.

PRESIDENT STOY: That did happen? Okay. So is there any further discussion? So we're voting to withdraw the motion?

VOICE: Yes.

PRESIDENT STOY: Okay. Okay. Dee.

MS. CHAPPELL-HALEY: Madam President, Dee Chappell-Haley of Department of Colorado.

Once a motion is made and seconded, it becomes the property of the body. Therefore, we have to vote to accept the rescindment of that motion.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Dee, for that clarity.

So it's been moved and seconded to withdraw the motion. Are there any further discussion?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: All in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: The motion is passed. So we have withdrawn the motion.

Thank you for your due diligence and your assistance, NEC from Colorado.

MS. DAHL: Madam President.

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes, ma'am.

MS. DAHL: In regards to this Philippines action, would it be possible to put -- Cyndi Dahl, Department of Oregon.

Would it be possible to put a time limit for the research on this problem with the Philippines?

PRESIDENT STOY: It would be possible if there was motion and action taken to do so if you felt that was necessary.

MS. DAHL: Madam President, Cyndi Dahl, Department of Oregon.

I move we give this research one year from this NEC to the next NEC.

PRESIDENT STOY: Is there a second to that motion?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Hearing none, the motion dies for lack of a second.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT STOY: The --

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Madam President.

PRESIDENT STOY: The chair recognizes Josephine Keanu.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: Madam President, Josephine Keanu, National Vice President, Western Division.

I feel that we should set a deadline and I would assume -- not assume -- I would like to move that we do it before our national convention in 2009.

VOICE: Second.

PRESIDENT STOY: It's been moved and seconded that the deadline be national convention 2009.

Is there any further discussion?

MS. CHAPPELL-HALEY: Madam President, I'm assuming that that includes firm recommendations that will come at that time as well?

I'm sorry. Dee Chappell-Haley, Department of Colorado.

Will that include that we're going to have -- the deadline will be to complete the research and that they will bring recommendations for this body to act on at that meeting?

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: I feel that before the close of books, it's -- the research should be accomplished at that time.

PRESIDENT STOY: Yeah.

VICE PRESIDENT KEANU: And so at the NEC meeting at the national convention, it should be determined what we should be doing.

PRESIDENT STOY: For the record, the answer to your question is yes.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Is there any further business to come before this -- did we vote on that?

Thank you.

It's been moved and seconded that research will be done prior to the NEC meeting at national convention.

Any other discussion or questions?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: All in favor, say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT STOY: Opposed, no.

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Motion carried. Thank you so much.

PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Madam President.

PRESIDENT STOY: Sure. I mean, yes, Jan.

(Laughter.)

PAST NATIONAL PRESIDENT PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan.

The immediate past president had this same problem last year and that's why it's continuing. But we have other departments, too, with issues.

And so whatever we do at the convention regarding the Philippines is going to be binding on perhaps other departments if we establish some sort of a criteria that you have to have X members for continuing chartering.

So, you know, not to say that we shouldn't be acting, but I just want to warn you that we have others that need to be considered as well. It's not just the department of the Philippines.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes. And so for the record, I will remind you as to how the motion was stated. To move to conduct further research regarding the status of the Department of the Philippines including membership requirements for maintaining a department's charter and report findings and recommendations to the national president.

So meaning that, yes, indeed, that any action taken on that would affect many departments or all departments actually, not just the Philippines, if that action is taken as far as a minimum, establishing a minimum for maintaining a department.

Okay. Is there any further business to come before this body today?

(Whereupon, there was no response.)

PRESIDENT STOY: This year is a year of hope. Honoring our promises every day.

So with that being said, will all the national chairmen in this room please stand.

(Whereupon, the audience complied with request.)

PRESIDENT STOY: These are the women who promised to lead the programs of our organization and this national president would like to thank them for their service. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Please remain standing. Please remain standing.

Also, part of the team this year is all those who said yes when this national president asked them to serve as a national committee member or divisional chair. Would you please join the national chairmen?

(Whereupon, the audience complied with request.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you.

It takes a team for success and I want to publicly thank you for saying yes and joining the team this year.

The chair calls upon the national secretary for announcements.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: Thank you, Madam President.

Announcements: North Carolina has a bus ticket for sale. See the North Carolina National Executive Committee representation here if you are interested.

If you arrived late or you were not present yesterday, please be sure to mark your attendance on the roll sheets at the back of the room where the lovely (unintelligible) are seated.

Another reminder. Those who have registered for the Arlington National Cemetery and Pentagon Memorial Tour should be sure to locate your ticket. It was included in your registration packet.

We will begin loading the buses promptly at 11 a.m. outside the Ninth Street entrance to the hotel. You're all familiar with where that is. You go up the escalators and turn to your right.

Please dress according to the weather. If you haven't checked, it's a little chilly.

Buses will return to the hotel no later than 4:30 p.m. I know we've had people interested in arrival back at the hotel because of other arrangements and travel plans you have. Buses are expected to return to the hotel no later than 4:30 p.m.

Poppy Contest, the Poppy Contest: voting for that will begin at 12:30 p.m. and last until 7 p.m. this evening. It will resume at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning. Poppies can be dropped off and registered no earlier than 10 a.m. today.

Awareness Assembly: the doors for the Awareness Assembly opening session will open at 7 p.m. today and the Awareness Assembly open session will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom.

I note for all of you attending that there will be a book selling and signing in correlation with our Medal of Honor Program after the evening's event. I have seen the book. It's a lovely book. It's going to be discounted for members tonight.

Oh, speak out. I can't read your hand language.

VOICE: (Unintelligible) 25.

SECRETARY BUCKLER: The book normally sells for \$40. It's going to be offered for \$25 for our members. And you will have someone who can autograph it.

Another item. You may have noticed an overlap in the schedule tomorrow as the morning session ends at 11:55, yet the Public Spirit Award reception begins at 11:30. So this is one of those ah-ah moments.

So for those of you who -- so for those of you who have an invitation to the reception, we do expect you to still attend the workshop of your choosing

at 11 o'clock, but you may be excused a little bit early, at 11:30, so that you may attend the reception.

The next meeting of the National Executive Committee meeting will be in Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, August 22nd.

Another item of interest: the unit handbooks. There is a prototype available for you to look at out at Emblem Sales. I hope you look at it and I hope you like its look. It is available for purchase now. A small hooray.

And I see -- and thank you to Amy Billings who's seated at the back of the room who has worked tirelessly on getting that done for you as well.

(Applause.)

SECRETARY BUCKLER: And, again, want to thank our sponsors for this morning's National Executive Committee breakfast, GloryBe Collectibles. Steve Bolt, president, was present.

Our opening session is sponsored by Quadriga Art.

Our Public Spirit Award luncheon is sponsored by AON Association Services and The Hartford.

And, Madam President, that concludes our announcements.

PRESIDENT STOY: Thank you, Dubbie.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT STOY: Yes, Loretta?

LORETTA: I have one question on the Pentagon Tour. Are we going to be required to go through the security check, that we maybe should not take too much junk with us?

PRESIDENT STOY: No.

VOICE: It's outside the (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT STOY: I'm sorry?

VOICE: It's an outside --

PRESIDENT STOY: The answer to your question is no.

LORETTA: Great.

PRESIDENT STOY: Okay? So Cherita Potter, National Chaplain, will offer our Benediction.

CHAPLAIN POTTER: Let us pray.

We take this moment to thank You, Lord, for all that You have -- all that we have accomplished here today. Prepare us in thoughts and interactions to be gentle, open, and with purpose, creativity, and faith. Embrace National President Desi in all her endeavors throughout our nation and across the seas. Inspire us to reach out and meet new friends from our other departments and share our ideals. Grant us a good night's rest to wake with a renewed dedication to our organization. Watch over our troops and comfort their families. Give them peace of mind and hope for the future. These things we ask in Your name. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT STOY: Will the pages please retire the colors?
(Whereupon, the pages retire the colors.)

PRESIDENT STOY: This meeting of the 2009 Executive Committee is now adjourned.

(Ringing of the bell.)

(Whereupon, at 9:37 a.m., the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)



AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY

Serving veterans, their families and their communities

National Executive Committee

2009 National Officer & Chairmen Reports



AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY

Serving veterans, their families and their communities

National Vice President

Divisional National Vice Presidents

National Chaplain

National Historian

2009 Reports

RITA NAVARRETÉ

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

The office of vice president is one that I take very seriously and continue to perform to be best of my ability supporting not only the organization's programs but those additional responsibilities that require my participation.

The first six months reflect work that has enhanced my working knowledge of the operations of both the volunteer and staff levels. I am proud to report that many accomplishments have been made during this time.

The first challenge given was serving as chairman of the Search Committee when former National Secretary Pam Gilley gave notice of her resignation the day after the National Convention. The work done by this committee was one of total commitment to do the right thing and move with an aggressive action plan to have an individual selected by December 2008. The committee composed of Desireé Stoy, National President, Linda Boone, Past National President, Kris Nelson, National C&Y Chairman, Marta Hedding, National Treasurer and Donna Parrott, Human Resources Director worked as a team to get the process completed to provide the recommendations to the National President. The job was accomplished and Mary "Dubbie" Buckler accepted the offer to serve and reported to duty on January 15, 2009.

National Vice President assignments provide opportunities that enhance knowledge of the organization and also of the programs of the American Legion and related veteran activities at a national level. Mid-year report is as follows:

- National Commander's Testimony, September 10-11, 2008, Washington, D.C. (The Legislative Agenda with Congress).
- National Commander's Homecoming in September 12-14, 2008 in Des Moines, Iowa, where my husband, Tony, and I joined the National President in representing the organization.
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Riverside, California, October 24-26, 2008.
- Finance Meeting, Indianapolis, October 10-11, 2008.
- Presidents & Secretaries Conference, October 12-15, 2008.
- National President's Homecoming, Columbus, Ohio, October 16-19, 2008. A weekend filled with exceptional hospitality and activities that met everyone's expectations. An honor to present at the banquet a gift from the National officers, Chairmen and Past National Presidents – a glass stained mural of her official pin – H.O.P.E.
- Veterans Day 2009 - represented the National President by attending the events planned by The Veterans Day Council of Indianapolis, which included the morning ceremony, parade and the 44th Annual Veterans Day Banquet. Once again a networking opportunity to demonstrate

support for our veterans at the National Headquarters city. It is my recommendation that this event be continued with the National Vice President's presence.

- Foundation Board Meeting, November 15-16, 2008, Indianapolis to further conduct business and work on strategic plan.
- Inauguration Events in D.C. – January 18-20, 2009. What an opportunity for both myself and husband Tony to witness the swearing in ceremonies of the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, along with an estimated 1.8 million – a monumental event and definitely “a moment to remember.” We joined National President Desi and husband Tim in attending the scheduled events made possible by The American Legion. A highlight was attending the Salute to Heroes Ball, sponsored by The American Legion every four years since 1953 where Medal of Honor recipients and the Commander in Chief are honored. President Obama did not attend but Vice President Biden and his wife, Jill, dropped by to express the nation's gratitude for the sacrifices and heroism of the 47 Medal of Honor recipients present and for all veterans and service members.

I look forward to the remainder of the year with enthusiasm and excitement to do the right thing in performing the responsibilities of my office, giving of time and talent to accomplish this year's goals and objectives to achieve success.

**VIRGINIA KODL
CENTRAL DIVISION
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

All of the Central Division states have been working very hard on “Honoring Our Promise Everyday” and are probably most prevalent in membership. Eight of the nine states are in the top 20 of the nation with six being in the top 10 and all states have reached the 75% goal. All of the departments continue to serve the veterans and our children – they have set goals with the benefits to be reaped by the veterans and their families, the children and the communities.

I have visited only three of my nine states to date and have been warmly welcomed by the officers, members and The Legion Family. All of the states report visiting the VA hospitals and helping with the Christmas Gift Shops, conducting Girl State sessions and helping the families of deployed soldiers.

Illinois is “Cooking Up Service” by traveling the state with The Legion Family to collect membership from all 25 districts. Attended a deployment of soldiers and participated in the “Pillow Case” project. Special project is for the VA hospitals and Field Service Facilities to be used for equipment for the veterans with ½ of the donations to go to the “Toby Tire Program” to promote school bus safety. Attended ground breaking ceremony for new Fisher House.

Indiana has “Stars and Stripes Forever with Service to our Veterans” and a commitment to visit all 9 state VA hospitals to visit with the veteran. Project “Kick for Nick” is collecting soccer balls in memory of a soldier killed in Iraq. Attempting to save the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Home for orphans of soldiers. Veterans’ shower collecting over \$8000 in value. Sending a representative to Valley Forge. Historian is promoting a scrapbook contest.

Iowa is leading the pack in membership. Chartered a new Unit. Interviewed by a radio station to share her projects, what the Auxiliary has to offer and how to become a member. Attended Legislative Rally at the State Capital.

Kansas had a booth at the state fair to distribute program materials. Special project is to replenish the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and thus far has collected \$300. Process of chartering a new unit. Redistributing Units to support the VA hospitals more equally. Had a women’s veteran representative speak at Mid-winter about issues specific to women.

Michigan has collected over \$4,000 for “Operation Military Kids”. The Legion Family toured the Detroit VAMC and Veterans Homeless Shelter along with President Desi. Also attended a legislative reception and hosted a cookie and

tea social hour with the membership. Working hard on membership to attain the goal that Suzanne's mother reached when she was Department President.

Missouri installed new officers and plans to visit all 17 districts. Had a newspaper interview published. Laid a wreath in memory of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Changed format of the Fall Conference. Participated in ground breaking ceremonies for a new Fisher House. President Rosemarie received the 2008 Woman of Achievement Award for the St. Louis Area. Purchased a new postal scale and upgraded the computer from funds raised at the "Hop."

Ohio is promoting the theme "Wonderful Women of Ohio" "WOW" so members can be recognized for their individual efforts and gifts they share in their units. Juniors collected 333 No Sew Blankets. VA&R collected 278 comfort bags for homeless veterans and homeless teen shelters and also raised \$1500 for the same with a state basket raffle. Developing a state web site. Signed up 30 new volunteers to meet President Desi's challenge.

West Virginia held its 1st ever Junior Auxiliary meeting. Units have updated by-laws and standing rules. Served over 750 veterans from the four Christmas Gift Shops. Collected over \$1,578.50 for Multiple Sclerosis special project. Working with the schools to help improve reading skills and offering tutoring.

Wisconsin donated \$3,704 to Spinoza Bears, \$1,630 for Heart Pillows, recognized three youths with the Youth/Hero Award, presented \$11,600 to the eight VA Hospitals, VA Homes, Medical Centers and Outreach Centers. Emphasizing "Family" as plans are made for future conferences and conventions so membership can grow in our organization. 3,500 Guardsmen are being deployed so our commitment will be great to help these families.

**MARY ANN VENTULETT
EASTERN DIVISION
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

The Eastern Division has set the pace for “Honoring Our Promise Everyday” by continued support to our veterans and their family. The local troops in each community have been welcomed and supported in bases and hospitals throughout the division with hugs, banners, gifts, financial support and helping hands. Many of The Legion Family have gone out and found the families of the active veteran and gone to the extremes to make the distance between them and the loved one as comfortable as they can with financial support and giving them hope until they return. I have traveled and toured the VA medical facilities and other veterans homes I can see that the ray of “HOPE” is within our members’ hearts to “continue the legacy” of service to them in all they do. New volunteers were established and indoctrinated with orientations of the service in each facility.

This year they have encouraged many new members and started new and innovative ways to encourage renewals.

Membership nights and individual contact with the unit member were emphasized on our organization through their eyes of the member. Although the states have had their difficulty changes in administration and loss of many vital people, the dedicated leadership in those departments continued the work by picking up the slack.

As the American Legion Auxiliary from this division each year attempts to participate fully in all of our varied programs, they have held many firsts this year: D.C. started having their first Christmas Gift Shop successfully. Four new units have been chartered, our programs though varied continue to support the AEF, Spirit of Youth, Legion Family effort to send dollars for the comfort of the hospitalized veterans in the United States and abroad the continuation of support for Creative Arts Festival.

Some units and departments made special attempts to support their troops by initiating fundraisers, walkathons, freedom walks, packages being sent through the post office free packaging and mailing for troops program. The Pocket Flag program is alive and well and Juniors took initiative to help largely with this program.

I have met several new and dedicated members in my travels and spoken to them on the current views of the future with new attempts in high technological venues as well as new ideas to encourage membership. Members showed the continued need for the mentorship program to flourish at every level. Each

department is making changes that are necessary to change administrative standards and utilizing the technology and staff to make financial and business quality.

In closing, I reflect on the dedication of the charter and originating members who laid the foundation for us so many years ago. I admire all of them for giving us the conscious responsibility to aid and support all veterans and their families, as well as instill Americanism in each and every citizen. Encouragement of the security of our principles of the Constitution, and efforts to give all the understanding of democracy and make aware all freedoms offered because of the service of all veterans of all wars. And to keep the seed planted to inspire each member to do this service in the same fervor and love the veteran has. Let us never forget the price they paid and give them "HOPE" they deserve, by honoring our promise everyday.

My sincere thanks to all of you for your dedication and love of God and country that has given me the morals and values that made me who I am. I will "continue the legacy" for The American Legion Family and offer assistance in all I do. I look forward to the encouragement you have given me as I traveled into your units and state and I look to see all of you in Louisville.

**THELMA "TOOTIE" FUELLER
NORTHWESTERN DIVISION
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

Madam President Desireé, national officers, Past National Presidents and honored American Legion Auxiliary members,

The Northwest Division is alive and well. Membership is very important to us. All seven departments in our division, North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota and Nebraska, are trying hard to reach our goal and also to stay on top in our membership standing.

Fall conferences have been a real learning experience. I have been fortunate to attend these and the chairmen really do a great job explaining their programs. It was good to see the information that was distributed at the Presidents & Secretaries Conference was being shared and referred to at these workshops.

The departments in the Northwest Division are working very hard with projects that benefit the VA hospitals and homes in their areas. The work our members do is truly amazing. Our hard-working members contribute many hours at the facilities for veterans and they also donate baked goodies for lunches and parties, collect books, make lap robes, purchase and contribute items for holidays, assist in getting patients to medical appointments, and present interesting and educational programs. Departments raise hundreds of dollars to assist with a variety of things at the homes and hospitals. With our financial contributions we have provided activities personnel to provide outings, needed items for different areas, shopping for holiday gifts, treats for parties, and decorations for special events. The Legion Family provides a generous service to our well deserving veterans.

I would like to say thank-you to the departments I have visited. Your hospitality, kindnesses and friendships have been wonderful. I know the rest of the visits will be a memorable time too. I HOPE you will continue the good work you are doing. We need to keep our organization secure for future generations.

Membership is the key to our organization and we HOPE to reach the goals. My HOPE is that when the year is over, we will still be #1 in membership. We need to work hard on our five-year strategic plan that was implemented in 2008. Times are changing and we need to move on for the best interest of the Auxiliary, our youth, the veterans, our communities as we continue to serve God and country.

**NANCY WEATHERLY JORDAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

Madam National President Desireé Stoy, Past National Presidents, and all members of the National Executive Board:

The Southern Division has been working on many projects to Honor Our Promises Everyday. We have been dealers of HOPE. We have accomplished our many projects of HOPE by first, honoring our leaders and members. Second, by having optimism and seeing the opportunity and not the problem. Third, by having perseverance and maintaining commitment and enthusiasm even when things get tough. Last, we will encourage our members by always approaching interaction with an attitude of encouragement.

The Southern Division is constantly working membership, trying to recruit new members as well as retain our current ones. Three departments made the first target date of 50% while all but one department reached the second target date of 75%. The Southern Division will strive to achieve 100% goal departments. As we all know without membership we could not accomplish all of our wonderful goals set by our national president this year.

The departments in the Southern Division have high hopes for a year of working the many programs under the auxiliary. Departments have been busy raising funds to help veterans in the many Veterans Medical Centers, the nursing homes, the homeless veterans and those still living at home. Departments reported their Christmas gift shops a huge success.

The departments in the Southern Division are having workshops and are disseminating materials passed to the departments from the national level down to the unit levels. Poppy corsage contests were held in many departments to help raise funds for the Creative Arts Festival. One department recently had a ribbon-cutting for their new department. What HOPE this shows for a bright future of our organization!

The department presidents have reported many worthwhile projects from raising funds to help the USO, sending electric blankets to Afghanistan, increasing awareness of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury, assisting their local National Guard units, helping with sendoffs and homecomings, raising monies for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and Educating Children of Warriors, and the list goes on.

I would like to personally thank those departments that I have already visited and look forward to my future visits.

I know that the rest of the year will be filled with much excitement and that the Southern Division will continue to accomplish the goals set forth by our national president. With HOPE, amazing things will happen in the Southern Division and we will be able to Honor Our Promises Everyday.

**JOSEPHINE KEANU
WESTERN DIVISION
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

Madam National President Desireé Stoy, fellow officers of the American Legion Auxiliary, members of the National Executive Committee.

ALOHA * LOVE, CARING & SHARING.

Following the National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, with the desire of HOPE--Honoring Our Promise Everyday. Plans were soon made to visit the Department of Arizona, of which President Vickey Zwall conducted mid-winter conference in Tucson with the most enthusiastic members of units. Great participation was made in keeping with her theme "No Beginning, No End in Service to our Veterans and their Families." All plans began with pre-conference committee meetings with the outline of the plans of work activities. The department's special project is JROTC, National Security program, in offering guidance and support to the youth of tomorrow. The carousel motif in the circus theme prevailed during its entirety with happy smiles and laughter in grateful spirit. With a big "TA-DA."

The gathering of national, department officers and chairman in mid-October to the Presidents & Secretaries conference in Indianapolis to begin the year to go over potential and implement the objectives of national programs with the greatest participation. Special speakers to elaborate on programs and more public relations with media should be made for media knowledge of this great organization of women of service. The visitation to meet and greet employees of National Headquarters' new offices was the highlight of the conference.

The visitation in mid-November to Department of Idaho with President Pearl Bentley and the "Gems," to participate in the greatest food convoy to the Idaho State Veterans Hospital. The generous members of post and units participating in gathering over a six-month period annually of non- and perishable food, sorting, loading and unloading likewise. The department held a brief meeting of officers to show appreciation to the veterans hospital coordinator for numerous volunteer hours of service. All post and unit members were hosted to a delicious lunch prepared and hosted by the staff of State Veterans Hospital, in acknowledgment of the generosity of "giving." Followed by a tour and patient visitation of this facility. The other greatest episode of this visit in community service was sightseeing and bazaaring to all towns within and out of city limits. These "gems" are showing their colors of the ladies Auxiliary to the Legion who have established very excellent community relations. Keep up the good work in Children & Youth and Education of youth in Junior Activities, likewise public relations to the local media on all topics. Keep up the renewals of "gems" to make it to the top. Great service is being done!

Plans were made in later days of November to the Departments of Utah and Washington prior to the opening of Veterans Hospital Christmas Gift Shops. These volunteers gather many items to be used as gifts for veterans to choose, wrap and send to their children and spouses. Much service hours are dedicated to these shops. While in Utah we visited two shops and veterans were appreciative of gift items available and serviced by Auxiliary volunteers. The members of units in Seattle have an ongoing program at Fort Lewis transitional facility to receive and aid "Welcome Home Veterans," homecooked dinners weekly and show a bit of musical entertainment in the joy of the arts.

The volunteers strive to service and their promise is rewarded. Great membership participation in workmanship. Keep up the good work, make it all count as you recruit and renew membership.

Following my return to Hawaii to greet National President Desireé and Timothy Stoy upon their return from the Far East Guam via Philippines. The local plans were to visit the U.S.S. Arizona memorial ceremony early the morning of December 7 for the honoring of the Pearl Harbor survivors in memoriam of all 2,500 casualties on the attack in 1941. Visitation to the U.S.S. Missouri and Pacific Aviation Museum and lunch to conclude the day. Plans to Cincpac for a debriefing followed.

The department hosted the guest National Commander David and Mrs. Rehbein, along with SAL Commander Tommie Cisna to dinner buffet at the Pagoda Hotel among members of the post and units. The entertainment of Hawaiian song and dance by dependents of military spouses and children from Hickam Air Force base. Bulletins were prepared in the month of December and mailed out to departments encouraging membership and updating visitation schedules. Plans soon after the new year began with a visitation to Ridgecrest, California, for Department of California DEC meeting. Many plans had gone into the meeting for all districts members to attend great support from the post and districts and units of California. President LuAnn Capazzi asked that all chairmen promote their programs for better understanding in service. Child Welfare fundraiser was carried out many incentive awards were presented and offered in membership encouragement in achieving goal. The theme for the year "Charting a Course to New Horizons." The flagship sails as the admiral guides her shipmates over obstacles of achievements. In all programs of ALA. Hoy Hoy mates!

The visitation to Albuquerque, New Mexico, likewise weather with the southwestern hospitality on February 13-16, to attend the ALA Mid-year conference of districts and unit members. The hometown of National Vice President Rita Navarreté. Much enthusiasm was shown in support to the programs of Children & Youth and Junior Activities and veterans service. President Cathy King is "Soaring With Eagles For Our Veterans, Children and Community." The Blue Star Bulletin prepared and mailed to members with great communication skills of reaching out with information. Great district and

unit support has been received by keeping in touch in all programs. Operation Wounded Warriors has been well supported. Visitation to VA hospital on this Valentine day weekend, giving cheers and sweets to our hospitalized veterans was a highlight of my visit. Unit volunteers are giving many hours of service and gifts as needed.

The other secret that has been told is The American Legion Children's Home in Ponca, Oklahoma, established in 1928, of which they have received a grant from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. This group of individuals led by Ms. Kerry Bowman who spoke on behalf of the Children's Home. She expressed great appreciation in reference to receiving a grant from ALCWF in 1994. They are proud to be associated with this great organization of service-connected members. The dinner banquet hosted by American Legion of the Department of New Mexico. I also met my counterpart Western Division National Officer of The American Legion, Mr. Harley Ray of the Department of Oregon.

Plans are being made to complete my visitation to Departments of Oregon and Alaska and finally end with Hawaii in the summer of 2009.

The honor and appreciation to the organization in giving me this privilege to encourage membership for the future. We once again need to build on great accomplishments and sound that tune in dedication of service. With this I say "ALOHA"- "LOVE" - "CARING"- "SHARING!" Good job—SHAKA!

CHERITA POTTER NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

As a kickstart for the year, a joint Chaplains Conference was held with The American Legion in Indianapolis in September. Several department chaplains and guests attended. It was fun and educational, reportedly well worthwhile by those that participated.

National staff member Tammy Garrity provided me with department chaplain contact information, and from there we developed a functional prayer chain and thus a successful link for sharing needed information.

By taking advantage of the Christmas season and cards sent out via snail mail, the reports and current contact information were improved a bit more.

In reading the reports, my eyes filled with tears many times. These ladies have truly accepted the challenge of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE, while embracing our troops, their family members, our veterans, our community projects, and this organizations mission.

In addition to the need for cards to the sick and for the loss of loved ones, these department and unit chaplains volunteered countless hours in gift shops, Healing Field ceremonies, hosting Wounded Warrior Week at Disney World, mineral baths and fishing trips for Warrior Transition Battalions, football parties for wounded warriors, and attended a multitude of memorial services, planned Chapel of Four Chaplain services, and held POW-MIA ceremonies. Donations were made to hospices and homeless veterans outreach programs while sending World War II veterans to D.C. to see their memorial, honoring Gold Star Mothers and women veterans and sending care packages for troops and children in need.

Many departments used National President Desi's theme of "Hope" and/or "Faith Hope and Love;" others added their own touch such as "Always Include the Secret Ingredient," "Brite Shining Stars" and "Up-Lifting our VA Hospitals." A lot of heart and soul went into providing for our veterans and our troops while Honoring Our Promise Everyday!

As Bonnie Erickson from Nebraska so eloquently put it, "When asked, these ladies came together in full force to get the job done!"

MARIAN “PIC” WEBSTER NATIONAL HISTORIAN

The number one goal for historians this year is 100% reporting. And if the mid-year reporting is any indication of the annual reports, we will achieve that goal. I am happy to report that 40 department historians have reported. Thank you to each historian for honoring your responsibility.

Alabama, Arkansas, and Virginia have been very busy taking care of their veterans by making many visits to VA hospitals and nursing homes, gift shops, distributing goodie bags, canteen books, glag programs and bingo parties.

Arizona is raising funds to adopt and support the Junior ROTC programs in their high schools.

California and Michigan are both boasting the formation of one new Unit each, with seven more in the works. Michigan is also proud to be the home of National Historian Marian “Pic” Webster.

At the Mid-Year Conference in Colorado, members witnessed the swearing in of 178 men and women into the U.S. Army. Two hundred backpacks were stuffed for Operation Military Kids.

Connecticut has begun a project to place a stained glass window depicting The Legion Family logos in the chapel in the new Levitow Veterans Health Center at the Rocky Hill Veterans Hospital.

Delaware was active on “Make A Difference Day” when they partnered with a beauty salon to benefit “Locks of Love.” Twelve ponytails were cut and \$300.00, wigs and knitted caps that looked like hair were donated to the Beebe Cancer Center.

Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue signed a “Proclamation for Poppy Day” in the state.

Hawaii is proud to be the home of the Western Division National Vice President Josephine Keanu.

Idaho holds a Food Convoy to stock the shelves of the VA Home in Boise. This year they donated over \$21,000 worth of food.

Illinois President, First Vice President, and the Membership Chair visited all twenty-five Districts during the first three months of 2008-2009 Auxiliary year making presentations regarding coming events for the Department, and shared information about all Auxiliary programs. They are proud to be the home of the Sons of the American Legion National Commander, Tommie Cisna.

The state of Indiana is trying to close the Children's Home. (One of only two left in the United States.) Members are contacting their governor, senators and representatives pleading with them to put funding back in the budget for the next two years, to give them time to work out a solution.

Iowa is doing the job of promoting the Auxiliary having had several radio and television interviews and articles in many newspapers. They are proud to be home to National Commander Dave Rehbein.

Kansas is preparing for its annual Valentine Celebrations that are held in various VA Hospital and Homes.

Kentucky held a re-dedication of the only permanent "Healing Field" in Kentucky after severe damage by a tornado.

Maryland members took part in the "Special Olympics Polar Bear Plunge" by taking a brief plunge in the Chesapeake Bay on January 23. They raised \$10,000.00.

Massachusetts President represented the Auxiliary on Veterans Day by attending the ceremonies at the Hall of Flags at the State House and also at the Bourne Memorial Cemetery. This Department is proud to be the home of the Eastern Division National Vice President Mary Ann Ventulett.

Maine Legion Family sponsors a week long "Healing Waters Program" for wounded military at the VA Hospitals. Veterans in rehab take a trip on the boat "Kate" spending time fly-fishing and enjoying the sights along the way.

Over 200 members of The Legion Family in Minnesota gathered for the Pearl Harbor Caravan Membership Rally to turn in membership. The game warden was there to tag what membership had been captured.

Missouri will be the home of the newest Fisher House. To date \$4776.00 has been collected by the Auxiliary.

Montana's President held a small conference of officers regarding these tough times with Department finances. It was felt that this was helpful in finding ways to improve things in the Department.

Although the historian in Nevada stated that she did not receive any mid-year reports, she did respond by reporting this. I did want to acknowledge the fact that she did report.

The Legion Family in New Hampshire held a 24-hour POW-MIA vigil at the New Hampshire Veterans Home. Members stood 15 minute watches during the 24 hour period. They also provided food for all to enjoy for the entire time.

New Jersey held its annual USO cookie drive and collected 1,750 pounds of cookies donated to Fort Dix for further distribution.

New Mexico is proud to be the home of our Vice President, Rita Navarreté. The VA&R Chair spearheaded a book fair to raise funds for the Creative Arts Festival.

New York's President Susan saw the sights of northern New York by way of a seaplane, visited the Wounded Warrior Unit at Fort Drum and lunched with the troops and had a chance to ride on the back of a Legions Riders motorcycle.

North Dakota became number one in the nation in membership as of December 2008. North Dakota is proud to be the home of Northwestern National Vice President Thelma Fueller.

Ohio is home of the National President Desi Stoy! Members offered up a memorable homecoming. Interviews with veterans are being conducted as a special project.

Oregon is taking an active role in nearly every Auxiliary program. They are proud to be the home of National Chaplain Cherita Potter.

Pennsylvania hosted a benefit called "Help For Heroes" and raised \$13,179.88 for the Local Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

Rhode Island and Vermont Units contributed time and money in support of Operation Stand-Down.

South Carolina is proud to be the home of the Southern Division National Vice President Nancy Jordan.

South Dakota's President was able to honor 42 WWII veterans and 2 WWI widows.

Texas has several Units helping a WWII veteran that lost everything during the Hurricane Ike and are now building him a new home. They have worked hard to raise the money to complete this project. The Department of Florida donated \$10,000 to this effort also.

Every other Monday night in Washington at the Wounded Warriors Battalion at Fort Lewis, they sponsor a Tailgate party by providing dinner, beverages and

snacks for the military men and women while they are watching Monday Night Football.

The Legion Family in West Virginia works a Highway Rest Area program every holiday week-end. They own a "Coffee Break Wagon" and serve food and beverages. Monies made from this endeavor go towards their scholarship fund.

A citizen of the Badger Girls State program in Wisconsin was the recipient of the \$20,000.00 Samsung Scholarship in 2008.

Wyoming Units took part in flying WWII veterans to see the WWII Memorial in Washington D.C. They were flown there on a chartered flight called "Wyoming Honor Flight." They are intending to take WWI veterans to see their memorials in May. It is with dismay that I cannot record all the events and work that is done in the name of the American Legion Auxiliary, but it would take volumes.



AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY

Serving veterans, their families and their communities

National Chairmen & Committee

2009 Reports

CORAL MAY GROUT AMERICANISM

At the mid-point of our year of HOPE, Units and Departments are hard at work on Americanism activities. November, of course, brought one of the most important elections in recent history. Members really worked on “Get Out the Vote” through community awareness activities, driving people to the polls, and volunteering at the polls.

- Twenty-one candidates attended a “Meet the Candidates Night” in Delaware. The audience included 105 people from the community.
- Several Georgia and Mississippi units sponsored mock elections in local elementary schools.

The Americanism Youth Conference at Valley Forge is nearly upon us. We are planning on a 22% increase in attendance over 2008. The addition of eight students through Operation Military Kids, as well as the inclusion of Departments that did not send a student last year, will provide a magnificent opportunity for this once in a lifetime experience. Unfortunately, sixteen Departments did not send a participant. New Mexico Auxiliary members are making 80 pocket flags, which will once again accompany notes being written at AYC by each attendee.

Nearly every Department identified the promotion of flag education programs and being an area of strength. Members are donating flags to schools and community groups, volunteering to speak in schools, resolving to fly flags daily, contacting the local media and writing “letters to the editor”, recognizing people and organizations/businesses for displaying the flag, and distributing flags at ceremonies.

- Illinois awarded Districts making and distributing the most pocket flags.
- Washington’s Department chairman designed an Americanism Pocket Guide which is being distributed.
- In Puerto Rico, members visit local schools each week to teach the Pledge of Allegiance.

Departments have undertaken Operation Military Kids with much enthusiasm.

- Florida included OMK students at their Fall conference.
- The Kansas Department President’s theme this year is OMK with all units being encouraged assist with this effort.

The ALA continues to work collaboratively with The American Legion on multiple programs. Units report that they are helping to collaboratively promote

Americanism programs and patriotic observances in the communities as well as in the schools, to sponsor Boy and Girl Scout troops and involve these students in Americanism programs, help with oratorical contests and other Legion programs, and Blue Star Banner distribution.

- New Hampshire units assist American Legion Posts with activities at the National Cemetery.
- Wisconsin distributes Americanism information via the Internet to the entire American Legion Family.
- Louisiana held a Blue Star Luncheon, while Oklahoma sponsored a Blue Star Tea.

The Girl Scout Scholarship program and the Auxiliary Americanism Essay Contest are in full swing. Departments, including South Carolina, Florida, Minnesota, and New York reported major efforts in this area.

Auxiliaries are participating in Healing Fields activities.

- Kentucky rededicated 79 flags to Healing Fields that were destroyed by tornadoes.

The Americanism program has been intertwined with Education, Community Service, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Public Relations, Poppy, and Juniors through the efforts of many Department and National chair people this year.

- In Utah, an Americanism float was included in the Veterans Day Parade.
- Indiana and Massachusetts distribute American flags at Naturalization ceremonies.
- Units in several states assisted with Wreaths Across America at our State Veterans Cemeteries.
- Illinois Units are sponsoring patriotic activities to commemorate Lincoln's 150th birthday.
- Ohio presented certificates to businesses that fly the American flag and the local media memorialized the activities.

Through the efforts of the hard-working members of the Americanism Committee, Divisional chair people, and Department chairmen, the word has gotten out and our Units have stepped up to the plate! We are indeed Honoring Our Promise Everyday!

MARTHA CORRIHER AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund mission statement states we are responsible for raising funds that provide temporary assistance to eligible members affected by weather related occurrence, change in the family, job status and also to lend aid to members for education to update skills to enter or re-enter the workforce. What we need to focus on are the funds being raised, collected and sent into the national organization to be used for the grant distribution.

With requests for assistance coming in very frequently and the review process being complete, you might ask where does the money come from. The money used for these grants come from the monies raised by departments, units and individual donations.

Over the past ten years, the organization has been able to build a small reserve to be used at the beginning of the year for awarding grants until the departments send in their contributions once or twice a year. This process has worked well with the exception of the most recent natural disasters and fires of the past four years. Areas in many departments were hit hard and we found our members needing assistance left and right. Auxiliary members came to the aid of their fellow members during those disasters which show our compassion and dedication to help.

We need to be proactive and encourage our members to begin collecting funds everyday of the year. At Presidents & Secretaries conference they each received a printout of department contributions from 2003 through 2008 and a proposed amount for contributions for each department based on their membership size. This amount was based on 25 cents per member. If we could accomplish this proposed amount, we would be able to award grants without having to use our reserve and add to it.

My projected AEF donation goal for 2008-2009 is \$215,155.75. As of February 3rd, 25 departments have reported to their Division AEF Chairman or other AEF Committee member with what their departments are doing to promote the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Forty-five departments have made contributions totaling \$53,183.83. Three departments have met and exceeded their proposed department contribution goal. Seven departments have not sent in their contributions yet, but I know they are working hard to raise funds. Congratulations go out to the Department of Alabama for contributing 280% of their proposed goal, Alaska for contributing 121% of their goal and to Hawaii for contributing 163% of their goal. Departments only dollars away from their goal are Puerto Rico, North Carolina and Mississippi. If we look at the goals in a realistic matter, they are attainable. Twenty-five cents per member is realistic. Ways to reach your goals may be like the following: Wisconsin held mini-

raffles, Iowa held bake sales and silent auctions, Ohio held a pancake breakfast, Kansas played bingo for the AEF, Minnesota held book sales, Alabama played penny bingo, Florida held dinners and dances, Kentucky passes the hat for donations, Tennessee holds Chinese Auctions, and North Carolina members contribute money based on their shoe size.

We should be proud of the good work we do to help our fellow members and strive to continue this legacy. With no way of predicting Mother Nature natural disasters will continue to occur and with the current economy members will be hit hard and in need of assistance. We have to be pro-active and continue to raise the funds we need for this year, but also be able to put some aside for years to come.

KRIS NELSON CHILDREN & YOUTH

Auxiliary members have embraced the challenge of “making a difference in the life of a child.” In this report I would like to share some of their success stories.

Departments across the country supported the children of our deployed military. In Illinois pictures were taken of family members and transferred to pillow cases, each family member received one pillow case so that they can hug and sleep with family members who are deployed. Pennsylvania hosted a children’s Christmas party for deployed National Guard family members. Colorado stuffed 200 backpacks to present to children of deployed parents. California assisted the Legion Riders collecting \$10,000 of donations for families of deployed soldiers including toys and food baskets. Washington set up an ALA information table at the Washington State Military Kids and Families Summit. Georgia supplied Christmas gifts for 127 children of Charlie Company.

Several departments hosted fundraisers to assist children in need throughout the holiday season. In Utah their unit’s Sub-for-Santa program supported several families. A child was sponsored to the Young Marine Program in Delaware where members also donated several items to Toys for Tots. Rhode Island members held several holiday raffles where funds raised assisted children in need. In South Carolina members participated in Project Night-Night delivering 67 bags to Citizens Against Spousal Abuse; bags included a blanket, stuffed animal, age-specific book, pajamas, socks, underwear, sweater, toiletry items, and games and activity items. In Florida new mattresses were purchased for the Tampa Children’s Home.

Units in Michigan have been monetarily supporting the “Bay Cliff Health Camp” a summer camp for children with cancer. In Oregon hours and dollars are donated to Lakeland Village a children’s home. Minnesota members donate to “Forgotten Children’s Fund,” a program that provides grants to foster children for special items they might not otherwise be able to obtain; school pictures, class rings, band instruments, and athletic fees.

Several Departments report a variety of activities supporting Children’s Miracle Network. Units in Ohio have embraced the Legion’s challenge to raise one million dollars nationwide and have hosted many fundraisers to do their part in meeting this goal. Wisconsin also reports CMN as a favorite program for their Unit’s donations. Maryland and California support CMN by hosting Walk-a-Thons annually.

New Hampshire members raised money to assist a 9-month-old baby who required a liver transplant. New York hosted a golf tournament raising funds for the University Children Cancer Unit in Syracuse. Members in New Mexico

crochet and knit afghans for premature babies and hats and booties for all newborns in local hospitals.

Montana sponsors Children & Youth Scholarships to American Legion Family member's children. In Nebraska one of their prime focuses this year is sponsorship of Special Olympics summer games. Idaho members are making scarves for the Special Olympic winter games.

Units across the country offer both hours and dollars to support their local schools, in South Dakota dictionaries were donated to third grade classes. Several departments report saving Kemp milk bottle caps, Campbell Soup Labels and Betty Crocker Points, for their local schools. Many departments also save pop-tops to support Ronald McDonald houses.

A variety of fundraising from car shows, pig-roasts, penny-a-pound, quarters-for-kids, and bar-jars are being used to support the Child Welfare Foundation.

Yes, from sea to shining sea, our members are making a difference in the life of a child.

SHARON CONATSER COMMUNITY SERVICE

A new venture for our organization this year was the MLK Day of Service. Cooperating with the VA&R and Junior committees we participated in many areas of the nation. Across the nation our ALA volunteers are still working hard to serve their communities and put our organization out in front in their areas.

Serving the Community that our Veterans have secured for us – Due to the local economy, Units have stepped up and helped to provide relief for projects in their community. Food pantries have taken a huge hit; instead of a gift exchange at their Unit meetings, members brought non-perishable items for the food pantry in their area. The Salvation Army was helped whether it was donating money, ringing the bell at the collection bucket, or donating time at a center. Angel trees were full this year and once again volunteers stepped up. Units delivered baskets and gifts for social service, food and clothing was also donated to needy families. One Unit is putting together a room at the local museum with military memorabilia, another is working with the Civil Air Patrol; another collected 27 barrels of food for food banks and 500 boxes of precooked meals for the elderly. In one area members made 17 bedrolls for the homeless. In one northern Department the Department President participated in a dip in the ocean on January 1st for Special Olympics with other community leaders. One Unit presented a check for \$6,300 to the Lee County Sheriff's office K-9 Unit to purchase ballistic vests for patrol dogs. Another invited the seniors from the Community Center to share Thanksgiving Dinner at the post with members that did not have family in the area. When the seniors left, they were presented a small food basket to take home. One unit participated with the town to have a "Walk in the Park" for Halloween where organizations and merchants provide fun for over 400 children. One Unit provided over 200 corsages and boutonnieres with birthday cards for nursing home residents to celebrate birthdays. Hurricane Ike took its toll as members volunteered over 5,000 hours helping to clean houses, haul debris and cook meals for victims of the storm. Members collected personal care items, clothing, household supplies and building materials for families. Members also assisted the Red Cross in this area.

Health Issues – Donations for cancer research was on nearly every report. Jerry's Kids, breast cancer, Cancer Institutes, just to mention a few. Numerous donations were made as memorials, or as a personal donation. One Unit participated in Pediatric Oncology Treasure Chest Foundation.

Community Support of our Troops – One area has Troop Greeters go to the airport whenever a troop plane comes in or out to give out phone cards and/or a Teddy bear. Some Units adopted a military family, by taking them out to dinner, providing food baskets, babysitting service, shoveling snow and promoted community involvement for helping families of deployed troops. Others

planned Welcome Back celebrations, parades, Halloween parties for 75 children of deployed soldiers and family day for all local guardsmen and their families. One partnered with their town to welcome every returning group of soldiers by having merchants decorate their windows and school children make cards and posters.

Make a Difference Day – Units collected food and donations for their local food pantry; donating books to local libraries, donating clothing, toys, snacks, candy, school supplies coloring books & crayons, puzzle books and cash to child abuse centers; one Unit worked the Night Ministry Care Center for the homeless on the streets of Chicago, where the center offered snacks, medical care and counseling; donated items included hygiene products, clothing, washcloths, snacks and toys.

Supporting Programs of The American Legion – Our American Legion Family has stepped up together to serve their communities. To mention a few, activities were planned for local children at Halloween and Christmas; they collected over 300 lbs of newspapers for a local animal shelter; supported Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.

Every project counts, big or little! Our Units are out there promoting the ALA by doing Community Service.

NANCY BROWN-PARK CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

This year the goal of the National Constitution & Bylaws committee is to help Units, Districts, Counties and Departments gain a better understanding of their governing documents and how they can help the organization run in a smooth productive manner. All levels of the American Legion Auxiliary Constitution & Bylaws committee members have reported they are encouraging fun and informative ways to teach our members about these important documents.

The department of Connecticut reported hosting a table at their midyear meeting. The chairman passed out model Constitution and Bylaws with a request of each unit to review and update their governing documents. The Chairman from the department of Kansas encouraged units to supply each new member with a copy of the units Constitution & Bylaws. She also gave a checklist for units to make the process easier.

The Ohio Constitution and Bylaws Chairman stresses the importance of updated governing documents monthly in the Buckeye Messenger.

A special thank-you to the Departments that have supplied National Headquarters with updated governing documents. The committee would request that all departments review their documents and send in a current version to National Headquarters by the end of this administrative year.

The Plan of Work also suggests that Unit, District, County and Department Constitution and Bylaws chairman work with The American Legion to gain a better understanding of their governing documents. Working together builds a better understanding and a strong legion Family.

We still have much to accomplish this year and Constitutions, Bylaws and Standing Rules to review.

JANET JEFFORD

EDUCATION

The mission of the Education Committee is to promote quality education for every child and to support students in their desire to continue education beyond high school. We endeavor to assure that a solid education is available to both children and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs and scholarship promotion. Departments are working hard to fulfill this mission.

All report that scholarship applications have been distributed to schools. At Nebraska's Mid-Year conference they held a "Little Red School House March" and raised \$124.76 toward their scholarship program. In Tennessee they heard President Desi's request and took scholarship applications to the National Guard. A unit in Idaho included the National Guard in their school's veterans program. The Department of Maine sponsored a Scholarship Awareness Week in January to provide information to communities about scholarship opportunities available through the Auxiliary.

The Department of Illinois's Education Committee took the Department theme of "cooking" and combined it with our National President's theme of HOPE and created the theme of "Education, the Recipe for HOPE" as they planned for their year. The Department offers five scholarships and the Education chairman reports that the "committee is looking forward to our mailboxes "bubbling" over with applications this spring as we add the final ingredients to the recipe of HOPE for success for the future."

Fall conferences in many Departments provided the opportunity to educate members about the Education program. Connecticut held round-table groups where information and scholarship applications were distributed. In Arizona, Units attended mini-sessions and received a packet of information including the Plan of Work, National and Department scholarship applications, Web site information and a handout on effective communication.

Units and Departments reported participation in American Education Week. Unit 19 in Columbia, Tennessee, asked the mayor to issue a proclamation for the week and delivered cookie trays to all the local schools. In Arizona, units participated by joining with other local education associations to sponsor events for the week. Thank-you cards were distributed to faculty and staff along with apples, muffins, candy and other goodies. One Unit reported, "The schools really look forward to the recognition the Auxiliary gives them along with the treats, of course." Tombstone Arizona Unit 24 of Wyatt Earp fame held a Constitution Week at an elementary school by judging decorated doors that each grade had done. They concluded with an ice cream social for all students and staff and gave prizes to the winners.

The ***Give 10 to Education*** initiative continues to grow. Forty-eight certificates have already been awarded with the Department of Indiana leading the way with 26. In Nebraska they have extended the program to include encouraging people to read to a child for 10 minutes or listening to a child read for 10 minutes. What a great idea to combine our literacy initiative with the Give 10 program!

Members continue to work toward achieving the goals of the Education Program in many ways. Halloween Safety coloring books distributed by members help to keep our children safe. Parents and students receive valuable information on scholarships because our members distribute *Need- a Lift?* magazines to the schools. School children learn about our Veterans through *Veterans in the Classroom* programs presented by our members. Units are working with The American Legion to sponsor oratorical contests to provide scholarship opportunities. Children are being tutored and mentored, books are being donated to schools and libraries and members volunteer in literacy programs, all to provide increased educational opportunities to both children and adults. Together, we are Honoring Our Promise Everyday as we work to fulfill the mission of the Education program.

MARY DAVIS GIRLS STATE

Over 70 years after its inception, the American Legion Auxiliary experience in government, known as Girls State, is as viable and inspirational to young women across the nation today as in its formative years. A fall conference was held for chairmen to introduce new ideas and to serve as a venue to network with other state chairmen. At that conference, Departments were encouraged to include emergency preparedness, college credit, Facebook, the Poppy Program, identifying and recognizing girls who have family members in the military among other ideas. Leaders of Girls State programs throughout the nation have been working tirelessly readying and improving sessions to be held this spring and summer.

Several departments in the Central Division will conduct registration and orientations online. Another has an alumni foundation. Additionally, departments will host workshops on women's health issues, identity theft and Internet security, as well as introducing how to dress for success. New Jersey, of the Eastern Division, will be sending the Girls State bills and resolutions to the state legislature.

In the Northwestern Division, North Dakota is working hard to regain the number of delegates attending their session. They have developed a public relations committee to help increase attendance numbers. Colorado continued the idea of public relations as a means of getting the word out and has had an article and interview published in a local paper. Also, they have introduced the Girls State program at a higher level in the school system by making presentations to state school counselors and school resource management personnel. South Dakota is hosting a College Fair, encouraging colleges and universities to offer scholarships to the girls. Nebraska and other Departments utilize a Girls State website to promote the program and provide activity opportunities to will help increase the citizens' community service hours required for graduation.

From way out west, Departments report many of the same activities as the other states, but have a few additional unique activities as well. With a land mass covering over 572,000 square miles containing many remote villages, Alaska is addressing the problem of high travel costs for the girls by exploring alternative financial resources which may be available. Idaho will invite mayors from surrounding cities to speak to the citizens as they run for city offices. As with many other Departments, Idaho, Washington and Oregon will conduct poppy programs which range from informational luncheons to making poppies for wreaths. Oregon will use time at an assembly to educate the citizens about the American Legion Auxiliary and the 2008 Utah Governor is assisting the Director to improve the session's whistle stops. In Washington, emergency preparedness

directors are being added to city appointments to address the assigned city problems by preparing their city for an emergency.

The fall conference and mid-year reports reflect the commitment of those dedicated ladies involved with the Girls State program as they work to develop the best learning experience possible for young women throughout our nation. We can look forward to a successful program this year.

KATHY DUNGAN JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Our Juniors have been busy helping veterans, their families and their communities. Juniors have been working on the Patch Program, including two new patches, Education and National Security. Leadership workshops have been held with the Juniors completing the Junior Leadership Course.

Many Junior Departments provided tray favors to veterans, visited VA Nursing Homes and Hospitals, sent packages overseas to our troops, and gave cards to nursing home residents. They helped military families at home with babysitting, mowing lawns and tutoring children. One department started a newsletter called *Just for Juniors*.

Many Honorary Department Junior Presidents selected a special project. South Dakota's project is collecting Linus blankets and pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Nebraska Juniors also collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and are raising \$1000.00 for the Children's Hospital in Omaha. One Junior from Wyoming attended Girls State and plans to return as a Junior Counselor.

Juniors from Mississippi participated in Veterans Day and Christmas Day parades. One Mississippi Junior unit sponsors a scholarship for their Girls State program. Texas Juniors gathered comfort items and distributed them to the VA Hospital. Many Texas Juniors participated in the Poppy Day program. Juniors of Puerto Rico distributed poppies on Veterans Day and plan to distribute them on Memorial Day. They participated in the pocket flag project and made patriotic bracelets with red, white and blue stones.

Arkansas Juniors had each Junior attending their Fall Conference write a "Thank you for your Service" on old Christmas cards, and they were distributed at VA Hospitals and Nursing Homes. An Army National Guard female soldier who had just returned from Iraq was invited to speak to them.

The Juniors of Kentucky are working to earn money for their Department President's special project. Florida's Honorary Junior President chose as her project to purchase books for the All Children's Hospital. Their Juniors are working on community service projects, such as reading to the children at the library, preparing food baskets and gathering clothing for the needy children.

Louisiana Juniors serve as intern Assistant Sergeant-at-arms at Department Senior meetings. Their Junior Honorary President chose two projects: selling Auxiliary bears to help families of veterans and collecting pocket change for Child Welfare.

Central Division Juniors hosted bingo parties for veterans, and the prizes given were paid for by the Juniors. Holiday baskets were made for veterans and families that were homebound. A total of 366 nonperishable packages were made and sent to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Cards and letters of support were included. Juniors attended homecoming of deployed troops and greeted them with flowers made with poppies.

Ohio Juniors collected 333 “No Sew Blankets” made by Juniors across the state and distributed them to homeless veterans and teens.

New Hampshire’s Honorary Junior President chose the Sunshine Cart at the Veterans Home as her special project. Their Juniors collected personal care and comfort items for troops overseas. Two Juniors will attend the Freedoms Foundation. Juniors of Maine prepared “Waiting Bags” and distributed them to children who are waiting to be seen in hospitals.

Delaware Juniors filled shoeboxes with gifts for No Child Left at Christmas. Juniors of New Jersey and Juniors of Maryland have a website page for Juniors. Connecticut Juniors crocheted afghans for the homeless and sent cookies to the military. Juniors of Maryland raised money to purchase two laptop computers for the Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. Vermont Juniors prepared and served a breakfast for a fundraiser.

Our Juniors have done a tremendous job this year. They are our HOPE for the future, and we have no doubt that they are up to the challenge.

DIANE DUSCHECK LEADERSHIP

Leadership takes a group effort. Department and Unit leadership chairmen have worked busily to encourage members to broaden their Auxiliary background and become informed members.

Department Leadership Chairmen in North Carolina and Kentucky have urged the units to hold 15-minute mini-workshops following their meetings this year. To help units plan their workshops, a list of perspective topics was provided for the units. No longer is a meeting just a meeting. Now, there is also the opportunity to learn something new, to ask questions and get some answers, and to learn how we can be active in this great organization. Even distributing copies of the Constitution & Bylaws is helpful for members, since many members have never seen the Constitution & Bylaws of their unit and even fewer have read them. Some units are reporting an increase in meeting attendance because of the helpful information members are receiving.

Workshops were conducted at divisional meetings, at Fall and Mid-Winter Conferences, and in parallel with the Legion College. Information Fairs and Program Fairs like the ones held in Iowa and other departments have offered attendees both fun and information. Eye-catching displays and handouts catch members' attention and provide them with materials to take home and share with other members of their unit. In Oregon, Leadership Training will even be provided at Department Convention. In all cases, leadership committees have hoped that meeting attendees will share their newly attained information with other unit members.

Mentoring programs for members at the unit, county, district, and department levels have provided conduits for more seasoned members to share their vast wealth of knowledge with newer or less experienced members. Seniors are mentoring Seniors, Seniors are mentoring Juniors, and Juniors are mentoring other Juniors. New members are receiving explanations regarding what is taking place at the unit meetings, rather than sitting through the meeting and wondering what is happening. Our tendency is to use acronyms such as VA&R and C&Y, making it difficult for new members to follow conversations. Program information, officer and committee roles, and guest protocol are only some of the topics that are shared. In all cases, future leaders in both the Junior and Senior organizations are seeing training of their future leaders. In Idaho, Auxiliary members are making a point of mentoring members who may be interested in being officers in the future. With a greater background of information to draw from, members can run for office and assume a new office with confidence.

The use of technology, especially the Web, has made the dissemination of information quick and easy. At the National Web site, both the Senior and Junior Leadership courses are available online, allowing members easy access to membership development information. Department chairmen have found the Web to be an outstanding location for the latest leadership information they would like to share, also.

Bulletins and memos from leadership chairmen have kept unit members informed of updates and pertinent information. Even inactive members are receiving newsletters and correspondence, reminding them that though they are not able to attend the Auxiliary meeting this month or this winter, they are still important members of the organization, and the unit wants to keep them informed about the happenings in the unit.

Because we have an innate desire to learn, providing members with opportunities to grow in their Auxiliary knowledge sparks renewed interest, excitement, and participation in the organization. In the words of Abigail Adams, “Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”

DENISE DELANEY-WROLEN LEGISLATIVE

As we converge on Washington D.C. to attend the Annual Awareness Assembly, “CHANGE” is in the air, as our 44th President of The United States has begun his agenda with the 111th Congress to move our country forward. It is the hope of The American Legion Family that now that the election hoopla is over President Obama will continue the plight of our veterans and “CHANGE” the way our veterans are treated and ensure that they continue to receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Auxiliary members have been extremely busy writing letters, making phone calls and sending e-mails to Legislators asking them to support the directives of The American Legion that benefit our members, their families, our veterans and our active servicemen and women. Many Departments reported encouraging members to subscribe to The Dispatch, making Dispatch order forms available for members as well as distributing copies of the names, addresses and phone numbers of state and federal legislators.

The Departments of Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, Colorado, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, California, Arizona, Oregon and Alaska reported on the legislative issues The American Legion Family has been working so diligently for.

The Department of Wisconsin reported an Annual Salute to their Legislators, a joint effort of many veterans’ organizations and the Department of Veterans Affairs where the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary participate and everyone throughout the state has the opportunity to have a one on one opportunity to meet and thank their legislators for their support of veterans programs.

The Chairman for the Department of New York reported two units sponsored Legislative Breakfasts just before election time inviting candidates to attend and address those in attendance. Members also sent approximately 100 absentee ballots to family members serving in the military overseas.

The Department of Minnesota reported one unit visited a school and held an election for grades 3 through 12 with 90% of the students voting. At their Mid-Winter Conference all Units were invited to participate in the “Bus to the Capitol Day.”

In the Department of Georgia it was reported that members voted in extraordinary numbers in the presidential election including the elderly and handicapped. Auxiliary members wrote to family members on active duty

asking that they vote absentee ballot and asked them to ask others in their company to request an absentee ballot.

The Chairman in the Department of California reported issuing four Legislative Alerts and writing letters to lawmakers and contacting her Congresswoman for a variety of issues. Communications are then shared with members and this helps to promote their Legislative Program. They also publish legislative articles in District Newsletters to inform members on issues.

Members in the Department of Arizona provided new contact information for all elected officials and promoted the “Get out the Vote” and “Kids Voting.” Members also reported working at the polls during elections. The Auxiliary worked closely with The American Legion on legislative issues and provided a list of bills in the legislature to be aware of for veterans, active military, senior care and education.

The Legislative Chairman for the Department of Oregon reported using “The Spirit of America E-Newsletter” and “The Dispatch” to keep members informed. In October she encouraged members to vote and to assist those needing help in filling out and mailing their ballots. She also encouraged all members to e-mail, fax and make phone calls to share their opinions and point of view with elected officials. In January she informed members where to find e-mail addresses and the proper way to address a letter and contact their officials.

We have come to the mid point of this administrative year, but our job is not over. We must not let a moment pass us by in contacting our elected officials in Washington to let them know the promises they made during election time must be kept now that the ballots have been counted. The mission of The American Legion Family is at stake!

RENÉ REESE MEMBERSHIP

“Honoring Our Promise Every Day by promoting membership growth and retaining current membership through leadership and mentoring.”

The Plan: The membership year began with the National Membership Committee collaborating and planning a program. Out of that collaboration came an idea that would give the Departments an opportunity to help develop their own Department Goals for the new membership year. The committee, Auxiliary members and office staff, were embarking on a dynamic new concept that would engage everyone in the membership process. It was rolled out to Departments and they began developing a membership program that not only included setting a number goal, but also making a commitment to plan, and execute specific steps throughout the year on how they would successfully reach their goal. Their success also depended on the assistance and support from the National Team to keep things moving forward. While there have been some adjustments needed, most Departments embraced the change and accepted the challenge with a positive outlook.

Divisions: The Divisional Membership Chairmen were diligent in their support to the Departments, and through regular communications they kept in touch with the Departments providing assistance and answers. The result of their efforts was seen throughout the year in the membership report numbers!

Bragging Rights:

As of January 2009:

- Sixteen Departments had chartered a total of 19 new Units! Great job - and an incentive to all of us that it can be done.

As of February 4, 2009:

- 41 Departments reached Target 2 – 75 percent! And three Departments - Iowa, South Dakota, and Missouri were over 89 percent! With that type of energy, the potential for making the next target is unavoidable! Then Department Goals will become reachable and success is sure to happen!
- Total numbers indicated we are still ahead of last year by 864 members!
- All Divisions are over the 75 percent point with the Western Division slightly leading the pack, and the Central Division following closely.

Making it Happen & What is Being Done:

- Communication continues between Divisional Chairmen and Divisional National Vice Presidents with Departments across the country. They are keeping in touch and giving support.

- Departments are using their membership contracts as a tool, and make changes as necessary. One Department President has made a personal contact to every Unit - by telephone, email and/or written note. Departments are using themes to get the attention of members and giving Units creative ideas that they can implement.
- Membership Chairmen are taking time to get re-energized and renew their commitment to our programs.
- Departments are doing membership caravans and round-ups. One Department has done a “safari” - how creative is that?
- This year collaborating with the American Legion has become more important and Units as well as Departments are building solid relationships that will benefit everyone.

Still Time:

Although it is almost springtime, there is still time to work membership! Now is the time to dig our heels in, get on board, make more contacts, be positive, keep goals in sight, smile, and make it fun! We hope to see many Goal Departments before the year closes, and to hear many success stories. Thanks to all who work Membership - and especially to the Office Staff and the Membership Committee, they are the best!

Committee Members:

Toni Gimpel - Vice Chairman
 Lori Skallerud - Member
 Wanita Burns - Member
 Martha Yancey - Central Division
 Kitty Wing - Eastern Division
 Marie Goede - Northwestern Division
 Sue Heil - Southern Division
 Joyce Arent - Western Division

KRISANN OWENS NATIONAL SECURITY

The National Security Committee has been extremely active this year. Promoting the programs under the National Security umbrella has kept our Units and Departments across the United States busy with the business of building awareness from personal preparedness to support of our troops. The committee has been diligent contributors to the weekly mailings from national with the steady flow of bulletins which has had a positive impact on information being distributed within the organization. There are many programs under the National Security umbrella and there is activity in all of them.

Citizen Corps' Citizen Emergency Response Training or CERT has been an active program this year. With the slogan, "It's not OK to be a victim," this program has excelled in activity. Members are seeking to be fully prepared in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. They are preparing personal disaster kits containing items suggested in the Citizen Corp website and promoting the information learned from this program within their communities. Training and information is also being shared at Conferences and meetings within most Departments.

Another exciting opportunity presented itself when Citizen Corp volunteered to engineer a CERT Program for Girls State. This program was presented at the Girls State Directors Conference in November. It was met with curiosity and I am please to say that at least one Department will be instituting CERT into their program this year with approximately 600 citizens and 80 counselors taking part and learning the value of being prepared.

As always clipping coupons for our military families overseas is still an enormous program for Units. The National Security Committee was able to obtain the most current and accurate information available and our members have been able to distribute the coupons in a broad spectrum so they will be appreciated and not overwhelm one commissary. The need for coupons is greater than ever before and military families overseas and here at home appreciate being able to receive them. It does make a difference.

The Landstuhl Hospital Project was promoted with bulletins in the fall and we are going to do a follow up bulletin on the impact the American Legion Auxiliary has made.

Our members have really taken ownership of supporting our troops with home comings and parties. Christmas parties, birthday parties, serving Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners, any way our members can bring happiness to our military families are what have been happening everywhere. Support is also coming in the form of dedicated involvement where American Legion Auxiliary Units

adopt military units and their families readying to deploy, have returned from a deployment or in a general sense of support everyday and National Guard units and families that are under the same circumstances are being adopted as well. This solidifies the fact that the American Legion Auxiliary is continuing to serve the mission of the founding principles.

Operation Military Kids (OMK) is becoming better known throughout the organization. OMK has been asked to speak to many Departments and distribute information and Teen Panel members have been asked to give their impressions of military life to our members and juniors as well, giving them a different perspective of what life in the military is like for kids.

Most importantly the Blue and Gold Star Banner program is being promoted with enthusiasm and Blue Star Banners being distributed in all Departments and this includes Gold Star Banners as well. Units have made sure those who have a loved one deployed that we care and those who have lost a loved one know we appreciate their sacrifice.

SHERRY MCLAUGHLIN PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY

As we near the halfway point of the year Departments have reported much activity by their Past Presidents Parley. Units have been “taking care of and honoring” female veterans in their communities in many ways.

The new award of selecting Outstanding Female National Guard Veterans is being promoted and embraced by many Departments. Many units are working hard at Honoring Female Active Duty and Iraqi War Veterans in unique ways. One Department has already selected their Unit Member of the Year and others are working on this award. Contributions have been collected to promote nursing scholarships. Past Presidents Parley dinners have been held to promote the program and give members ideas.

Past Presidents Parley programs have been given at Schools of Instruction and unit meetings and articles have appeared in newsletters. Many bulletins and letters have been sent reminding units to promote this worthwhile program.

Some of the unique ways of honoring female veterans are as follows:

- Valentines and Christmas cards have been sent to women veterans.
- Districts in Illinois have been assigned certain facilities to work with women veterans.
- Packets of information were distributed at a Program Fair in Iowa.
- One unit in Florida held a luncheon honoring their past presidents, female Legionnaires and active duty females who had served in Iraq.
- Units in New York are providing hair care, visits to doctors, personal items and providing transportation to activities.
- Teas are being held with gifts and special entertainment at many facilities
- Handmade blankets, phone cards and canteen coupons have been provided by many.
- One county in Iowa holds a “social” each month at a Veterans Home with the units being assigned to take refreshments and provide entertainment. Held on the 2nd Tuesday these women call this their Auxiliary meeting.
- Adopting a woman veteran has been the focus of one unit in Virginia. They have honored this woman veteran with a birthday party, provided a certificate to have her nails and a pedicure done and then provided transportation to this appointment.
- The Department of Michigan provides a scholarship for Nurses or Physical or Respiratory Therapists.

As you can see there is much work being done throughout our Departments to honor women veterans. For this we thank you !

VICKIE KOUTZ POPPY

It's been a very exciting year for the Poppy Committee, with the various changes.

In the Central Division, Indiana's Senior and Junior members decorated Christmas stockings with poppies in them and distributed them, while singing to the patients in Nursing Homes. Senior members told Juniors the Poppy Story. Contests were held at each of their District Meetings. Poppies were handed out at school programs and City programs on Veteran's Day. Holiday wreaths with poppies, bows and money were raffled to help raise funds for their welfare program. Small stockings with poppies were sent to Department Headquarters for President's Christmas tree.

The Department of Kansas has approached their local officials by making them aware of the Poppy program. One member donated corsage boxes for transportation to the Awareness Assembly for the poppy corsage contest.

Department of Ohio has Miss and Master Poppy contestants that are in the process of preparing their annual scrapbooks. Units were asked to decorate at the hospital representatives luncheon tables with poppy centerpieces. They promoted the poppy this year by having games in the classrooms; word searches and cross word puzzles. Christmas trees were decorated with poppies at the court house with pamphlets near by on the poppy story. Their department now has six veterans making their poppies with an increase of one over last year.

At their Informational Forum, the Department of Wisconsin Chairman shared information at the paper fair for interest Auxiliary members attending, which included poppy goals, information on poppy contest, awards, annual report, suggestions for uses of poppies and information on supplies available for their use. And an article was written in their Auxiliary paper that gave information to all their members on uses for the poppy and the proper use of poppy funds.

Eastern Division reported the Department of Vermont Chairman was excited about the Poppy Corsage Contest at the Awareness Assembly and holding contests at their Mid-Winter Conference.

New Hampshire reported the President's theme this year is Fenton Shoe "Step forward to accomplish our goals. So, the Poppy Chairman purchased small glass shoes and put Poppy Bouquets inside and the funds received from this project was donated to the New Hampshire Veterans Fund, which is a fund to help fulfill the needs of the veterans and their families.

Northwestern Division Department Chairmen all received information about changes in the Poppy Poster size and the addition of a Class. Three Department Chairmen reported they don't become active until February. North Dakota reported they had orders for 78,253 small poppies and 3,117 large poppies. South Dakota had orders for 145,000 small and 1,000 large poppies. Montana reported they had orders for the same as last year.

Southern Division is developing new ways of promoting the Poppy program.

Fall distribution of poppies was held by the Department of Arkansas. They were held at Senior Citizens Centers, Convenience Stores, Grocery Stores, Legion Posts, VA Hospitals and Churches. They had their articles published in their newspapers and gave poppies to their elected officials, with \$735 in total contributions and they explained the Poppy Program to their Chamber of Commerce.

The Departments of North Carolina and Virginia have held Poppy corsage and wreath contests. They asked the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion to become a part of the poppy distribution team to promote the Poppy and the American Legion Family.

Western Division had the most reporting with seven Departments.

Alaska stated their members handed out poppies at their Posts, Stores, VA and to the military for a total of over 3,000 poppies. Poppy Proclamation Days were hosted with four Miss Poppies presenting the Mayor with a poppy. One Unit hands out approximately 500 poppies at the Memorial Day Service at the Veterans Wall in their community. Poppy cans are placed at stores in two communities. Their members hold joint Memorial Service at cemeteries in their community where they hand out poppies and over 3,050 poppies are placed on crosses.

The Department of Arizona has a couple of Chairmen who have veterans make their poppies.

They are made in the VA, The American Legion Posts and in Veterans Homes. Their veterans make them all year. These two ladies also ship the poppies to the Units as they come due.

The Department of California Chairman has been traveling the state and promoting the poppy program. The USS Sultan began the year at its first Port of Call Yountville, with the signing of the poppy contract and a tour provided. Poppy information was given out at a workshop for members. The Chairman addresses the Legion meetings and explains the importance of their help and participating in aiding their Units poppy distribution. While visiting Long Beach, they received the news that they are becoming a Poppy Production

Facility beginning this next Auxiliary year. 100% of their viable Units have turned in poppy orders.

Hawaii received orders from five Units, with a couple Units supporting the program by purchasing and volunteering. They also planned their poppy days for this year.

The Department of Idaho reported they have 74 Units that will participate in poppy days beginning the Month of May.

New Mexico reported 21 Units had ordered poppies so far, for a total of 20,500 ordered.

Several of their Units wait until April to order their poppies. One Unit makes numbers out of poppies to show where their membership stands. Others make Poppy wreaths for the cemeteries and some use poppies year round in their Post Home for decorations for special occasions and poppy corsages for special guests.

Oregon stated they have 207,585 poppy orders. They sell to other states and they brag they have the prettiest of all.

- A special thanks to all the Departments who sent in Mid-Year Reports.
- Don't forget the Poppy Corsage Contest is being held here at the Awareness Assembly.
- The American Legion Birthday month is soon approaching. This is a great way to tell our Poppy Story and distribute poppies to everyone.
- Don't forget the Poppy Poster Contest and also the Miss Poppy Contests.
- Have a wonderful "Poppy Year" as we "Honor Our Veterans Everyday"!

VIRGINIA NELSEN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Coast to coast this organization is stampeding into cyberspace. Visit the national Web site at www.legion-aux.org. The National Plan of Work can be accessed on the Internet, the American Legion Auxiliary Legislative bulletin and national mailings can all be received via email.

Much of the communication chairman to chairman; to departments; department chairmen to units; to National Headquarters staff; to The American Legion and back is being conducted “on line.” In fact this report to membership was wholly secured and constructed electronically.

Recent bulletins prepared for national distribution included: an easy reference to American Legion and Auxiliary resources, helpful hints to navigate the national Web site and a template generated by national staff to enable any member to easily promote and introduce National President Desi Stoy during her travels.

Future bulletins will include clarification of contest rules, deadlines and judges.

Public Relations division chairmen shared many ways that the Auxiliary projects of departments and their units were promoted, activated and recorded. The most popular means of communication used were newspapers, followed by radio, and the rapidly growing online highways. Community action and public service announcements on television, Plan of Work handbooks, civic newsletters, and community displays are also popular. A number of chairmen prepared public relations kits, how-to bulletins, and their own press releases for visits of the national president. These were distributed over the Internet and displayed at department, district and unit meetings all over the country.

Of particular note were the Web sites: Idaho will have one soon, Nebraska has theirs up and running, and the departments of Mississippi and Wisconsin have much to be proud of. One e-newsletter that was offered for perusal is from District 14 in California, the *Flagship*. Many are working on erecting department web pages and the *Flagship* is a wonderful example of how to get the job done, and well, by a district. In addition to this the department of Massachusetts reports that *Vets News* from District 4 is sent to members from the American Legion Family. Two area veterans share information with members from local newspapers as well as other Veteran organizations across the state and nation.

The Southern Division not only reported on how they did it, they also shared some successful projects: donations of laptops and Wii games to VAMCs, fun events held for military being deployed, Smiles Across The Miles for the military serving overseas, \$9000 donation to the Healing Fields, stand down

for 330 homeless veterans, Family Readiness Assistance Conference for the National Guard, support of department scholarship programs, and goody bags for troops in Iraq. Members also helped in a Welcome Warriors event, hosting lunch for troops being deployed and helped to start a new USO.

This chairman offers her personal pride and kudos to the Department of Wisconsin chairman. The Public Relations “how to succeed” Plan of Work posted on their Web site: <http://www.amlegionauxwi.org/Public%20Relations.htm> is the very best this chairman has ever read. This Navy wife writes, “I started out 22 years ago when I was 7 years old because of my grandfather, and now this organization means so much more because of being married to a sailor.” Assisting and educating members across the state to effectively promote all the great programs of the Auxiliary is her main goal. At Wisconsin’s Fall Forum workshop she presented a public relations PowerPoint program highlighting Internet access and using everyday language in an easily understood format that would meet any organization’s future electronic objectives.

Heartfelt thanks to the women who promoted the American Legion Auxiliary and took the time to share how they did it.

CARLENE ASHWORTH

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

The mission statement of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program states, “This committee initiates, sponsors and participates in programs and services that vocationally assist and enhance the lives of our veterans and their families. We endeavor through our efforts to help ensure those who need assistance can restore and or transition to a normal functioning life, physically, mentally, socially and vocationally.”

This committee has challenged our volunteers to pick up the pace to serve our veterans in their time of need. We ask that you seek out those veterans, not just in the VA Medical Centers, but also in your communities, through an aggressive program that will provide assistance in their homes, nursing homes, Vet Centers and other facilities. Small communities and rural areas where so many of our veterans feel they have been forgotten are of special concern and need our attention.

A new initiative this year is the request for every Department to recruit at least 17 new Regularly Scheduled Volunteers who have had the VA Hospital Orientation and are logged into the VA system and regularly volunteer as little as two hours or more a month in a VA facility (VAMC, Fisher House, VA Cemetery, veterans home, Vet Center, etc.). The VA&R Grant project was initiated to assist you in your efforts.

Several Departments have already accepted the challenge and through their own efforts have had great success in recruiting new volunteers. President Desi’s own home state of Ohio not only reached their goal of 17 but also in one hour signed up 30 new volunteers. These new volunteers have been logged in to the VA’s system. The Department of Delaware has reported 27 new volunteers and the Department of New Mexico has reported 15 new volunteers.

Field Service volunteers have also increased with Montana reporting 17 new volunteers and the Arizona reporting 99 new volunteers. Many Departments reported orientations were being held during spring meetings.

Mid-year reports came in from 36 Departments. You continue to do awesome things for our veterans. Thousands of hours and dollars are being spent for their care through the regular activities held at our VA facilities. Parties, picnics, carnivals, Veterans Day activities, Gift Shops, and day to day care with comfort items were reported. Field Service and Home Service activities such as knitting, sewing, cooking and baking, continue for those on our watch. In addition you provide transportation to doctor’s appointments, outings to baseball games, fishing trips and numerous other activities.

Volunteers in Pennsylvania, in addition to their regular activities, also participate in a well-organized Homeless Vets program where they assist in renovating homeless shelters and collect items to furnish them.

Kentucky, Arizona, Connecticut, California, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Massachusetts and Texas all participated in Stand Downs.

In Georgia, six units participated in a Welcome Home party at the Atlanta VA and furnished monetary donations of \$14,300 for food and supplies. Many others also participated in Welcome Home celebrations.

Pennsylvania and Texas reported they have Girls Day Out programs for the female veterans and Units in Virginia support the Women's War Memorial in Washington, DC.

Indiana held a Veterans Shower during their Fall Conference to collect needed clothing and distributed it between their VA Reps for patients and homeless vets. Iowa and West Virginia reported having similar projects.

Connecticut had a special fundraiser for a stained glass window to be installed in the chapel of one of their VA facilities. The window depicts the emblems of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Many of you also participated in special activities for MLK Day on January 19. Thank you for reaching out to our veterans on this special day of service in your community.

An increase in monetary donations for the Veterans Creative Arts Festival is badly needed. Our goal every year as a national sponsor is \$100,000. From October 1, 2008 until January 31, 2009 we have only received \$16,558.00. Please send your donations as soon as possible and encourage your Units to do likewise. To qualify for one of the plaques given by the VA, the award levels are Bronze \$1,000-\$2,499, Silver \$2500-\$4,999 and Gold \$5,000-\$14,999.

We need your continued support for the American Legion VA&R legislative efforts that increase awareness and participation in programs and resources to assist transitioning service members from military life to service life, and all other legislation that is for the betterment of our veterans.

Be sure to recognize and celebrate the important work our volunteers do every day on behalf of our veterans. You should thank them every day, but most especially during National Volunteer month in April.

Note: A Cavalcade of Memories report was not presented at Awareness Assembly for these Proceedings.