



## **SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

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

**August 18 – 24, 2017  
Reno, Nevada**

**American Legion Auxiliary  
National Officers  
2016-2017**

**National President**

Mary E. Davis, Department of Washington

**National Vice President**

Diane Duscheck, Department of Wisconsin

**Division National Vice Presidents**

Central: Carollee Junge, Department of Illinois

Eastern: Patricia Lach, Department of Maryland

Northwestern: Virginia Nelsen, Department of Nebraska

Southern: Beverly Mulkey, Department of Arkansas

Western: Cary Fisher, Department of Utah

**National Chaplain**

Valerie Brown-Debro, Department of Georgia

**National Historian**

Coral May Grout, Department of Massachusetts

**National Secretary**

Mary "Dubbie" Buckler, Department of Indiana

**National Treasurer**

Marta Hedding, Department of Indiana

## PRESENT

### Pre-Convention National Executive Committee Meeting Saturday, August 19, 2017

#### National Officers

National President.....	Sharon Conatser
National Vice President .....	Mary Davis
Central Division National Vice President .....	Lynda Lancaster
Eastern Division National Vice President .....	-
Northwestern Division National Vice President.....	Judy Twete
Southern Division National Vice President.....	Flora Jean Craig
Western Division National Vice President.....	Linda Workman
National Chaplain.....	Bird Derrick
National Historian.....	Debra Noble
National Secretary .....	Mary “Dubbie” Buckler
National Treasurer .....	-

#### Past National Presidents

Linda Boone  
Virginia Hobbs  
Elizabeth “Lib” Stewart  
Kristine West  
Katherine Morris  
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan  
Desireé Stoy  
Rita Navarreté  
Carlene Ashworth  
Peggy Thomas  
Nancy Brown-Park  
Janet Jefford  
Sharon Conatser

#### National Executive Committeewomen

Alabama.....	-
Alaska .....	Beverly Eads
Arizona .....	Josephine Herrera
Arkansas.....	Carol Smith
California .....	Susanne Tozier
Colorado.....	Susan Bozella
Connecticut .....	Margery Sunbury
Delaware.....	Carol Feeley
District of Columbia.....	-
Florida.....	Kelli Becraft
Georgia .....	Rosa Scott
Hawaii.....	Josephine Keanu
Idaho.....	Toni Gimpel

Illinois.....	Kathy Cisna
Indiana.....	Ruth Rairdon
Iowa.....	Ann Crawford
Kansas.....	Jeanne Haas
Kentucky.....	Donna Thurman
Louisiana.....	Ethel Theriot
Maine.....	Mary Jane McLoon
Maryland.....	Paulette Caron
Massachusetts.....	Margaret Roy
Michigan.....	Sue Verville
Minnesota.....	Shirley Frederick
Mississippi.....	Mary Barrett
Missouri.....	Gayle Metzinger
Montana.....	Jennifer Herman
Nebraska.....	Barbara Washburn
Nevada.....	Glynis Seeley
New Hampshire.....	Cheryl Fournier
New Jersey.....	Doreen Gallagher
New Mexico.....	Janet Romero
New York.....	Janet Mahoney
North Carolina.....	Linda Laws
North Dakota.....	Marlene Boyer
Ohio.....	Martha Setlock
Oklahoma.....	Carol Blosch
Oregon.....	Pam Seelye
Pennsylvania.....	-
Puerto Rico.....	Haydee Rivera-Almodovar-
Rhode Island.....	Cathy Card
South Carolina.....	Anne Parker
South Dakota.....	Laura Clyde
Tennessee.....	Janice Bruce
Texas.....	Paula Raney
Utah.....	Sherry Wagner
Vermont.....	Debra Tiernan
Virginia.....	Sallie Rossman
Washington.....	Eva Wallace
West Virginia.....	Susan Wade
Wisconsin.....	Laura Calteux
Wyoming.....	Linda Feezer

**Post-Convention National Executive Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, August 23, 2017**

**National Officers**

National President.....	Diane Duscheck
National Vice President .....	Kathy Dungan
Central Division National Vice President .....	Trish Ward
Eastern Division National Vice President .....	Karyn Porempski
Northwestern Division National Vice President.....	Peggy Miller
Southern Division National Vice President.....	Diane Spencer
Western Division National Vice President.....	Nancy Michalski
National Chaplain.....	EveIn Espinola
National Historian.....	Susan Campbell
National Secretary .....	Mary “Dubbie” Buckler
National Treasurer .....	-

**Past National Presidents**

Linda Boone  
Linda Newsome  
Virginia Hobbs  
Elizabeth “Lib” Stewart  
Kristine West  
Katherine Morris  
Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan  
Desireé Stoy  
Rita Navarreté  
Carlene Ashworth  
Peggy Thomas  
Nancy Brown-Park  
Janet Jefford  
Sharon Conatser

**National Executive Committeewomen**

Alabama.....	-
Alaska .....	Lisa Williamson
Arizona .....	Jan Cushing
Arkansas.....	Carol Smith
California .....	Wendy O’Brien
Colorado.....	Susan Bozella
Connecticut .....	Debra Knickerbocker
Delaware.....	Carol Feeley
District of Columbia .....	Lauren Lloyd
Florida.....	Kelli Becraft
Georgia .....	-
Hawaii.....	Laura Hashimoto
Idaho.....	Toni Gimpel
Illinois.....	Luella Buske

Indiana .....	Peggy Bishop
Iowa .....	Ann Crawford
Kansas.....	Claudia Satterlee
Kentucky .....	Betty Bulter
Louisiana .....	Ethel Theriot
Maine .....	-
Maryland .....	Patti Lach
Massachusetts .....	Ann Fournier
Michigan .....	Ellen Jackson
Minnesota.....	Shirley Frederick
Mississippi .....	Anita McAllister
Missouri .....	-
Montana .....	Jeanette Bossen
Nebraska .....	Debra Albers
Nevada .....	Ganise Vance
New Hampshire.....	Cheryl Fournier
New Jersey .....	Doreen Gallagher
New Mexico .....	Janet Romero
New York.....	Janet Mahoney
North Carolina.....	Brenda Toppin
North Dakota .....	Tammy Ryberg
Ohio .....	Denise Conrad
Oklahoma.....	Patsy Chinn
Oregon .....	-
Pennsylvania.....	-
Puerto Rico.....	-
Rhode Island.....	Cathy Card
South Carolina.....	Brenda Holland
South Dakota .....	Laura “Susie” Clyde
Tennessee.....	-
Texas.....	MaryAnn Paul
Utah .....	-
Vermont .....	Debra Tiernan
Virginia .....	Sallie Rossman
Washington .....	Eva Wallace
West Virginia .....	Susan Wade
Wisconsin.....	Laura Calteux
Wyoming.....	Linda Feezer

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**PRE-CONVENTION  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2017**

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- meeting will now come to order.  
(Ringing of the bell.)

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

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Valerie Brown-Debro, National  
Chaplain will lead us in our invocation and moment of silence for our fallen  
heroes and those serving our nation today for the protection of our freedom.

Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman, Sue Britton,  
will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem followed by  
Constitution & Bylaws Chairman, Vickie Koutz, leading us in the Preamble to  
the Constitution. Valerie?

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Great morning, ladies.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Great morning, ladies.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Great. Yes, that is great.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this (indiscernible) which you have  
provided for us. Father, (indiscernible) anything for granted. Not even the air  
we breathe. We thank you for traveling mercy and traveling mercy. We  
thank you throughout each (indiscernible) elected and (indiscernible) position  
by the way that you speak through our vocal cords, direct our thoughts and  
bring peace in our minds. We ask that you bless our meeting and the  
decisions that we make today, that we may accomplish (indiscernible) and the  
purpose to better serve our members by (indiscernible) things. As we take a  
moment to pause in recognition of what you have done (indiscernible). These  
things we ask in your holy name. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

MS. BRITTON: Please join me in the Pledge of

Allegiance.

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

MS. BRITTON: Please join me in singing the National

Anthem.

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

MS. KOUTZ: If you'll join me, please.

ALL: For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories of the incidence of our association during the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring pain, deprivation and imprisonment.

Before we begin our activities this morning we pause to remember our POW's and our MIA's.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You may be seated. This meeting of the National Executive Committee is convened. It's struck me to see everybody here. I hope you (indiscernible) so far. Good morning, everyone.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So it's hard to believe that here we are here in Reno, Nevada for our last meeting together! You have taken an added responsibility to work for the organization by being on the governing board for the American Legion Auxiliary. I truly appreciate the care taken in that extra step.

Today as we conduct our business, it is my hope that you will ask those questions, make those suggestions which you may or may not feel are important. Your input is valuable. Before I forget, thank you for the work you have accomplished so far and I look forward to a productive meeting today.

Before we begin our business, anyone wishing to speak must first make their way to the microphone in the center aisle as this is the only way your remarks can be heard for the court reporter's transcripts of the meeting.

When you entered the room today, your attendance was recorded on electronically by our hardworking national headquarters team. By our record, national members seated (indiscernible).

(Indiscernible), right?

So ladies, (indiscernible) voice (indiscernible). Please see one of them if you missed getting recorded that you are here.

It's my pleasure to introduce those seated at the head table. National -- or I'm sorry, Diane Duscheck, National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Carollee Junge, Central Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Patricia Lach, Eastern Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Virginia Nelsen, Northwestern  
Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Beverley Mulkey, Southern Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And Cary Fisher, Western Division  
National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Valerie Brown-Debro, National  
Chaplain.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Dr. Coral May Grout, National  
Historian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mary "Dubbie" Buckler, National  
Secretary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chris Dickey, Convention  
Parliamentarian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Those seated close, but not at the  
table are Lorna Ledoschuck, Personal Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Vickie Bowles, Personal Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And Elaine Roach, Personal Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Though you may have noticed the  
person on the list today is Marta Hedding, National Treasurer, Marta had a  
personal emergency and was not able to be with us today, so we will miss her.  
But unfortunately, this is like her twenty-something year that she has been  
with us, so she -- that's a big hole for us to not have her here, but our prayers  
are with her family and I know that she will be back just as soon as she can.

Past National Presidents, please stand to be recognized.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: They told me to not to sit for long  
because I'll just be here about to stand back up.

It's what I call (indiscernible). So we will be utilizing a  
consent agenda this morning. Information on the consent agenda and how it  
works was circulated in advance along with the following items listed on the

consent agenda:

The unit charter cancellations since February 2017.  
Resolution of Non-Financial Support - Gold Star Mother's

National Monument.

Does anyone wish to remove anything from the consent agenda?

MS. SEELEY: Glynis Seeley, Department of Nevada. I will (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, Glynis. Okay.

MS. SEELEY: Sorry. I go through (indiscernible) because (indiscernible) from the Consent Agenda for the non-preservation.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's not on the consent agenda. A bunch of things are on our term cancellations and we'll start that tomorrow morning.

MS. SEELEY: I know.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Not that I don't want you guys just to speak up. If it's not right, it's all part of the process and I (indiscernible).

The Chair will now obtain a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda.

MS. WALLACE: Eva Wallace, Department of Washington.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, (indiscernible)?

MS. WALLACE: I move the consent agenda.

MS. TIERNAN: Deb Tiernan, Department of Vermont. I'll second the motion.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It has been moved and seconded that we adopt the Consent Agenda. All those in favor of adopting the Consent Agenda, please say Aye.

ALL: Aye.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Those who opposed, say No.

The ayes have it and the agenda is adopted.

The Chair is pleased to report that the Minutes Approval Committee met and approved the minutes of the NEC meeting from February 2017. This committee is comprised of the NEC members from the Department of Illinois, Wisconsin and Virginia. Thank you, ladies for doing a wonderful job this year.

Members of the NEC received the electronic minutes of the special meeting of the National Executive Committee I convened on July 17 and 18 to address two urgent business exceptions. The meeting, as you know, was conducted by email plus two teleconferences.

For those others in the room, I will report the outcome. With 58 of the 61 AC members voting, the national board, by vote of 53 to 5, voted overwhelmingly to approve the Dues Structure Proposal amendment submitted to convention delegates.

The amendment would become effective in the 2019 ALA membership year to increase National per annum Senior Dues to \$12 and

National Junior dues to \$2.50 per annum.

The amendment authorizes the NEC to make incremental increases effective with the 2021 membership year based upon the federal inflation Cost of Living Adjustment index and budget needs, not to exceed the amount of 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10-cent increment, and any nominal increase would not take effect until the membership year two years later.

Ladies, that is dimes a year, not dollars!

The NEC also voted 57 to 1 to approve purchasing the building and property located in Indianapolis for \$2,080,000 to become the ALA National Headquarters. Ladies, it is beautiful! It couldn't be more perfect for us if we had designed it ourselves!

Every year, part of the ALA National budget includes funding office space for National Headquarters. Our lease expires next year.

After looking at all the options, including building, buying or continuing to lease, the AEC was presented and approved by a vote of 57-1 to purchase the building as a way to further save money for our members.

This does not mean that you're putting (indiscernible) to use, but it means we are, in fact, investing in our (indiscernible). We are just looking at (indiscernible) or (indiscernible). That's our agreement.

The NEC approved transferring maturing CDs and bond investments and Reserve Funds to a real estate asset that will become a permanent location for the ALA National Headquarters.

The purchase further diversifies our investment portfolio, with real estate in a location that will steadily appreciate over time.

The real estate -- I'm sorry -- the real investment gain comes after 10 years when we no longer pay millions in lease payments versus what we will spend to maintain a real estate asset as National Headquarters.

We start realizing a savings, and ultimately a net gain, of millions of dollars over the following decades. Information about the NEC's decision and property being purchased was widely circulated to department and national leadership on July 19th. Simply said, as I said previously, it's a different way of investigating and at the appraised value, we have already made money! It's appraised at over \$2,500,000. We're purchasing it at \$2,080,000.

As Chairman of the Executive Committee to the NEC, I will now give our report. This Committee includes the American Legion Auxiliary: National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer and National Finance Committee Chairman.

The charge of the Executive Committee is to address and act on time sensitive matters subject to ratification by the NEC. I'm happy to report that there were no time sensitive matters that required action! Finally, I'm most pleased to report that we've fulfilled our responsibilities with care and without spending a dime!

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The chair now calls on Peggy Thomas, Chairman of the National Finance Committee.

MS. THOMAS: Madam President, good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee is pleased to report the following accomplishments this fiscal year. Direct mail donations as of July 31st, 2017 totaled a whopping net of \$454,000. USAA Credit Cards number of auxiliary member usage has steadily increased since its conception. \$40 Million has been charged by card holders.

Previously, there was a split of the royalties being 50/50 split between National Headquarters and the Department. The National Finance Committee has now voted to split the proceeds from the USAA Credit Cards to a 90/10 ratio with 90 percent going to Departments and 10 percent going to National Headquarters beginning fiscal year 2018. So keep using those credit cards, ladies --

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: -- but be responsible. We like the money, but be responsible. Also, we were able to do the following. Fund visits to Departments by our five Division Vice Presidents, continue training of Department Secretaries at National Headquarters Annually at no cost to Departments and we present six annual mission trainings and six junior meetings.

And by the way, in 2017 attendance to the mission training grew 33 percent over 2016.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The number of juniors attending has more than doubled in the previous years.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The National Organization has dropped a .15-cent per capita rehabilitation assessment for the fifth straight year and we have made it possible for new members to join online, made it possible to pay dues online, we developed the ALA Department of Operations Guide for Department's organization effectiveness. We developed the DEC-101 for Department Governing Boards and these are just a few of the things the National Finance Committee has worked to make possible for our members by carefully monitoring the monies spent.

However, to meet the needs of the American Legion Auxiliary and keep up with inflation, dues must be raised and a due structure is needed to sustain the financial future of this great organization that we all love.

The Comptroller presented the financial analysis to the ALA National Finance Committee for review. We then presented the due structure proposal to the NEC, you people, for consideration. This process was very thorough with over 80 ALA members having reviewed the numbers and the due structure needed to keep up with inflation. And I repeat, over 80 auxiliary members have reviewed these numbers. In an overwhelming 53:5 in favor of the NEC's adopted the due structure proposal recommendation and I want to applaud the NEC for their vision and foresight in approving this. So I'm going to do this.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: We must have funds to help our veterans, and military, and their families. It is so very little to ask of all of you, but it means so much to our most vulnerable. Our soldiers, our veterans and their families. How can we do it without money?

Keep in mind that the dues received by National, 80 percent or more goes to fund the programs and only 20 percent or less is used for operations which includes National Headquarters and salaries and whatever. This is just a short review of what your National Finance Committee has accomplished this year. Thank you for your support.

Madam President?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Peggy. Audit Committee Member Marybeth Revoir will now report.

MS. REVOIR: Madam National President, distinguished members of the National Executive Committee of the American Legion Auxiliary and my fellow members, at your National Executive Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., National President Mary appointed a committee of four to delineate a procedure to be followed in the event of a vacancy in the position of National Secretary.

After numerous conference calls and drafts, I am pleased to present our suggested procedure for filling a vacancy in the position of National Secretary. These procedures are due to the efforts of Past National President Sharon Conatser, Kathy Dungan and Nicole Clapp along with myself. Each NEC Committee member should have received a copy today.

It was most important to the four members of this committee that we achieve a balance of potential participants in this process. The National Staff will play an enormous role in the transition. Their knowledge and guidance will be immeasurable. Another important component will be the representation of the volunteer contingency of our organization.

My sincere hope is that this procedure will not be -- need to be dusted off for many, many years to come, but if and when a need presents itself, the American Legion Auxiliary should be prepared to act.

Madam President, thank you very much for appointing the other three members of the committee. It was a collaborative effort and they were most knowledgeable and helpful.

Madam President, it has been my honor to serve.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Marybeth.

MS. REVOIR: You're welcome.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I ask that the National Secretary develop a plan to implement these procedures for adoption at a future NEC meeting.

We will begin with the handling of resolutions previously distributed. They will not be read unless a request is made to do so, so you may want to get yours out. If a request is made, the maker will read the resolution. In order for a resolution to come before this body, the maker of the resolution needs to move its adoption.

Does the maker of resolution: ALA Code of Conduct wish to move its adoption?

MS. CONATSER: Madam President, Sharon Conatser, Department of Illinois, Past National President --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, Sharon?

MS. CONATSER: -- I move the adoption -- sorry. I move the adoption of the American Legion Auxiliary Code of Conduct.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The motion -- I need a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's one of the committee, so the committee (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yeah. Okay. The motion is on the adoption of the ALA Code of Conduct. Is there any discussion?

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

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, Glynis?

MS. SEELEY: Considering our Centennial Strategic Plan and the culture of goodwill, when I read this, one of the things that immediately came out to me was who is deciding our moral character. There's a number of issues that I have with this and the wording of it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Pull the mic up a little bit higher. There you go.

MS. SEELEY: Is that better?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes.

MS. SEELEY: There's a number of things that I absolutely agree with and I think it's awesome that we're actually trying to hold ourselves to a standard that the public would understand and want to come and join us. There's also an other number of issues. The first line, To conduct yourself with dignity, displaying good manners and good morals at all times.

Who's to determine our good morals? How far does this go? I had to sign morals clauses in business practices this before. This is a blanket statement. The morals clauses that I had to sign were anywhere between three and 20 pages long identifying exactly what that was supposed to mean.

This is a very broad-based and can -- I'm worried about our culture of goodwill, that this turns into a witch hunt. It says very clearly that we're not going to bully, but then all of a sudden this winds up being that we're spying on one another. Who determines what the morals are?

To be a good citizen and a good neighbor by obeying local, state and federal laws and regulations. How far does that go? Does that mean somebody with a suspended license five years ago because of parking tickets is now eligible for a suspension or expulsion from the auxiliary?

There's certain times that actually breaking the law may not be such a bad thing. What if you saw a baby in a back seat of a car? You broke that person's window. Technically, that's breaking the law, but you're saving the baby.

To not abuse or tolerate the abuse of alcohol, to not use illegal drugs or tolerate the illegal use of drugs. Many posts have bars in them. Do we now all of a sudden become substance abuse counselors and say, Oh, you're misusing alcohol?

I'm a credentialed substance abuse counselor, retired counselor emeritus. I spent 10 years in school being able to diagnose someone. I am actually A) a legally mandated reporter, B) I can also be called into court as an expert witness. But that's me. I have the credentials. Who else does? There may be others in the room, but that's a hard job.

Many posts have bars in them. How many times have we seen either our own members or Legion family members misusing alcohol? There's a number of things that I think we could really use a little rewording and a little more investigation before we actually adopt this as a whole.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Is there any other discussion?

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Rita Navarreté, delegate to this convention from the Department of New Mexico and I am a past --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Rita, if you'll pull the mic up.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Okay. Can you hear me now?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Representative from Louisiana, come around to the front. Come around to the front. You're right over here. Second row, second one in. All the way across the front. Okay. Okay. Sorry. Go ahead, Rita.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Rita Navarreté, delegate from the Department of New Mexico. Serving as a Past National President, I want to speak in favor and it's real difficult to try to understand why at this time in our organization we need to address, but, you know, it's for the right reason and it is time. If not us, than who? And why not now? And I just want to leave you with a prayer because we are a forgotten country.

I am grateful Father, that you are at work in me. I find it difficult to change and I wonder sometimes how, if ever, I will, yet I know that you are continuing your work in me, and I, as I look back, will see the growth you are producing in this greatest organization that I belong to. Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Rita.

MS. HERMAN: Jennifer Herman, NEC, Department of Montana.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, Jennifer?

MS. HERMAN: We need something in place. Montana has gone through -- I don't want to say a trial -- but we have a member who is very unruly and it's not funny because I've been on the end of her bullying and it's bullying through the internet and we have to have something in place that we can stand firm on.

No, we're not police. I'm not going to say, You use drugs, you're bad. You're out. You drink too much. I'm not a drinker, so if one -- if a person has one beer, to me that's more than I drink so, apparently, you're a heavy drinker, you know. No, we can't be police, but we know what goodwill is. We know what kindness is. We know when we are being bullied. We know when we hate to open our emails because there's something on there.

I had to block this person from contacting me through my email, but yet I have to go to department functions where she's there and it is

very uncomfortable. This does need to be reviewed. Things do need to be reworded because we're not police. We don't want to be police. We didn't join this organization to be a police, but we have to have goodwill. We have to have kindness because people don't want to join us when they come to a meeting and you have somebody who is very belligerent.

They go -- if I'm going to volunteer my time, I'm going to go where they're nice. So I really think that this needs to be reviewed, but it is something that we do need.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Jennifer. Is there other discussion?

MS. WASHBURN: Barb Washburn, NEC Nebraska. Yes, Madam President, may I ask for clarification from Past National President Sharon about how this Code of Conduct would be implemented outside of the National Organization, so the whole assembly may know about it? Because I was unclear if this was adopted how it would be implemented with -- at the grassroots membership level and Sharon explained that to me a little bit this morning. Would she be able to answer a question? Like, is it all departments do it? Is it something at National or how does this move forward if adopted?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Let me find out if she's willing to answer. Past National President Sharon?

MS. CONATSER: Sharon can answer. Past National President, Department of Illinois. National is not going to police your departments. This is going to be handled at the department, or unit, or district, or county, or division, whatever you have. National will not be policing the departments. Is that the answer you -- I don't see Barb. Where's she at? Barb? Oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Sharon.

MS. CONATSER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there other discussion?

The motion is on the adoption of the ALA Code of Conduct. All those in favor of adopting the ALA Code of Conduct, please say Aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed, please say No.

VOICES: No.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Could you please stand? The ayes stand, please.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm standing to count.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I got 29.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I can't see so I can sit down.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All right. Please be seated. Just looking at those standing and those remaining -- or would the no's stand, please? Okay. The ayes have it.

(Banging of the gavel.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Now we're down to announcements.

Dubbie, do you have any announcements?

MS. BUCKLER: Of course, I do. Well, good morning everyone. Thank you.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. BUCKLER: We've held several NEC meetings and I'm just going to comment isn't it nice to be in a room where you actually have a little breathing? Oh, is that -- are you telling me to smile or speak into the mic?

(Cross-talk.)

MS. BUCKLER: I got this. The pre-con --

(Cross-talk.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear in the back.

MS. BUCKLER: That was intentional.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. The pre-con meetings will begin at 10 a.m. Check. Okay. If I -- is this -- so here's the key to the mics in this set-up. We've got to have them below -- well, I think that's what -- I think we got to have them below. We're used to holding a mic up like this. I'm just -- and apparently, that's not -- so if I -- if it's here, it's not coming across, right? Because we need to learn this right now.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can hear you, but it's garbled.

(Cross-talk.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's very garbled.

MS. BUCKLER: It's garbled?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

MS. BUCKLER: That may just be me.

(Laughter.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. If it's -- okay. Well, seriously help me out. So if -- or help us out because we're -- this is going to be our set-up all week long. So if it's here, can you hear it better? Is this better?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. BUCKLER: So you all can hear and you all can't?

(Cross-talk.)

MS. BUCKLER: All right. I'm going to -- we really do need to figure out the mic situation. So I'm going to say -- so I'm going to make an announcement. Pre-con meetings begin at 10 a.m. Check your agendas for room information. Who could not hear that clearly?

(Cross-talk.)

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. But what I just said, could you just hear what I just said?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, ma'am.

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. So the key for everybody who is using the microphone is, it's got to be about chin level instead of raising it up like we usually speak. So, I mean, that's just good to know. Thank you. And close. So as we say in the biz, Bite the mic. Okay. The constitution -- so for

real, so the pre-con meetings begin at 10 and look on your sheets and figure out where you're going.

The Constitution & Bylaws Pre-Convention Meeting is today at 1 o'clock p.m. and it's in this room, correct?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. BUCKLER: Correct. Okay. Division Caucuses begin at 3 p.m., so please check your agendas for specific locations. Now, in keeping with our policies about non-solicitation, I will only mention that -- where is Jane?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right up here. She's coming (indiscernible).

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. So I will only mention if you are enamored with Jane's earrings, I can't promote them, but if you're enamored with her earrings, a little bird told me she might have five pairs left. So you can see Jane.

And I just want to, as a matter of personal privilege, Madam President, just say that Marta Hedding hasn't missed a National Convention for 23 years and --

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And some of you have heard me joke that when we do our profiles about what kind of people we are, Marta and I are alike in every category except of one of us is an introvert and one of us is an extrovert and you all get to guess which one is which.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: Marta is just a terrific asset to this organization and I miss her personally because she's always just right here next to me and she's worked really hard on getting ready for this convention. Her doctor just simply said -- she's got to have some eye surgery and she's got a few other things going on. She is not -- I just want to be clear because I know how rumors go. She's not dying. She's not, you know, terminally ill or nothing like that, but she's not -- she's -- her doctor said you cannot be traveling right now.

So I miss her and I just wanted to, because I kind of heard some, overheard some, whispers I just wanted to make you aware that yes, she couldn't travel, but no, we do intend for her to be with us for another several long years. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes? Oh.

MS. BUCKLER: Madam President, that concludes the announcements.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Did you talk about Division Caucuses?

MS. BUCKLER: I did. I said --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay.

MS. BUCKLER: -- they were at 3.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I missed it. Sorry. Must have been eating a Tootsie Roll. Please stand with me as our National Chaplain offers the benediction.

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we just thank you today for this meeting and the accomplishments that we were able to achieve in you. Father, we thank you that we are able to fulfill the obligations that we set forth to the community, state and nation and to our body as a whole. As we leave this place, but not your presence, may your blessings be with us and keep us in perfect peace until you bring us back together in unity. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

ALL: Amen.

(Ringing of the bell.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Well, it says (indiscernible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are we adjourned?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I still have something to say. You're not adjourned yet. Wait a minute. Thank you, ladies of the NEC, for your dedication and good work. It's been a pleasure serving with you this last year. This meeting of the National Executive Committee is adjourned for everybody. Have a wonderful convention.

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You should say if you need directions to your pre-con meetings, ask any of the staff (indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Ask any of the staff if you need directions to your pre-con meeting.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 8:43 a.m.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2017**

ANNOUNCER: Good morning, and welcome to "Make Membership Matter" the 97th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention.

Please welcome your national president, from the Department of Washington, Mary Davis.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Good morning!

ALL: Good morning!

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's absolutely wonderful to be with you today for our 97th American Legion Auxiliary Convention! Make Membership Matter.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: None of you would be here today if your membership didn't matter to you or to the people we serve. I'm preaching to the choir, I know. My job, your job, is to find ways to make membership matter to other members, and prospective members, who may not have heard the opportunity to work our programs and feel the incredible satisfaction of helping.

Helping veterans who are in hospitals or veterans homes. Helping the families of our active duty military, who are often far away from home. Helping find ways to get our military children into college with scholarships, or just helping kids get the things they need for school.

That sense of incredible satisfaction we get when helping others is evident in a long-time American Legion Auxiliary member from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her devotion to our veterans is absolutely breathtaking.

Let's watch.

(Video plays.)

(Music.)

ANNOUNCER: "Located on a beautiful wooded campus next to the Grand River, Michigan's Grand Rapids Home for Veterans has served" --

(Applause.)

ANNOUNCER: -- "our veterans since the Civil War. The 90 acres of serene grounds include a majestic fountain, a massive American Flag, historic displays and it serves as the home for over 300 veterans. Inside there is an American Legion Auxiliary member who" --

(Applause.)

ANNOUNCER: -- "it's fair to say is known by virtually every resident and staff member."

MS. BROOKS: "I'm Sarah Brooks. 91 years old and I'm an American Legion Auxiliary volunteer."

(Applause.)

ANNOUNCER: "Sarah has accomplished an incredible feat, one that continues to be carried out with love and respect for America's veterans and she's been honored by a new American Legion Auxiliary Lifetime Achievement Award that recognizes over 35,000 hours of volunteer service. That's the equivalent to working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year without a single day off for nearly 17 years."

(Applause.)

ANNOUNCER: "What motives a person to donate so much of their life to others?"

MS. BROOKS: "I enjoy people and my main concern is the veterans and I come here to do what make them happy."

ANNOUNCER: "And the veterans appreciate Sarah too."

MR. SPALLONE: "She's very dedicated to the troops that are in here. Whatever they need, she goes out of her way to get for them."

ANNOUNCER: "Sarah cares for veterans sometimes when their families don't pay much attention to them."

MS. BROOKS: "There are so many veterans here that have families that don't come and visit, so we become their families."

ANNOUNCER: "Sarah has been a fixture at the home for years, but she isn't alone."

MS. BROOKS: "I've been doing this a long time, volunteering, but it would be impossible if I didn't have the help of the other volunteers."

MS. MCVEIGH: "I've worked for Sarah for many years at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans serving -- currently serving as her First Deputy. At 91 years old, I can hardly keep up with her. She has more energy than any person I know."

ANNOUNCER: "Sarah's love for the veterans is obvious and so is the love for Sarah from the veterans and staff."

MS. MCVEIGH: "When Sarah is up on the floors interacting with the veterans, when they come down the hall and see Sarah, they always put a big smile on their face because they know she's been around for a long time and she's here to help them."

MS. CARR: "The home has been honored and blessed to have Sarah Brooks serving 56 years here basically as a volunteer servant for our heroes that we care for every day and that's so important to us because there's just not enough staff that our veterans need here at the home. So Sarah and her deputies that come, religiously go above and beyond serving the needs, but ultimately Ms. Brooks is a profound servant-driven leader for us that we can't do without."

ANNOUNCER: "And as a small token of her profound leadership, Sarah was honored with the first American Legion Auxiliary Lifetime Achievement Award presented by National President Mary Davis at the Department of Michigan's Convention in June."

(Applause.)

MS. BROOKS: "I hear ladies say, 'I don't want to go. I'm not getting this or getting that.' You're getting something. You're getting a reward from heaven for doing for your vets."

ANNOUNCER: "And thank heaven for Sarah Brooks. Let's all honor her service to our veterans by finding the time to volunteer as well. For more information about how you can volunteer, visit [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org) and Sarah isn't accepting any excuses."

MS. BROOKS: "Some of you that say, 'I'm too busy,' you're never too busy to give time for our veterans."

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And now, if you'll please give a warm welcome to my friend Sarah Brooks, escorted by Michigan Past Department President Mary Anne Yuncker.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sarah, you're wonderful and you're right! You're never too busy to give time for our veterans!

Sarah doesn't fly, but coming today was important to her and many others at the Department of Michigan. Thank you, Mary Anne --

MS. YUNCKER: You're welcome.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- for being Sarah's travel companion on the train-ride here, and thanks to everyone who helped make Sarah's appearance here today possible.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much.

MS. BROOKS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Enjoy!

MS. BROOKS: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. This way. This way back.

Thank you.

MS. YUNCKER: You're welcome.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Mary.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The people I'm about to introduce you to, certainly make membership matter.

By decade, please welcome the attending Past National Presidents of the American Legion Auxiliary.

From the 1990s.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Linda Boone, from the Department of Oregon, your 1992-1993 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Linda Newsome, from the Department of Maryland, your 1994-1995 National President. Linda's not with us right now. She's a little indisposed. She'll be back as soon as she can.

Virginia Hobbs, from the Department of Kentucky, your 1998-1999 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And Elizabeth Stewart, from the Department of North Carolina, your 1999-2000 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, ladies.

From the 2000s.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: From the 2000s. There we go.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Kristine West, from the Department of New Hampshire, your 2000-2001 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Katherine Morris, from the Department of Texas, your 2003-2004 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, from the Department of Wisconsin, your 2007-2008 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Desireé Stoy, from the Department of Ohio, your 2008-2009 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: and Rita Navarreté, from the Department of New Mexico, your 2009-2010 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, ladies.

From the 2010 decade.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Carlene Ashworth, from the Department of Texas, your 2010-2011 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Peggy Thomas, from the Department of Virginia, your 2012-2013 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Nancy Brown-Park, from the Department of California, your 2013-2014 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Janet Jefford, from the Department of Connecticut, your 2014-2015 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And Sharon Conatser, from the Department of Illinois, your 2015-2016 National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, ladies. Let's give all our attending Past National Presidents another round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Some of you may know our keynote speaker at the Washington DC Conference this year.

Timothy Eernisse, who just happens to be my nephew, is the director for development and marketing at WGVU Public Media in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Michigan is doing really well this year. He is a proud Air Force veteran serving from 1990 to 1998 and was assigned domestically and overseas.

Tim is a member of the Ken Burns Station Advisory Board, has been involved in multiple military documentaries and is a two-time Michigan Emmy nominee.

Tim works with LZ Michigan, a "Landing Zone" to remember, honor, and celebrate veterans. His address today is entitled, "What's Your Why?" and fits in perfectly with Making Membership Matter.

Please welcome, Timothy Eernisse.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. EERNISSE: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: How are you, Timothy?

MR. EERNISSE: Good. I love that we're the same height when you stand on that.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I know.

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you everyone, and let's hear it for Michigan first off.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: I hear there may be somebody from the other side of the lake that's going to be doing things next year. Just so you know, you got the right side of the lake this year.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: They had to start on the good side of the lake. That's all I'm going to say.

MR. EERNISSE: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. How are we doing today?

ALL: Good.

MR. EERNISSE: I didn't hear you. How are we doing today?

ALL: Good.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: It hasn't been that hot yet and this is your first day of the conference. It's time to liven up a little bit, but I want to start because we are here for one specific reason. In 1776, a group of individuals gathered in Philadelphia to declare our independence and to stand up and they were called patriots and have been for multiple centuries. There's individuals today that still stand up and defend that freedom, so can I ask all the veterans that are in this room to please rise and stay rise -- stay standing for a moment if you're able.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you patriots!

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Those are the folks that you serve. Thank you for being here today. Now, we want to get the rest of you involved because you can't sit down that long. So if everybody can stand up for a minute. If you're able to stand, please rise. Okay. Everybody standing up? We're going to have a little bit of fun first thing in the morning.

So one of the things that you hear a lot from veteran service organizations is it's like there's a secret code. "How do I get in? How do I become a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, or the VFW, or the Disabled Americans, any of those groups? I don't know how."

There's this stereotype that you have to know something special, so we're going to have fun with it this week. I want you to turn to the person next to you and in the next minute, I want you to create a secret handshake that only you two know. So you got a minute to create a handshake.

Okay. Everybody getting their handshake down? And just to continue with the Michigan theme, can I have two of you ladies join me up here real quick? Come on, ladies. Two ladies? All right. Here we go.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: Now, we'll know how real the Michigan fans are in here if we say, "Go Green"!

VOICES: Go White!

MR. EERNISSE: All right. Just so you know, I'm from Green Valley State University. We got the best football record in the entire state. Just saying.

VOICE: (Indiscernible).

MR. EERNISSE: Okay. These ladies are from Michigan. Show us your handshake. Share with everybody what you guys came up with. Awe!

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you, ladies. Thank you. Everybody have a seat. Thank you very much.

Now as that happens, I want you to remember that secret handshake. It may come back in a little bit. It is my honor to be here today to help kickoff your national convention. There's a lot of things that are happening that you guys are go through over the next few days and so my Aunt Mary challenged me to kind of share something with you that's been a part of me for several years, but I want to start giving you a little bit of history.

So before I share my why and those things, I want to share with you my history. So here's my family and yes, there are some in the audience that are probably going to be really, really mad at me for sharing some of these photos and yes, that is Aunt Mary.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: So my family has a tradition of serving in the military. My grandfather, Mary's step -- or father in-law served in the --

with the Checkertail Squadron during World War II in Italy. That top left-hand picture is Uncle Skipper. Some of you know him, Dale and Mary.

The other right-hand corner which is the one that will probably -- I'll be sleeping on the curb the rest of the week -- that's my other uncle who served in Department of Defense for over 30 years.

Bottom right is myself and my dad at my basic training. My dad also served in the Air Force, but he was an officer, so I wouldn't put him up here. I don't hold it against him, but -- and the other one is myself and my wing man when we on our way to deny flight.

So it's a history of my family that has served and it's one of those things that is important, has become important, to my family. So I will share with you a little bit of my why later on, but this is what started me. Okay?

On top of that, I was born in that city of brotherly love in Philadelphia. So where's the Pennsylvania folks?

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: I've been known to drive 12 hours to get a Philly cheesesteak just so you know.

Dalessandro's is the only place to get one. Grew up in New York. Where's New York at?

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: All right! Grew up in Arizona. Where's Arizona?

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: See, they put them all up front. I love this. Good planning! As well as New Jersey for a little bit right behind Arizona over here.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: And now I've called Michigan home for 25 years.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: You ladies are going to have fun today. This is going to be awesome! So with that, as you kind of get into figuring out what you're going to talk about with family with what I've done, you have to determine a way of how do I know I did a good job today? So you ladies are all going to help me do that.

So later today, the only thing I can think of is if I did a good job for the speech and kicked off the convention right, there's going to be an epic event that has to happen. So my thought process is if you help me today and if anytime during the day it goes dark sometime when it shouldn't be, I did a good job. What do you think?

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: So I need you to tell me later if it went dark sometime when it shouldn't have. Outside not inside. Okay?

Now, as we go through things, my why kind of starts back, as Aunt Mary said, I am -- work for PBS. I kind of bounced around after I got out of the military like a lot of folks do. In the military I was a PERSCO team

member and then loaded weapons on A-10 aircraft and down in Battle Creek, and I had to find myself after that time frame. It took me a long time to do that.

Eleven-and-a-half years ago I landed at WGVU PBS and NPR for west Michigan and that, to me, really felt like home. The reason it felt like home is I'm a first generation PBS kid. So I grew up in an era where this little brand new show came on called Sesame Street.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: Yes! I love Sesame Street, and Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, and all of those things and I had an uncle named Roger so it was really confusing for me. But the cool thing with it is growing up after I got to PBS I realized all the touch points I had had in my life, one of them being my last name is Eernisse. Nobody can pronounce it, but there were two characters on Sesame Street. One Bert and one Ernie. So there was myself and another Tim in kindergarten together. I didn't want to be called Timmy, so I became Ernie and he became Timmy so we could tell each other apart and through my entire life I was called Ernie, even in the military. So I had a connection.

So I started doing things at PBS, had the privilege of serving on a lot of community committees and now I'm honored to serve on Ken Burton's station advisory board for his little tiny documentary that comes out in a few weeks called the Vietnam War. It is only 18 hours long, so it's a short one for Ken. Excuse me.

The nice one with it is my sons -- I have a 17-year-old and a 7-year-old -- know what PBS is about. They live and breathe it. The other piece that PBS has allowed me to do is to determine and figure out what I want to do and who I am as an individual, but also give me an opportunity to tell great stories.

You got a great story from Grand Rapids, Michigan that happened three miles from my office and I'm ticked I didn't get to tell it yet. So we're going to be telling it soon, but we were able to tell those stories. So as we tell those stories, we will have flashed back and said, "How do we tell them?" We can all tell stories. We can all do documentaries, but what makes us different than somebody else? What makes us different than Honey Boo Boo on the History Channel or Learning Channel? If you don't know that, I'm not going any further.

If you don't know the difference between PBS and Honey Boo, we got a big problem. So one of the things we did is a couple years ago we delved in with a group called Small FI and delved into a thing called "What's Your Why?" That was specifically was Simon Sinek. Simon Sinek, if you're familiar with him or go look him up on YouTube, did a great job of codifying what it means and "What's Your Why" means and he has a thing called the golden circle.

So the golden circle starts on the outside and talks about what you do, how you do it and why you do it and what a lot of companies do is they start with the what, the how and the why. An example, Apple. They make great quality products and they're easy to use and they look pretty. How

they do that is because they have a great team that does it. You want to buy a computer from them. You see how that works?

What Simon did is realized that if you start the other way and you start with why you do something, it does not matter what you're doing. If you share why you're doing it, you can change the world.

So Apple switched around and said they believe in changing the status quo. They changed the status quo by making a commitment and doing things differently. How they do that is make great products that are user friendly and fun to use. Do you want to buy one? You don't know if it's a computer, or a cell phone, or a tablet. You'll buy anything from Apple.

How many people have an iPhone? They're a computer company not a phone company, but you guys have the iPhones because they start with why they do things. So we did the same piece at PBS and what happened with that is it allowed us to say, "Why are we telling these stories? Why does it matter? Why do I get out of bed every morning and why should anybody else care about what I do and what story we tell?"

So pulling in the American Legion Auxiliary, I've been here a few days. I had the advantage of being in Washington, D.C. back in March. I've learned more about the American Legion Auxiliary in the last year, thanks to my aunt, than I ever knew. I'll be blunt and honest. And I've got people that work with us volunteering in Grand Rapids that are ALA members and I know a lot more know.

As I do that, every single one of you will tell me you're the world's largest female -- I got to get that right -- female service organization for veterans, correct?

VOICES: Correct.

MR. EERNISSE: Okay. You do great things! Girls, say -- come on!

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: All right. You give scholarships for people to go to school, correct?

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: You have service officers that help veterans be able to get their benefits.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: What else do you do?

VOICE: Community service.

MR. EERNISSE: Community service. What else?

VOICE: National security.

VOICE: Higher education.

MR. EERNISSE: National security. What else did I hear?

VOICE: Higher education.

MR. EERNISSE: Oh, education. All of these great things that you do, that's what you do. Not a single one of you until last March when I challenged people told me why it is you do it.

VOICE: To help veterans.

MR. EERNISSE: To help veterans? Okay. Do you have a story behind that?

VOICE: My dad.

MR. EERNISSE: Your dad. When's the last time you shared that when you were asking somebody to be a new member of the ALA? What you've shared is -- so some of you have shared it every day, but you've got to delve into that why and when you know your why and you know what it is and why you're doing it, it makes everything else insignificant. Because if you base all of your decisions in the why you're doing it, it makes life a little easier.

The challenge for you is when you find that why to then wear it on your sleeve because to wear it on your sleeve is really tough. To tell somebody, "Let me tell you a little story. Let me tell you" -- I don't want you -- it's really easy to talk about the what you do or how you do it and we do all these great things, but you get personal when you talk about your own personal why and that's very challenging for some people.

But as you go through, I know there's a lot of things in the next two days, two-and-a-half days depending on the shift in schedule, that you have to decide as a group, as an organization. Some things that haven't been changed, I'm hearing, since the '30s. You have to make those decisions.

If you base it in why it is you do what you do, to serve veterans, to make a difference in your communities, to honor your grandfather, your grandmother, your father, your cousin, whoever it is, it makes a lot of those decisions a lot easier because does it really matter on some of it? You can sit and talk about it and discuss it, but if you base it in your why, you know it's the right to move forward, whatever that might be.

So one of the other ways that we did this at PBS is we delved in a local engagement around content. So I talked about content a little bit and telling great stories, but our why for content started in creating content of consequence. What content of consequence is, is content that actually matters.

There's a lot of programming out there. You can get it on your smartphone, you can get it on your television. It can be everything from the Honey Boo Boo to game shows to whatever. They all have their place in our world. For us, as we decided what we wanted to do for PBS, we wanted to create content that very specifically can make a difference. It can be a program that'll make you think, that'll educate you or providing new spirit to you.

So when we do that -- you see a TV show. Are you excited about it sometimes? Do you do anything with it? What a lot of times happens is you watch it and you're done. That's not content of consequence. Content of consequence for us is being able to take things off of that television screen and bring it into the community, exactly the things you were trying to do with the American Legion Auxiliary.

Case in point, Ken Burton's "The Vietnam War" starts September 17th. It's 18 hours. So you got five nights of two hours a night. We take Friday and Saturday night, another five nights at two hours a night.

We're going to show this documentary. It's going to create a lot of emotion. Imagine for those of you that were around between 1955 and 1975. How many people?

Think of the things that happened in that 20-year span. Put the Vietnam War aside. Think of everything that happened in our culture and our society in that 20-year span. MLK was assassinated. Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. JFK was assassinated. The women's movement, civil rights movement, the FDS, protest happening on college campuses, the teaching at the University of Michigan, the shootings at Kent State and oh yeah, there was a war going on. The first media war.

There was a lot of things that happened in that time, so you create a documentary to show this. Now what are you going to do with it? You've just ripped off a lot of Band-Aids and a lot of raw nerves. What PBS is committed to, and local PBS stations, are to go that extra step. Why? Because that's what we do. We believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in making a difference and exploring the world with each and every one of you because we're all in it together as human beings.

So there's events going on around the country. There are things that happened a couple years, about seven years ago in Wisconsin. LZ Lambo. Oh, you guys got quiet on me.

(Cheering.)

MR. EERNISSE: LZ Lambo happened seven years as did LZ Michigan. LZ Michigan is coming back this year. LZ Maryland was last summer. There's events and activities in each and every one of your states. Those stations are waiting to connect with organizations that believe in the same why that we do, to make an impact in the community. They're looking for you.

I can tell you there's one group that I know of across the country that's heavily engaged and that's District 5. American Legion Auxiliary District 5 in Michigan. Thank you, ladies. Not only are they engaged -- I'm going to get in trouble for this one too -- but Harriet Sterum (phonetic) who is leading it for us --

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Harriet has come to us and not only does the American Legion Auxiliary District 5 doing things, they are the group that is doing the female veteran's expo at LZ Michigan.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you. Last year I heard talk in Cincinnati about all of these great things that you're going to do for female veterans. They stood up and did it, and trust me, Harriet called -- she's probably calling me knowing Harriet. "Oh, Tim's -- I know he can't go anywhere, so I'm going to text him," because they want to do something and make a difference because they know the why they're going to do what they do. So there's a lot of stuff going on.

But to tell you a little bit more besides just words and to really help you feel what the Vietnam War documentary is going to be about, let's take a quick 30 second look at the show.

(Video plays.)

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Did that get anybody's attention, wake you up a little bit? Lynn Novick who is one of the co-producers on the documentary said it best when she said, "This documentary," as you saw in there, "will be about things you thought you knew, you forgot you knew and you never knew."

I have another friend who once told me when we started talking about content of consequence and why we do what we do, told me "Art creates emotion and emotion creates action." That's an art form. It's going to create a motion around the entire United States and those folks are going to have emotion and they're going to want to do something with it.

The ALA and the American Legion are poised if you where your why on your leave to say, "We are here for you because of why we do this. This is what we do because we believe in our fathers. We believe in helping out our veterans. This is deep and personal to us. This documentary is coming. You have a chance to set up and step out and make your membership matter and do something that can really change a lot of lives.

So this year, to give you an example of what's going on in Grand Rapids besides the -- just the event and the documentary, we partnered with Art Prize. I know you work with the National Creative Arts Festival. There's a lot of things you can do. We're going to give away for the first time ever a veterans prize for an art prize. There's going to be a jury vote and a public vote and I think they're arm wrestling in the back on who is going to be on the jury from the ALA. It's kind of cool. I think Aunt Mary is winning by the way.

Between her and Dubbie, it's -- I did not get in the way. Let me put it that way. So there's lots of things going on. But with the American Legion Auxiliary, you've been around for almost a century. That didn't get some excitement? Come on! You've been here for almost a century!

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: So you do lots of things as we talked before. The last time I spoke with one of your groups was right before you went to congress. We all know what you do, but why is it that you do what you do and you have to delve into that. And not only do you have to delve into that, you have to be able to share it with different people at different times and at any time.

A lot of you I saw wearing the ALA pins that you received last year in Cincinnati. You got to wear your why on your sleeve just like you do that ALA pin. People need to know what you do. Today's generation that's younger, that you want to bring in to the ALA, they don't care what you do. They care why in the world are you doing it. "Why should I get out of bed on a Saturday morning at 9 a.m.?" And when you connect with that story and you connect with the why behind it, they're going to do it. They know what you do.

An example, a lot of you know Aunt Mary. I have to call her Aunt Mary or I get in trouble in my head. A lot of you know Aunt Mary. A lot of you had her visit this past year, correct?

VOICES: Yeah!

MR. EERNISSE: How many people know why she does what she does? Okay. I see some hands going up. I'm sure she's shared stories with you, right? For me, and maybe it's because her mom was ALA for decades. Well, how many people know her mom? Mom's great; isn't she?

So a lot of -- maybe it was that that was passed on to her. I personally think she just wanted to get out of the house and away from Uncle Skip or Dale, as you guys may know him, but she shares that why and she's come to the local communities to share it. I'm sure your next president, whoever that may be, they're from the other side of the lake maybe, but, you know, so it may be a little slower, but she's going to share that.

(Booing.)

MR. EERNISSE: Oh, I got them waking up now. I think the Packers are going down this year. That's all I have to say.

(Booing.)

MR. EERNISSE: So you have to find that why and you have to share it each and every place and you have to challenge each other. When you see Aunt Mary, when you see your Past National Presidents where they are, challenge them and ask them, "Why is it that you do what you do?"

And if you don't think it's a powerful piece -- and I can tell you we talked with the VA voluntary service organization and they created an entire campaign about "What's Your Why?" Why do people volunteer? They uncovered stories they never ever knew. They uncovered things that made people cry when they were talking to them to put it into a script. You will uncover things in your local organizations that will be amazing.

So one other last thing, I did tell you a while ago that I would share with you my why and a little bit about it. The best way to do that, honestly so that I don't cry, is I'm going to play a quick video for you. So let's take a look at a video from a few years ago.

(Video plays.)

(Music.)

MR. EERNISSE: "As co-chair of the LZ Michigan Committee, I have been honored and humbled to receive countless phone calls and emails of appreciation for bringing LZ Michigan together. The following email sent to me from the daughter of a Vietnam veteran is just a sample of the emotional outpouring we have received.

"I just wanted to send you a note to say thanks for letting me be a part of LZ Michigan. You guys really have no idea how much this has affected my life and countless others. The past 27 years of my life have been shaped by the Vietnam War. Obviously, I was not around back then nor do I have any clue what it is like to fight in a war, but I certainly know the affects.

From a vacation to a family dinner or a day at the beach, the affects of Vietnam were ingrained in my life. Without getting too personal, it just always seemed like we were dealing with something. For a long time, I

blamed my father for my far from normal life until I reached an age, not that long ago, where I understood it was not his fault.

Over the past ten years, he has gotten help and has learned to better deal with life. I truly hope that some day we can have some sort of father/daughter relationship and I 100 percent believe that Saturday, July 3rd got us a lot closer to that point. The few times I saw him at the event, it was like I was looking at a different man.

We were never allowed to purchase items with a 'Made in Vietnam' label and on Saturday my mom said that he went up to a Vietnamese soldier, shook his hand and had a conversation. I couldn't have told you where he served during the war, but his name is now displayed on the large map forever. These things may seem insignificant to some people, but when he gave me a big hug at the end of the night with a big genuine smile on his face and said thank you, I knew we had both been changed forever.

Please try to remember the affects LZ Michigan had on people's lives that day. You didn't just bring families a day of celebration. You completely altered the course of some of our lives in a way a lot of us never thought possible. Thank you.'

Personally, as the LZ Michigan Chair, I don't know if we changed the world on July 3rd or how many lives that were affected. Maybe some of the people in attendance won't even realize the affects and impact of the day for years to come. We know on that day, after the event, no one would remember our name, the sponsor's names or the LZ Michigan Committee, but for me the sponsors and the committee are just one Vietnam veteran who didn't before now feels welcomed home. We succeeded. I encourage everyone to continue the mission of LZ Michigan and on behalf of the LZ Michigan Committee, for all Vietnam veterans, thank you for your service and welcome home."

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: That is my why. That email. That young lady is one of my whys. I've know Allison for eight years now. Allison has changed her life completely after this event and talking with her dad.

There's other individuals I've met over the last couple of years in New Mexico with the VA voluntary service organization. I met some young gentleman that are in the bottom right corner there. Ian, Gino, Aaron. Ian and Gino are marines, have PTSD. One manifested itself as black-out rage. One was ready to step off the bridge because he didn't have to worry about anything anymore then.

They set out on a cause to go around the country to give hugs. Not to help other veterans, but to help themselves because they needed it. They're now traveling the country giving a hug to someone because why? That's what they needed. Their why is they needed to feel like they were loved.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: You have Jerry who's in the bottom there. Jerry is a World War II Battle of Bulge vet. I sat and had dinner with Jerry in New Mexico. It was amazing and the crazy part to me is about three hours

later I got a Facebook message from someone I did not know who was Jerry's daughter and said, "My dad absolutely loved having dinner with you because nobody's sat and talked to him like that for a long time." He just wanted somebody to talk to. Jerry is one of the reasons I continue to do what I do.

The left-hand corner over there, the marine with the young man and the gentleman sticking his head out of his blue Jeep which I find funny because he's an army guy and it's a blue Air Force color, that's the most recent Medal of Honor recipient Jim McCloughan from South Haven, Michigan.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Jim is the most down to earth guy you ever want to meet, but he is my why. Everybody on here. The last year of knowing what you ladies and gentlemen and do, you are my why because there's people out there that believe in doing something. Over 20 years ago, I raised my right hand and solemnly swore to defend the constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic as a member of the United States Air Force.

To this day --

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you.

MR. EERNISSE: -- 1 percent of our population does that and to this day, I still live by their Air Force core values. Integrity first, service before self, excellence in all we do. That is important to me and I where my why on my sleeve no matter how many people have looked at me and told me, "You're nuts. You're crazy. You can't be doing this. We can't go do another event for veterans. We can't go do another event for somebody that has cancer. We can't do all this stuff. It's physically impossible." But I said, "No. This is why I do what I do is to make a difference in somebody's life, to change a life hopefully. If we talk to one veteran or one person who doesn't feel like they can go another day and a program that we did on PBS got them to say, "This is interesting. I want to talk. I want to go to the wall that heals at LZ Michigan because I need to see it for myself because of this documentary and we can be there to talk to them and our partners in the community, the American Legion Auxiliary and the American Legion can be there with us, that's why I do what I do.

So I challenge you the rest of this week to wear your why on your sleeve and how we're going to do that is this little thing we started with a handshake. So everybody stand up again. Look to your partner and do your handshake.

All right. So you got your handshake down. Keep standing for just a second. So the rest of this week, when you see each other in the hallways, okay, when you're at your favorite watering hole for non-adult beverages tonight, when you're doing the slot machine -- I guess you're just pushing the buttons now; aren't you? When you're doing all that and you see your partner that you just did it with or you see somebody from another state, do your secret handshake. And when the American Legion member that's standing next door has no clue what in the world is going on or the person in the hotel that's had a few too many of the adult beverages wonders what's

happening, tell them, "Well, let me tell you. This crazy guy we heard earlier this week made us do this secret handshake so we could tell people our why," and tell them why you do what you do for the American Legion Auxiliary and do it at your next chapter -- at your next state meeting or whatever it is when the -- because people are going to look at you funny, but you're going to remember, right?

VOICES: Yes!

MR. EERNISSE: You have to remember it because that is what's going to make your membership matter. Regardless of the what you do, how you do it, all that other stuff, if you base it in why it is you're here, why did you give up a week of your time and spend, from what I've heard, a lot of money to get here for some people, why did you do that?

The other last thing I have for you is if those people from Michigan and everywhere else, there's one young man that's here this week that is part of our LZ Michigan Committee. So when you see Jerry Dennis from Michigan, I want you to go up to him and tell him --

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: -- thank you -- you want to create a secret handshake with him. It's going to confuse the beep out of him and I want to see him next week at our LZ meeting and have him go, "All these ladies kept walking up to me. I don't know what it was about."

So enjoy your week. Enjoy the last few days of the current president who I am bias, I think he's the greatest we've had in at least nine months --

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: -- and enjoy the rest of your conference. Thank you for letting me be here.

(Applause.)

MR. EERNISSE: Thank you. Did I do okay for you? I'm still on. She's still got me on.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, the 97th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention will resume shortly as we reset the stage and prepare for our business meeting.

(Pause.)

ANNOUNCER: Here to begin our business meeting is Convention Chairwoman from the Department of Nevada, Courtenay Burns.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Good morning, delegates and guests. Welcome to Nevada for the very special 97th annual convention of the American Legion Auxiliary! Before we begin, I would like everyone to please silence your electronic devices. Thank you.

It is my honor this morning to present to you the 2016-2017 National Officers of the American Legion Auxiliary.

National Historian, Coral May Grout of Massachusetts.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: National Chaplain, Valerie Brown-Debro of Georgia.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Central Division National Vice President,  
Carollee Junge of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Eastern Division National Vice President,  
Patricia Lach of Maryland.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Northwestern Division National Vice  
President, Virginia Nelsen of Nebraska.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Southern Division National Vice President,  
Beverly Mulkey of Arkansas.

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: Western Division National Vice President,  
Cary Fisher of Utah.

(Applause.)

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

(Applause.)

MS. BURNS: And National Vice President, Diane  
Duscheck of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

(Rapping of the gavel.)

MS. BURNS: Please rise as the National Colors are  
presented by the Department of Washington.

Please remain standing for the introduction of our National  
President.

This morning, it is my special privilege to introduce a  
wonderful lady from the great state of Washington. Our National President  
served her entire year, Making Membership Matter by faithfully working our  
mission every day and treating every member of the organization with respect  
and kindness.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our  
National President, Mary Davis!

Madam President, I present this gavel, so you may officially  
open the 97th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Courtenay.

The 97th National Convention of the American Legion  
Auxiliary will now come to order.

Valerie Debroy -- I'm sorry -- Valerie Brown-Debroy, our  
National Chaplain, will lead us in prayer.

You look beautiful always.

MS. BROWN-DEBROY: Thank you. Great morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. BROWN-DEBROY: Beautiful family, let us pray.  
Heavenly Father, we thank you for another day, another opportunity and  
another privilege that you have blessed us to see today. Father God, someone

didn't make it today, so we take nothing for granted, not even the air that we breathe.

Father God, we give you all the glory and the praise. You told us in your word to pray one for another. I pray for each and every person under the sound of my voice and those that cannot be with us today. We include them in our prayers.

Father God, we ask your blessing upon this convention today. Bless our leadership, every elected and appointed position, every speaker that appears on this stage. Speak through their vocal cords, all of you and none of them. Speak through their minds Father God. Let your presence fill this room. These things we ask in your holy name. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. National Constitution & Bylaws Chairman -- please remain standing as Sue Britton, National Americanism Chairman, leads us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and then remain standing for the National Anthem performed by Vickie Bowles.

Do you want this out of your way?

MS. BRITTON: That's okay. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Please join me in the Preamble.

ALL: For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories of the incidence of our association during the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

(Rap of the gavel.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Welcome to the 17th National Convention. It is wonderful to see so many dedicated members here today. I believe in our organization. Working hard to gain new members and having a

goal to grow, will help build the core volunteer force we need to fulfill our mission. Sound familiar? Did I get your attention? In 1937, Mrs. Malcolm Clara Douglas, the first National President from Washington State, may have expressed these sentiments.

As your sitting president, I, too, welcome all of you to Reno. It is my hope that you not only enjoy your time here, but you learn more about our organization. As we work to better the organization, please remember we are, also, here to recognize those members, units and departments who have worked diligently to fulfill our mission. It's also, a time for each one of us to rededicate ourselves to service not self.

We have so much to celebrate and so many important things to accomplish, so let's get started!

Please join me in welcoming this year's National Convention Appointees. Lorna Ledoschuk, National President's Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Vickie Bowles, National President's Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Elaine Roach, National President's Page.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Past National President Carlene Ashworth, Distinguished Guests Chair -- Committee Chairman.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Past National President Rita Navarette, Distinguished Guests Committee Vice Chairman.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Past National President Kristine West, Distinguished Guests Committee.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chris Dickey, Convention Parliamentarian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please help me welcome our special guests to the stage to bring greetings. Ganise Vance, Department President of Nevada.

MS. VANCE: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. VANCE: The Department of Nevada wants to welcome you to the great silver state and if I have any delegates here that aren't running around making this thing work, could you give a big loud welcome?

VOICE: Welcome!

MS. VANCE: Excuse me. Nevada is not the largest state, but its communities are spread across all of it. Most people know of Reno and Las Vegas. They rarely hear about Round Mountain a mining town in eastern

Nevada with a very active auxiliary (indiscernible) half way between Reno and Las Vegas.

The Department of Nevada has 23 units. Many are hundreds of miles apart. We travel long straight highways down a valley. We call them the "highways to heaven". As you look the down the road for a hundred miles, the road disappears into the sky.

Talking to many of you over the weekend, I've heard you had taken advantage of the rich history of his area. Virginia City and its mining history, Lake Tahoe and its pristine waters, the home of Nevada Girls State. And by the way, there is no Bonanza Ranch at Virginia City.

It's ironic that 10 years ago I attended my first convention, National Convention, in this very hall. So whether this is your first convention or your 51st, think that some day you could be standing here too. Let's have a lot of fun here. Let's learn a lot and don't get overwhelmed if it's your first time. You'll make it to the end and you'll make friends that you'll never forget. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Love you. You did a good job. Dr. Courtenay Burns, National Convention Chairman.

MS. BURNS: Whoops. Good morning National President Davis and welcome to beautiful Reno, Nevada! The Nevada American Legion Family and Convention Committee hope you will enjoy your stay in the biggest little city in the world.

During your stay, you can enjoy museums, a historic post-office and strolling down the beautiful River Walk. Additionally, there's shopping and many excellent restaurants. Please feel free to contribute to Nevada's economy as well. We hope you would leave a winner! You can also enjoy sightseeing in our beautiful capital, Carson City, the historic Virginia City and at nearby Lake Tahoe.

I'm Courtenay, the Convention Chairwoman and you'll see me around the convention all week. I'll be assisting the Local Pages and you with any needs or concerns that may arise.

The Convention Committee offices are located in Hall 5. The Flowers Committee, Mail Room and Local Pages will be located in the same place. It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce you to the Chairwomen and Vice Chairwomen of the local committees. I am exceedingly proud of them and I'm honored to have had the opportunity to work with these fantastic women.

National Convention Vice Chairwoman Nancy Mehowski (phonetic). Flowers Committee Chairwoman, Barbara Stewart and Vice Chairwoman Lillian Hack. Mail Room Chairwoman Judy Cobb and Vice Chairwoman Ava Hayer. Local Pages Chairwoman Samantha Gingrich and Vice Chairwoman Christine Ritger.

To make it easier to find your way, our Local Pages will be easy to spot as they'll be wearing American Flag scarves. We are looking forward to assisting you on making sure you get from one meeting to another

this week. If you need anything, please locate a Page or another member of the Convention Committee in our office located in Hall 5.

On behalf of your Convention Committee, thank you Madam President for giving us the opportunity to assist the members of the American Legion Auxiliary during this National Convention. Madam President, this concludes my thoughts and remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. BURNS: Oh, sure.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. BURNS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sharon Conatser, Immediate Past National President from the Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. CONATSER: President Mary and American Legion Auxiliary friends one and all, it's my honor to bring greetings to you today on the opening of this awesome Reno convention. Make it meaningful to yourself and to your members at home. Mary's wish is that you share the information. President Mary's communication all year has been to make all unit members aware of what's happening. Please take back all your information today and share it with them because we need to succeed for many years to come.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes.

MS. CONATSER: President Mary, I wish for you a very successful convention. All of your friends are here to -- behind you. Enjoy each and every minute and make memories that will last a lifetime. Our American Legion family is important to the success of our organizations. We all stand ready to help and move our organization forward.

Mary, your commitment to your military and our veterans this year has continued to contribute to our mission far and wide. Thank you for all you've done for our veterans. Thank you for all you've done for our military. Thank you for all you've done for our youth. All of your unit members say thank you, enjoy your convention and you've done an awesome job for our unit member.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Sharon.

Okay. She didn't need the box. She was tall enough. We'll be utilizing the electronic voting system.

Your delegation chairman should have already picked up your voting key pads before today's session began and each delegate should have a keypad.

Remember that Convention Standing Rule #14 states that voting key pads are not to be removed from the assembly hall.

Each delegation's chairman -- each department's delegation chairman is responsible for all key pads issued to their department. Now, here's the important thing. Departments will be charged \$100 donation to the

President's Education Children of Warriors Scholarship Fund for each missing key pad, so be sure to count them before you turn them to the election committee at the end of the day.

We will be using the number one key for a "yes" vote and the number two key for a "no" vote.

If you choose to abstain from voting, simply do not press any keys.

If you press the wrong key on the key pad, wait a moment and then press the correct number. The key pad will register only the last key pressed.

So now, let's start with some fun and take a minute to get familiar with our electronic voting keypads by doing some practice votes.

Now, these are hard questions just so you know. If this is your first time at an American Legion Auxiliary National Convention, please press the number one key.

If you've attended an American Legion Auxiliary National Convention before please press the number two key.

Please make your selection now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Has everyone cast their vote? I did too. I forgot.

Voting is now closed.

Please show the results.

Ooh, wow! That is wonderful.

Looks like all of our "first-timers" are passing this test with flying colors!

Now for our second test question: The American Legion Auxiliary's 2017 National Convention is currently being held in Reno, Nevada? Now, this is a trick question. Press one for "yes". Press the number two for "no" and press the number "three" if you have no clue where you are right now.

Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is now closed.

Please show the results.

It's amazing. Everybody knows where they're at. Almost.

Now for our final question: If you are a delegate from the department of Washington --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- please press the number one on the key pad.

If you are a delegate from a department other than Washington, please press the number two.

Please vote now

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is now closed.

Please show the results.

Oh, you did, did you? There we go.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: We're a small department.

So now it looks like we've all got it down which is great!

Please be sure to count all of your keypads before turning them in at the end of today's session.

Our first item of business is the adoption of the reports which organize the Convention.

The Credentials Report will be presented by Credentials Chairman, Michelle McRae, Department of Maine. Michelle?

(Music.)

MS. MCRAE: Okay. Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. MCRAE: Madam National President, the Credentials Committee met on Saturday, August 19th, 2017. The following is our report:

Alabama 9  
Alaska 8  
Arizona 16  
Arkansas 9  
California 22  
Colorado 9  
Connecticut 10  
Delaware 9  
Dist. Of Col. 6  
Florida 30  
Georgia 12  
Hawaii 6  
Idaho 7  
Illinois 26  
Indiana 37  
Iowa 22  
Kansas 14  
Kentucky 11  
Louisiana 11  
Maine 11  
Maryland 22  
Massachusetts 11  
Michigan 24  
Minnesota 30  
Mississippi 8  
Missouri 15  
Montana 8  
Nebraska 21  
Nevada 7  
New Hampshire 12  
New Jersey 12

New Mexico 9  
New York 34  
North Carolina 11  
North Dakota 13  
Ohio 34  
Oklahoma 9  
Oregon 10  
Pennsylvania 48  
Puerto Rico 6  
Rhode Island 7  
South Carolina 9  
South Dakota 14  
Tennessee 9  
Texas 19  
Utah 9  
Vermont 11  
Virginia 13  
Washington 11  
West Virginia 10  
Wisconsin 25  
Wyoming 8  
TOTAL 774

MS. MCRAE: Madam President, on behalf of the Credentials Committee, I move that the roll of Delegates hereby submitted be the official voting attendance of this Convention.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The question is on the adoption of the Credentials Committee's report as presented. Is there any discussion?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The question is on the motion to adopt the Report of the Credentials Committee.

All those in favor, please press the number one key on your voting pad. Those opposed, please press two.

Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is closed.

Please show the results.

Thank you.

739 in favor. 3 opposed.

There is a majority in the affirmative. The motion is carried and the Credentials Report for the 2017 National Convention have been adopted.

Thank you, Michelle.

MS. MCRAE: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Rules Chairman, Kristine West, will present the proposed rules for this Convention.

(Music.)

MS. WEST: The Rules are printed on pages: 124, 125 and 126 of your Convention Program. Madam National President, by direction of the Rules Committee, I move the adoption of the National Convention Rules printed for 2017.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The question is on the adoption of the National Convention Rules for 2017 as printed.

Is there any discussion?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All those in favor, please press the number one key on your voting pad.

Those opposed, please press two.

Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is closed.

Please show the results.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: 740 in favor. 3 opposed.

There being two-thirds in the affirmative, the motion is carried and the rules for the 2017 National Convention have been adopted.

Thank you, Kris. Appreciate it.

MS. MCRAE: Bye.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: National Secretary, Dubbie Buckler, will give the Program Report.

(Music.)

MS. BUCKLER: You may have noticed every year there are unique things about each National President. One of the things that is not unique about this year's president is that she is not the tallest one.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Oh, you -- you could have (indiscernible).

MS. BUCKLER: So you're just going to be notice people coming up and trying to move quietly move things over to the side.

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

And by the way, that was Mary's and my personal handshake. So you all got your convention guide and annual report, I hope.

Okay. I just want to remind a few people that for those of you who have been to a national convention before which is most of the people based on the voting earlier in this room, you know that national convention this year is a week earlier.

Well, all of you who are very familiar with the American Legion Auxiliary's annual administrative year calendar know that everything else did not change. So when you get ready for an event, there are things you do a year out, six months out, three months out and then you get down to the five weeks out, four weeks out, three weeks out, two weeks out and one-week out and we're doing things that were two weeks out and one-week out in one

week. So that moved everything, the timeline up for getting this program printed. So for all of you who contributed and participated in getting the information to us in a timely manner, I just want to say thank you. We appreciate it very much.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Also, I want to draw your attention to the photo directory section and we know because of the early printing deadline that there are some pictures in there of department secretaries that have changed. So those were the department secretaries as of the time that this went to print. We're still experiencing about 60 percent turn-over in department secretaries each year which is another subject for another time, but it did impact whose picture is in the directory. So with that, Madam President, that concludes my remarks about the convention guide.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

The Chair will entertain a motion to adopt the Program with the previously distributed agenda.

MS. LACH: Madam President, I move to adopt the Program.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Turn the mic on.

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

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there a second?

VOICES: Second.

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

VOICES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The question is on the motion to adopt the Program with the changes noted.

All those in favor please press number one on your key pad.

Those opposed press number two (2).

Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is now closed.

Please show the results.

745 in favor. 7 opposed.

The affirmative has it and the Convention Program is adopted.

By adoption of these reports, the 97th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary is officially organized for conducting business.

This morning -- oops. This morning we have the privilege of having our Sons of The American Legion National Commander with us. Jeff Frain was elected national commander of the Sons of The American Legion in Cincinnati during the 45th national convention of the Sons of The American Legion.

Jeff is a 33-year member of the Sons and he has served in every capacity of the squadron -- at the squadron level and numerous positions within the Detachment of Arizona and the national level.

Jeff's theme for the year is "Knowledge is Power," with a Membership theme of "Be a superhero and sign up three American heroes." Please welcome Super Man the Sons of the American -- Sons of the American Legion National Commander Jeff Frain.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: I don't need that. Please sit down. Good morning!

ALL: Good morning.

MR. FRAIN: You do have one of these up here. Where is it? I was in the back watching that going, "Press one or two." I was pushing three. I'm not sure. Hi, Mary!

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Hi.

MR. FRAIN: How are you?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Fine.

MR. FRAIN: Good morning, ladies.

ALL: Good morning.

MR. FRAIN: As you know, as my travels, I've probably seen a lot of you. This is the best part. The ladies. Ooh.

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: That's better. Like I say, when you look at guys all day, mmm. Come to look at these beautiful women. Can I join?

Nowadays they have those surgeries. I'm sure I could fit right in.

I'm not sure if I want to do that or not, but I'm in. On behalf of 366,000 and growing Sons of the American Legion --

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: -- I bring greetings.

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: And from them Son's, we say thank you because we know without you we cannot get done what we do. Without our better halves, our support and what I call our SAL moms, we would not achieve the goals of \$594,000 for child welfare foundation this year.

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: And if you didn't hear, I got the honor of helping writing a resolution to go from our reserve fund of \$300,000 to the TFA Program this year we get to give to them. So them two program, almost a million dollars the sons are giving this weekend or this year. That's because of the help from you supporting us, our SAL moms and I want to thank you for that.

But I have to tell you a little story about your Normandy trip. How many Sons National Commander gets to sleep with Madam President?

(Cheering.)

MR. FRAIN: Her husband was there, but what the heck, I was still there and I got to sleep with National Commander's Charlie's wife, two daughters, his aide, a few other staff. We had one heck of a glory time in Normandy, but on that bus they wore us out so we had to kind of sleep together, but it's a good story. I like it.

As you can tell, I haven't seen Dale yet this weekend, so I don't know if he's setting me up for something or he's going to take me out. I'm not sure, but was it as good for you as it was for me?

(Cheering.)

MR. FRAIN: See me later, I'll tell you a story. I got pictures too. She doesn't know it. You can tell by her smiling she knows she's in trouble. Aren't you glad you're about done?

Well, ladies, they said I have three to five minutes. I could take three to five hours with you ladies because I really enjoy everything you do. All your programs, your support, everything you do is phenomenal and I want to say thank you for doing that, supporting our veterans and their family because without your support, nothing really gets done. I watched the old programs. All the stuff you've done, it's been phenomenal so thank you for all the hard work you've done and thank you for allowing me to have her for a year. I could go wrong too, couldn't it?

One year of her, who-hoo! Say, I don't know where to go from there after that. I just got that visual and I'm done.

Anybody got a cigarette?

I don't smoke, but hey, I'm in. Okay. Push three. Not sure.

All right. Ladies, I'm going to let you go. I just wanted to come give greetings from the sons, but most importantly just thank you to everything you do. I really, really appreciate it. We just got done with our convention. We've had a banner year. We really got a lot done and like I say, the Sons are moving forward, but most importantly we want to stand side-by-side with the American Legion Auxiliary so we all can take this American Legion family forward. So find us, use us. You know, Mary, I'll find you later and then we'll go from there. But thank you for everything. Thank you for having me come up here and address you. I've looked forward to this one, telling everybody I got to sleep with Madam President.

That's a pretty cool deal except her husband was there, but we'll get over that. Thank you, ladies! Thank you for everything and Mary, I'm going to put your box back up.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Jeff. Oh, you are so swell. Whoops.

MR. FRAIN: Already undressing her.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I got it.

MR. FRAIN: Look at that! Boom!

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Jeff, I want to present you with a little something. We --

MR. FRAIN: It's not a PT, paternity test; is it?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is --

MR. FRAIN: No.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is the year where I learned to shop in airports and at truck stops. So Jeff --

MR. FRAIN: Three quarters, please?

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: Now they're getting it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Get over here. So --

MR. FRAIN: I'm not getting near you ever again.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So this is just a little token of my --

MR. FRAIN: Don't hit --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- gavel back.

MR. FRAIN: Don't hit me with it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Just a little token for my super hero because he really, truly, in Hawaii and in -- going through Europe, the Sons of the American Legion were just the best. You couldn't have asked for any, even genetic, sons to be as kind as these guys were. So --

MR. FRAIN: We're doing genetic testing now?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: No, we're not. Biological.

MR. FRAIN: Biological testing?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The top you can open here. The bottom, you can take (indiscernible).

MR. FRAIN: Okay.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sorry, I don't want you to get embarrassed. And there's a card in there too.

MR. FRAIN: Which one? She says I can open them all if I don't mind getting embarrassed. Really? Look at the glasses I have on.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is from the airport.

MR. FRAIN: What is it?

I don't speak --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It says --

MR. FRAIN: -- German or French.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's an aftershave --

MR. FRAIN: Well, what are you saying?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- for your super -- look at this. For your super hero. For Superman.

(Applause.)

MR. FRAIN: Who-hoo!

PRESIDENT DAVIS: He was my Superman.

MR. FRAIN: I thought maybe she was saying I was stinking or something and I was like, "Okay."

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Well, enough hours on a bus, you know. Oh, no.

MR. FRAIN: Is this the embarrassing one?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes.

MR. FRAIN: Oh, hell no.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: But you have to try on the first two.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: He likes to golf.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is a daytime show.

MR. FRAIN: Well, you -- never mind.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: They said the first two balls -- you can push them up here.

MR. FRAIN: I can push the balls up that way?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: They come out.

MR. FRAIN: You're good at that.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I am.

MR. FRAIN: Oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Do you recognize those?

MR. FRAIN: Okay.

(Cheering.)

MR. FRAIN: At least they're not blue.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: At --

MR. FRAIN: It just popped.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Actually, the lovely pink balls are from your sons who asked that I make sure I gave them to you at an appropriate time.

MR. FRAIN: The bus would have worked better.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MR. FRAIN: You're bad.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Jeff.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Jeff, I think, for being with us today. We spent many hours on a bus. That's the story.

The ALA's relationship with USAA not only rewards you, it supports your department, the national organization, and our mission-outreach programs.

Here to tell you more about the program is USAA'S Military Affairs Relationship Director who joined the USAA team in 2007.

Please welcome Force Master Chief U.S. Navy Retired, Greg Pratt to the stage.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. PRATT: Okay. Well, good morning and I have to tell you before I start, I have to take a selfie with you all. Is that okay?

(Cheering.)

MR. PRATT: All right.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Do you need the box?

MR. PRATT: I can see you.

(Cheering.)

MR. PRATT: All right. We got to take one more so we can get this side in --

(Cheering.)

MR. PRATT: -- and this side. All right. So good morning.

VOICES: Good morning.

MR. PRATT: Hey, I'm going to get rolling, but, you know, I have to do a couple things before I do and I don't want to take a lot of your time, but I have to thank all of you, but I have to in particular point out the State of Pennsylvania because that's where I started my navy career --

(Applause.)

MR. PRATT: -- when I left home and I have to thank the State of Texas because that's where I got to and I'm at now.

(Applause.)

MR. PRATT: But I don't want to make light because all of you all are very, very important. Before I go any further though this morning, I really would like to send my thoughts and our hopefully, hopefully our thoughts and prayers to the families and the crew of the U.S.S. John McCain and those ten sailors that are currently missing over in the Singapore area. So my thoughts and prayers out to those families and sailors.

(Applause.)

MR. PRATT: But really this morning is an opportunity for me, for us, USAA, to thank you all. So good morning and it is great to be in Reno with you and I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. Now, I'm honored to be with you because you all do so much for veterans and their families in the communities that you and they live in, that we live in every day.

I'm very proud of being a Legion member. For those that inspired me over the course of my young life growing up in northwest Pennsylvania and that's what ended up making me and helping encourage me to join the navy in the mid '70s.

When you think about it, in the mid '70s right after the Vietnam War, the navy was in a very different place and during the late '70s and '80s we were growing our fleet and starting this new thing called the All Volunteer Force and I had a lot of folks that helped mentor me and turned me into what I'll call as a pretty good sailor.

I consider myself lucky that the navy kept me around for 30 years. You know, this young kid from northwest Pennsylvania. Having that opportunity to serve with the best of the best, travel the world and learn from so many people really meant a lot.

But really what it comes down to is learning from others and that's something I'd like to discuss briefly with you today. We think about the dedication that you, that others, put into and I had that instilled in me very young in my life, but really very young in my navy career and I want to talk about that a little bit.

You know, if you look up the word "dedication" in Webster it says, "A feeling of very strong support for loyalty to someone or something. The quality of state of being dedicated to a person, group or a cause." And when I read that definition and I look out in this room, you could take that definition and just put American Legion Auxiliary in there and that's the

definition. You're committed, you're dedicated to folks, to something greater than yourselves.

Like you, I was dedicated. I dedicated myself to my service and those that served alongside me and their families. So after transitioning from the navy, I wanted to continue to dedicate myself to the efforts of those currently serving, veterans and their families.

Today as a retired Force Master Chief working for USAA, I have the opportunity to travel around to many conferences, particularly a lot of navy conferences and coast guard bases and ships and talk to a lot of sailors and service members. One of the things I will tell you, and I'm asking this question often is what do I think of the future of the navy or the services in general and I would tell you it's very bright because of our young folks and their dedication and their desire to do -- serve something bigger than themselves.

And then you think about the family component. 55 percent of our young service members, 55 percent of our service members in general, are married today. 55 percent and it takes that family unit to continue to support, but when I go to a navy boot camp and I look at the young men and women, they want to make a difference. They want to join and it takes a family, but I see you all as that family that helps make that possible as well. Again, this brings me back to you.

The key, you're the key, and one of the keys, to those that wore the uniform or wear the uniform and they continue to -- you continue to dedicate yourselves and your time, and your efforts towards those serving, veterans and their families and you do that through your many programs.

A quote I recently read from an unknown person talks about dedication. "Dedication is not what others expect of you. It is what you give to others," and that is what you do through your many programs and you know what they are. But it's, you know, Girls State, Girls Nation and the many family programs that you provide and you provide that future for those who have served, those who are serving, their families and those communities in which they live.

When I look into the eyes of a young service member or a spouse, I see dedication and desire and I will tell you often someone from the Legion, someone from the Auxiliary or one of your programs has touched that individual just as it did me in the '70s when I decided to join the navy. I was inspired by those around me in a small northwest town of Pennsylvania.

They, because of you, are often that -- have that same drive, determination and dedication that they saw in you or were affected by your programs. There isn't one -- just one story that we could tell today, but many. Each of us could stand up today and tell a story about someone that we know, a service member or a family member that through pure dedication made a difference in the battlefield or back home helping others, helping them adjust, reacquaint, helping them transition.

As you all well know, spouses become both parents when the service member is deployed and spouses, you all, make that difference. The Auxiliary makes that difference because often you're asked to help out

where there's an extra need, an extra hand. So families make it possible, you make it possible, for those that are serving, those that have served to be able to do what they do.

When I look at the American Legion Auxiliary, I look at a group that had and has the dedication to serve alongside those who wore and who wear the uniform and continue to serve through your dedication to the Auxiliary, veterans and their families.

You know, as I've said a little bit, I have the privilege today to work for a company who does know what it means to serve. Yes, USAA. And when I see the American Legion Auxiliary and USAA, I see us two organizations that are dedicated to those serving, those that have served and their families and the goal and desire is always continue to inspire, dedicate and do what we do for those serving and the veterans and families through the various programs. I call it making a difference through our dedication.

Ladies, I don't want to -- and gentleman -- I don't want to take anymore of your time, but I do appreciate the opportunity to be here today and I'll simply say in closing, I want to offer a quote from Pat Tillman, football star, who joined the Army Rangers shortly after 9/11 and was killed in action in Afghanistan.

"A passion for life is contagious and uplifting. Passion cuts both ways. I want to create passion in my own life and with those I care for. I want to feel, experience and live every emotion. I will suffer for the bad for the heights of the good." Think about those words. You make a dedication for what you do for your organization and then your -- that affects others to do it. Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for your passion. Thank you for your continued vision in supporting veterans, their families and your communities.

Thank you for having me here today. I see us being able to make things even better for those that are serving, have served and their families together. You make a difference. Thank you for your patriotism.

May God bless each one of you. May God bless all those currently serving around our world, veterans, their families and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you and have a great convention.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much. I appreciate it. I got it. I do it with my toes.

MR. PRATT: Okay.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Greg.

Here with us today is Melody Wang our 2017 Girls Nation President, from Georgia.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Melody is a rising senior at George Washington Comprehensive High School. She was elected by her peers to serve as the 71st President of the ALA Girls Nation. She's involved in student government and volunteers with the Cobb County Public Library and the Atlanta Community Food Bank. From Marietta, Georgia, please welcome Melody Wang!

(Music.)

(Applause.)

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

You want to move that or do you want to stand? You can stand up on it.

MS. WANG: Okay.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay.

MS. WANG: Of course. Good morning, everybody. What an honor it is for me to be here at the 2017 National Convention in Reno and to be speaking to you all this morning.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Just start. Just take it out.

MS. WANG: Take it out? Thank you.

Before I begin, I would like to say thank you to a few people. Thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary for providing me with both the opportunities of Girls State and Girls Nation. I would like to say thank you for the American Legion and the Sons of the American Legion for letting me be a part of the American Legion family.

I would also like to say thank you to the American Legion Auxiliary of Georgia.

(Applause.)

MS. WANG: And to my ALA Unit #29 back home in Marietta, Georgia.

(Applause.)

MS. WANG: And of course, I have to thank my family, especially my mom who's accompanied me here this weekend. None of my success would be possible without their unconditional love and support.

So I'd like to start my speech with a simple question. What is the American dream? It's a term we throw around, but none of us really know what it is. When my parents left their homeland 25 years ago leaving behind all friends and family, they wanted to pursue that dream. They wanted to live somewhere where they could actually make enough money to buy a home, to buy a car and even buy a toy for my brother who was three years old at the time for the holiday season.

They wanted to live somewhere where they could vote for their public officials and actually have a say in their government and they wanted to pursue that American dream so that they could have better lives, and this is why I believe we live in the greatest country on earth, because of the opportunities offered in America, the opportunity to become successful, to make a difference in this world and because of these opportunities, I stand before you as a daughter of two immigrants as President of Girls Nation.

(Applause.)

MS. WANG: I've been inspired by my parents' story, so I've dedicated myself to public service and become their mouthpiece to politics. I've met with the Lieutenant Governor of Georgia and discussed state-level legislation. I've met with the Director of the National Geospatial-

Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C. to discuss some of the most pressing National Security issues today and I've also met the former Vice President of the United States Joe Biden --

(Cheering.)

MS. WANG: -- during my tenure as a United States Senate Page. But perhaps what is most integral to my life so far has been Girls State and Girls Nation. To say that those were life changing experiences would be an understatement.

Through paying our respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery and singing songs in the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater, my pride for this country and patriotism had been strengthened and reinforced.

Through the mock Senate sessions that we had, I learned to appreciate the beauty of our democracy and the legislative process and although hearing a Holocaust survivor speak and meeting the President of the United States were certainly highlights of my week, my favorite memory was the process of gaining 99 sisters at Girls Nation and making friendships that will last a lifetime.

And now, I can safely say that I have at least two friends in at least every state of this country.

(Applause.)

MS. WANG: Being surrounded by these inspiring, empowering young women was such an incredible honor. It renewed my faith in that the future of this country is in very safe hands and for that, I will be forever grateful to the American Legion Auxiliary.

Thank you for this once in a lifetime opportunity to be the 71st ALA Girls Nation President. Thank you all. May God bless you and God bless the United States of America.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Go ahead and take your bag. So I would like to present you with a little token of our appreciation of a job well done --

MS. WANG: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- and a memory from Girls State. You can open it if you want. Oh, it's got the ribbon all the way around.

MS. WANG: Oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You have to slide it off. There you go. Let me hold this for you. There you go.

MS. WANG: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I'll get the bottom. Oh, this is fancy.

MS. WANG: It's fancy, yeah.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I'll hold your speech.

MS. WANG: Thank you. Ooh, beautiful. It's a bracelet.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And I think it says Girls Nation

President.

MS. WANG: Yes, thank you. Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So it's a little bracelet for her.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You can go.

MS. WANG: Thank you so much. It means a lot. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: (Indiscernible).

MS. WANG: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Oh.

MS. WANG: Sorry about that.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's okay.

MS. WANG: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: For decades, our volunteer efforts have supported the programs that bring us the American Legion Family Youth Champions. Please welcome your 2017 American Legion Youth Champions:

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please welcome from Chester, Virginia your American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team Captain, Adam Conway.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: From Phoenix City, Alabama your 2017 Boys Nation President, Darius Thomas.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: From Colorado Springs, Colorado please welcome our Junior Shooting Sports 2017 Precision Champion, Emily Smith.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Representing Zion Benton NJROTC, from Zion, Illinois, please welcome our Junior Shooting Sports 2017 Sporter Champion, Hailey Smith.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: From Newton, Massachusetts, please welcome your 2017 National Oratorical Contest winner, Andrew Steinberg.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Let's all give these amazing young men and women a round of applause.

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Youth Champions, thank you for being with us today and thank you Shayne Abrahams, the Assistant Director of The American Legion's Americanism Division. Shayne works so hard on these important projects -- programs and is responsible for the Youth Champions visiting our stage today. We thank you, Shayne.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation are premier programs of our organization that serve to inspire and educate young women. From participating in service projects and mock court

trials to senate sessions and electing officers, these programs encourage bright young women to take their places as future leaders of our country.

Let us welcome ALA Girls State -- National Girls State and Girls Nation Committee Chairman, Melanie Taylor.

(Music.)

MS. TAYLOR: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President Mary, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Chairman across the country continue to provide the best leadership program for their ALA Girls State delegates thus making American Legion Auxiliary Girls State our most prestigious program.

Many departments reported an increase in the number of delegates attending simply by reaching out to their community business to solicit donations for sponsorship to their ALA Girls State programs. Modern technology was embraced with online registration and electronic voting being utilized in many departments this year.

Every department reported a mission-based service project at their ALA Girls State session. These projects included folding pocket flags to be sent to our troops serving in Afghanistan, collecting canned goods to be delivered to their local food banks, providing laundry items and personal care supplies to long-term care patients in VA hospitals and donations were made in supporting the USO.

The ALA Girls Nation senators also participated in their special project, Stitches of Love. This project provided cotton fabric that will be used to create homemade Christmas stockings for our active duty military and veterans both domestically and internationally. Stitches of Love is a group that works with the Landstuhl Hospital Care Project in Landstuhl, Germany.

Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary was promoted all throughout the ALA Girls State sessions.

(Cheering.)

MS. TAYLOR: Junior members who attended as delegates were recognized as part of the membership awareness. Membership applications were included in the delegate's packets and many program fairs were held throughout the week including a table where the membership chairman asked trivia questions about membership requirements.

In Connecticut, members of the Connecticut General Assemblies Legislative Commissioners Office came and taught the delegates proper procedure and guidance for writing bills.

Maine's New England School of Communication offered their staff and technology to establish the first ALA Durico (phonetic) Girls State News Team. Reporters produced news briefs that were shown during the daily assemblies.

The Department of California Fifth District ALA Girls State luncheon was honored with National President Mary's visit. The delegates and Auxiliary members were excited for the opportunity to meet President

Mary and I must say she enjoyed working in the kitchen serving up ice cream and cookies.

Once again, ALA Girls Nation was held at the National 4H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland from July 22nd through the 29th. We were pleased to host the brightest and most talented young ladies from all 50 states. These 100 senators spent their week debating bills and resolutions as well as seeing some of the Washington, D.C. sites.

New this year to ALA Girls Nation was electronic voting. We were able to purchase the voting key pads and software for future ALA Girls Nation sessions making senate voting a smooth process.

Some of the weeks highlights of ALA Girls Nation including laying a poppy wreath at Arlington National Cemetery, singing patriotic songs on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, touring the Holocaust Museum Memorial and Nancy Goden, a Holocaust survivor spoke to them later that evening.

On Wednesday, the senators made a trip of a lifetime. A visit to the White House and meeting the President of the United States. Capitol Hill where the senators met with their respective U.S. senators and representatives and the week ended with a candlelight service allowing the senators and staff to reflect on the week's events and then the grand finale, the ice cream social filled with fun, music and laughter.

Madam President, as you can see, the ALA Girls State and Girls Nation programs instilled an awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission and the goals of our centennial plan. Thank you for suggesting the soft serve ice cream on your final evening in California.

madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. You did so well. I hope I'm in order here.

Melanie, I had such a great time at Girls Nation! Thank you for your support!

MS. TAYLOR: You're welcome.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This year, American Legion Auxiliary members demonstrated pride in protecting, caring for, and supporting our children and youth, particularly those of veterans and military families. Here to share all the wonderful ways our departments and units used their own creativity and generosity to engage our children and youth is National Committee Chairman Nicole Clapp.

(Music.)

MS. CLAPP: Madam National President, ALA member pride was demonstrated daily to protect, care for and support our children in youth and as you said, particularly those of our veterans and military families.

American Legion Auxiliary members focused on our children and youth's physical, emotion and social needs and wants this year. Basic human needs were met with food, warmth of clothing and shelter to children in Kentucky with their Dignity Bag program.

In Alton, New Hampshire, the ALA Fights End 68 Hours of Hunger, the number of hours between the free lunch children receive at school on Friday until breakfast on Monday morning.

Safety and security were of utmost importance. Utilizing the American Legion's Safe Halloween information and "Bridging the Gap" comic books to identify youth who are the silent victims of neglect, abuse and bullying.

Children and animals have a natural connection. Seen here, 18-year-old Drew Moffitt of Twin Falls, Idaho --

(Cheering.)

MS. CLAPP: -- was a Good Deed awardee. He and his pet alpaca named Sprite visit healthcare centers as a method of pet therapy. Clinger the horse and Josh Dogs brought smiles across American to military children throughout the year. One Arizona unit, post and SAL coordinated a petting zoo for military families.

(Cheering.)

MS. CLAPP: The Easter Bunny and his ALA helpers in Logan and Chapmanville, West Virginia were very busy when two units teamed up to hide 20,000 Easter eggs.

(Cheering.)

MS. CLAPP: Yes, I said 20,000 for a combined population of just over 3,000 people. I bet the children are still hunting for all those decorated acts of love. And by the way, they also provided over 100 bicycles and more than 500 chocolate bunnies.

Additional emphasis this year centered on the Military Child Table-Setting Ceremony performed countless times across America reminding individuals, kids of deployed, are heroes too. I presented the Table-Setting Ceremony at the American Legion Children and Youth Conference last fall with the assistance of two juniors and SAL members.

In April, Indiana showed their purple love --

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: -- for military kids pride by selling t-shirts to mark this very important occasion. Every four years, our country stops and appreciates our democratic process. During this presidential election and inauguration year, American Legion Auxiliary members shaped our youth through educational opportunities.

Star Spangled Kids learned about the United States Constitution and our country's heritage accompanied by flag etiquette presentations. Using the School House Rock Constitution Preamble cartoon was a very creative and fun way to learn in the department of New York while high school students in Nebraska painted a mural of the flag raising at Iwo Jima as part of a local veterans memorial.

Weekly, units recognized our youth citizens' heroic and generous efforts of service not self with Youth Hero and Good Deed awards. Year-to-date there have been over 13 Youth Hero awards and more than 113 youth have been honored with Good Deed awards.

(Applause.)

MS. CLAPP: Every day that goes by, events and activities related to children and youth programs supporting children and youth in our communities, supporting military children and youth, supporting addressing American Legion Auxiliary units across America were the youth that we've addressed.

So Katina, the Children and Youth Department Chairman of Massachusetts shared so eloquently, members empowered and encouraged mentored children and youth in their community. In our busy lives it is often easy to overlook the talents, strengths, humor and kindness our youth have to shape with the world.

Our moment -- one moment with a child or a teen that you take to listen or impart your wisdom can make an impact that lasts a lifetime. Thank you all for letting our youth know that they can do anything they set their mind on and they are not alone. Time will tell, but planting a seed often turns into a magnificent thing of beauty.

I believe this is truly demonstrated by three-and-a-half year-old Kyrie an SAL member of Maine showing he knows what to do.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Nicole.

Our Legion family's concern for our nation's youth is first and foremost the mission of the Child Welfare Foundation. Each year the Foundation Board reviews hundreds of grant applications from worthy non-profit youth-oriented organizations. Representing the American Legion Auxiliary to the Liaison to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and reporting this year is Past National President Vice Chairman, Kris West.

And I said before, Linda Newsome is indisposed right now, but she'll be back with us as soon as she can.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: Madam National President, pride in our American Legion family and all members, that certainly describes our work with the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The American Legion Auxiliary is proud of its participation and support of the American Legion's foremost priority in educating the public about the needs of children across the nation, the Child Welfare Foundation.

Established in 1954, Child Welfare Foundation has awarded nearly 15 Million -- yes, an M, million -- in grants to assist America's children.

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: Thank you. During the 2017 calendar year, 144 grant applications were received for consideration by the foundation's board. The board's Screening Committee recommended awarding 20 grants totaling \$618,606.

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: The American Legion Auxiliary sponsored four grants and an additional three with the Sons of the American Legion. Among the recipients is Angels & Doves of Indianapolis, Indiana which was -

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: -- \$19,900 for its project, Reduce School Bullying and Youth Violence which will provide an anti-bullying program for high risk school districts.

Another award, Bethany Christian Services of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: They were awarded \$25,000 for its project Post-Adoption Support for Military Families Awareness Campaign which will contribute to the mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children adopted by military families.

Books Allowed of San Jose, California was awarded \$10,000 for its projects Books Allowed Youth Program. This project will serve children who can't read conventionally due to blindness, visual impairment or a physical or learning disability. A grant of \$60,000 for its project Hope Binder was awarded to the Childhood Leukemia foundation of Brick, New Jersey.

(Cheering.)

MS. WEST: This project will offer 12 sections of templates and resources to help families begin to feel a degree of control over their circumstances. CURESEARCH for children's cancer of Bethesda, Maryland was awarded \$22,250 for its project, Childhood Cancer Educational Video and companion E-Book. This project will create a video about features, personal stories and education content.

Mercy Medical Angels of Virginia Beach, Virginia was awarded \$45,000 for its project Angel Flights for Children which will increase the number of volunteer pilots available to transport children requiring specializing medical care of healthcare facilities that provide the treatment necessary for that child.

Located in McLean, Virginia, our military kids was awarded \$56,055 for its project In Their Own Voice: Military Children Tell Their Stories. This grant will enhance outreach and marketing efforts of the organization.

Contributions to the foundation this year totaled \$692,798, an increase over last year. Sons of the American Legion led the way once again with contributions totaling \$496,752. Bringing them to an incredible total of over \$7 Million since their first contribution. That's awesome!

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: Contributions of \$107,992 were received from the American Legion which was followed by the Auxiliary contributing a total of \$56,571. Thank you all --

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: -- to the great work of the American Legion family. Together with other contributions and requests brought the total to \$692,798. So with these funds and your continued support of the Child Welfare Foundation, we were able to be proud of our support and our dollars to help the children of our nation.

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

Megan Sweet, marine veteran and legionnaire from the Department of Indiana joined the Legion's headquarters staff in 2015. She currently serves as Assistant Director of the Americanism Division.

Joining Megan on stage is a very special friend of mine and of Dia Linda's, Herbie J. Petit, Jr. is a Vietnam veteran, combat veteran --

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: -- who served in the United States Marine Corp from 1966 to 1969. He joined the American Legion, Ed Brauner Post 307 in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1972. He has been active in the post, district and Department and served as Department Commander for the 2012, 2013 American Legion year.

When I served as National President -- this is Linda speaking now -- was my unofficial aid through the official National Commander Phil Detweiler. Herbie has served as Chairman of Louisiana Department Children and Youth Commission for 30 years.

(Applause.)

MS. WEST: In 2004, he received the National Children and Youth Chairman of the Year Award. Herbie currently is a member of the Board of Directors of the Child Welfare Foundation. Please give me a nice warm welcome for Herbie Petit. Herbie?

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Madam President, Past National Presidents, distinguished guests, fellow delegates and guests, good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MR. PETIT: It's indeed an honor to stand before you this morning representing the Child Welfare Foundation Board and our President Dennis Boland and the Commission members. We know we're going to give out awards in a few minutes, but I just want to say on behalf of Dennis and the board members, thank you everyone in the Departments for the hard work that was taken with the donations for the Child Welfare Foundation.

I realize Chris just gave you some numbers and I also realized that the Auxiliary needs to get these numbers in like two months before the convention.

So what I'm going to do now is bring you up to date with some final numbers. The donations for 2016/17 program year totaled \$886,637.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Like always, the SALs beat the Legion and the Auxiliary. Their donations was \$594,414.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: The Auxiliary's donations, \$86,993.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: And the Legion, \$170,640.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Now, for the 2017 grant, we will have a meeting on October 8 and we received a total of 147 grants. Out of that 147, we have a cap on how much money we're going to spend and the number of non-profit organizations that we'll give to.

In closing, let me just remind everyone that the Child Welfare booth is Nos. 203 and 302 and it's right down at the exhibit hall naturally on Foundation Row. If you get a chance when the meeting is over with, please stop by, say hello. Of course, drop a little donation in.

MR. PETIT: We got some great shirts this year. Nice little off red shirt. You might have saw it in the parade yesterday. They're only \$20 and it's got the logo and we got pockets this year, so.

(Cheering.)

MR. PETIT: Thank you. Thank you. With no further ado, now we get to the good part, giving out the awards. The first award Excellence Award, achieving the highest per capita giving in 2016/2017, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wyoming.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: No problem. Great job, Wyoming!

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: The second award, the Meritorious Achievement Award having the highest increase in per capita giving for the 2016/17 year, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Wisconsin.

(Cheering.)

MR. PETIT: All right, Wisconsin!

(Music.)

(Applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No one ever gets an award by themselves. The State of Wisconsin works hard and will continue to do that. I love you every single one of you out there. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Great job.

Udie Grant Legacy Award, 2016/2017, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Arizona.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: In recognition outstanding support of the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, the board thanks you. Great job, Arizona!

Thank you, my dear.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, so much.

MR. PETIT: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sure. I just want to thank the Department of Arizona. Go (indiscernible)!

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: This is a heavy one. Okay. The last award, the Garland M. Murphy, Jr. Award presented to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation American Legion Auxiliary to the Department of Florida.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Great program near Department of Florida. You're going to make a speech. Wait.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was told I have to speak, but I want to say thank you so much Florida. You rock! We work so hard. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PETIT: Great job, Florida! And like I said earlier, you know, we got four winners, but a big thank you to everyone out there who really worked hard for the Child Welfare Foundation this year. You know, 886 plus thousand dollars, that's not bad.

In closing, Madam President can you come up here for a second?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sure.

MR. PETIT: I have one of our prestigious --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Oh, wow.

MR. PETIT: -- lapel pins. It's got five little diamonds in it and it's all yours.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MR. PETIT: Appreciate it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Worthy cause.

MR. PETIT: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MR. PETIT: Thank you, very much. Let me get this out your way.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, John for being with us today and thank you award winners.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is beautiful.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here's your script.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Joining me next -- I'm sorry -- is the leader of the Nation's largest veterans organization. The American Legion National Commander Charles Schmidt was elected during the 98th American Legion national convention.

Charles enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1965 and served on active duty until his retirement in 1993. As an active-duty service member, he

joined Story-Hardin Unit 164 in Craig, Missouri and in 1984 -- in 1984, later transferring his membership to Harney County Post 63 in Burns, Oregon.

As an American Legion PUFL member, Commander Schmidt served as the Department of Oregon commander from 2004-2005, and has served at every level of the Legion, including National Executive Committeeman from 2005-2016.

While serving in the Air Force, he earned several accolades including a Bronze Star and a Joint Service Commendation Medal. Please welcome, from the great state of Oregon, National Commander Charles Schmidt.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MR. SCHMIDT: Good morning!

ALL: Good morning.

MR. SCHMIDT: I am honored to be here at the 97th National Convention of the largest patriotic women's organization in the United States -- actually, in the world --

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: -- the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: I have to ask for forgiveness right up front because my schedule says I only get five minutes, so if I run six or seven, please forgive me. But I want to bring you greetings on behalf of over 2 Million American Legion Members. As you know, down the hall and around the corner we're having -- preparing for our 99th National Convention and I know today is a very important day. We got some eclipsers watching science and nature, but you know, the really big show is right here in this convention center, the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: The American Legion's 99th National Convention is going to be very historic. It's going to be historic for a couple reasons. First of all, on Wednesday, the nice -- or the President of the United States of America, as many presidents have done before, will come and address the convention and it's going to be after those comments that he presents that there on the stage of the American Legion he is going to sign into legislation the Appeals Modernization Bill, a bill that the American Legion and American Legion family has been fighting for some time to streamline that process of veterans who have been waiting far too long --

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: -- of just hearing a yes or a no.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: A concern of ours that we never gave up and that's what the American Legion family does and I believe many of you had a part in sharing your voice on behalf of that bill and together we're going to witness history because I don't think in the history of any veterans service organization that the President of the United States came to their stage and signed a bill into effect. It is going to be historic.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: And secondly, on Thursday, as we normally do, we elect our next National Commander and that too is going to be big time historic.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: The American Legion is going to elect its first lady National Commander in the 98-year history.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: And I got to tell you, she is ready to go. She's been ready and everybody, we're all going to get behind her because we got a lot of challenges ahead of us and we'll take them as they come, but the American Legion will stand steadfast in our resolve to take care of veterans, take care of their families and stand up for the greatest country in the world, our United States of America!

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: That's who we are! Now, it's kind of a bittersweet occasion here that I come and kind of say, at least while we're in office or as we're about to go out of office, farewell to President Mary. I, again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve with Mary.

We've had a great time this year and we've traveled a lot of miles together. We traveled the Pacific starting out in the Department of the Philippines and, of course, Department of the Philippines includes several other Departments or several other islands, rather.

Not only the Department of the -- the islands of the Philippines, but Korea, Okinawa and then we also happen to stop in at Guam and visit that American Legion family --

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: -- which is part of Department of Alaska and, of course, this spring we went to the Department of France which also includes several countries. Ireland, England, Germany, France, Belgium and I believe the Netherlands is in there too.

But together along with National Commander of Sons of the American Legion Jeff Frain, we carried the American Legion flags, the family flags, and we shared our stories together talking to home -- talking to town hall meetings of veterans, retired veterans, talking to active duty men and women wearing the uniform of our services and we told them and shared with them the American Legion story because many of them were yet to hear about the American Legion family and we had an awesome time.

And of course, we paid our respects on D Day to Normandy to those hundreds of veterans who are interred in those beautiful cemeteries that will never come home. The American Legion Auxiliary was there and your President was right along side us. She done a great job.

So Mary, again it's bittersweet. It's been an honor and a pleasure and, you know, in the west we have the saying, "The west is the best".

(Cheering.)

MR. SCHMIDT: Of course, we serve everybody.

But actually, we call Washington northern Oregon, so.  
(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: But Mary, if you would come forward and is the first dude around? Dale? Dale, is you around? Until he gets here.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Here I am.

MR. SCHMIDT: And if I could have the first lady of the American Legion, my wife Linda, join us.

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: Mary, it's been a great ride and we've enjoyed every minute of it and Linda and I would like to leave a little appreciation for what you've done not only for the American Legion family, but specifically what you've done for the American Legion Auxiliary.

So if you'd like to open up that if the --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Oh, my.

MR. SCHMIDT: -- agenda will allow you time.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sure.

MR. SCHMIDT: And is Dale here?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: No. I don't know where he's at.

That's why Jeff was here to take his place, right? You don't know what Jeff said. Whoop! It was. All right. Those who know me know I'm really bad about not ripping paper.

MS. SCHMIDT: Oh, just rip it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I know.

VOICES: Rip it, Mary! Come on. Just rip it!

MS. SCHMIDT: Just rip it!

VOICES: Come on, Mary! Rip it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: There, I didn't rip too much.

MR. SCHMIDT: It's a long way 'til Christmas, so just rip it.

Careful with that.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's gorgeous. Wow.

VOICES: Ooh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's beautiful.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Let's get a picture of (indiscernible).

Let's go down over here. Thank you guys, dearly. He's going to take a picture of us over here. Hold on.

MS. SCHMIDT: What?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: He's going to take a picture of us.

Turn left.

MS. SCHMIDT: You and Charles.

MR. SCHMIDT: (Indiscernible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yeah, I don't want -- no, you too!

MS. SCHMIDT: All right. Good, God.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I have something for you too.

MR. SCHMIDT: This year I've eaten so much apple pie. I've ate more apple pie this year because, of course, that was printed in the

American Legion magazine that one of my favorite foods is apple pie. I've eaten more apple pie this year than I have in my lifetime, but on occasion, Mary got to help me eat some of that pie.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yeah, when I thought he had finished the whole half of the pie, he gave it back to me.

Just -- no, I got it. So Charlie, Commander, I have a little something for you because I know you live in the country. Well, Burns is like outback.

MR. SCHMIDT: Outback.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The only post in the --

MR. SCHMIDT: Largest county.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- district? In the largest county.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So here's a little something. It came from Jeff's -- it didn't come from an airport. It came from Commander Jeff's homecoming.

MR. SCHMIDT: Oh. Okay.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So there's a card for you.

MR. SCHMIDT: I guess I'll open it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And there's a card in there.

MR. SCHMIDT: Ah.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You need to sort of (indiscernible).

MR. SCHMIDT: Oh. Oh, oh, oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's all great. I guarantee you. Well, you're just throwing it on the floor. I'll pull if you make sure it's undone here.

MR. SCHMIDT: Oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Just take these off.

MS. SCHMIDT: Oh.

MR. SCHMIDT: Oh, wow.

MS. SCHMIDT: Oh, wow.

MR. SCHMIDT: Looky there!

(Applause.)

MR. SCHMIDT: Oh. Thank you, Mary.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You're welcome.

MR. SCHMIDT: Thank you so much. Now, I'll have to find a place to hang this one too. Wonderful. Beautiful. Thank you, Mary and we have a little something for Dale whenever he shows up, so. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I also have -- you're welcome. I also have something for Linda and that's Charlie's. I won't open it. I'll let you open it.

Close to the airport is where I got this.

MS. SCHMIDT: I didn't hear that.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I tried to tell them I went shopping and I got to do this in airports.

MS. SCHMIDT: Oh, oh.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: There's something inside too.

MS. SCHMIDT: Oh, that's beautiful.

VOICES: Ooh.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Well, is it going to fall off? Oh, all right.

MS. SCHMIDT: "North Dakota Nurses Over There". Very nice. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: If I could (indiscernible) who did the World War I (indiscernible). We've enjoyed that. There you go and here's your card.

MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you all so much. I appreciate you. All right. Thank you, Charlie.

MR. SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mary. It was a good year and we'll see you around the stage area.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yep, yep.

MR. SCHMIDT: Thank you. God Bless you and have a great convention!

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I was feeling short.

So I told you earlier that our Past National President Linda Newsome was a little indisposed. I'll tell you a little bit more. Linda Newsome was so excited about National Convention that her heart went aflutter. So she's not with us today while she has a little procedure to unflutter her heart. I know you'll join with me in wishing her well.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It is my pleasure to introduce the 2017 Convention Corporation President Mr. John Warden.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: (Indiscernible).

MR. WARDEN: Good morning!

ALL: Good morning.

MR. WARDEN: As a marine, I've always learned to make things short and get out there and do the job. Madam President, on behalf of the Department of Nevada and the city of Reno, the biggest little city in the world, I would like to welcome all Auxiliary ladies and their guests to Nevada.

I've been informed by my Little Misses that the ladies enjoy shopping. Nearby for your enjoyment are three outstanding shopping venues. The Summit at South Reno, Meadowood Mall which is close to the convention center and the Legends Outlet in Sparks. I hope you've had a time to enjoy them.

Besides enjoying the sites, sounds and the lights and glitter of this wonderful and great city and its wonderful restaurants, I hope you had time to go back to the silver state's mining days and visit Virginia City, a

national historic district and the state capital of Carson City with its railroad and state's museums.

Besides our battle-born history that has some of the most awe-inspiring national scenery that you'll ever see in our snow-capped mountains known as the Sierra Nevada. And of course, Lake Tahoe, one of the largest alpine lakes in the world. A ride on the gondola at Heavenly will give you an awe-inspiring view of the lake.

Have a wonderful 97th Annual Convention, come again, come often and thank you for coming.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, John. I appreciate it.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you John for being with us today.

Now let's welcome our Junior Member of the Year Cassidy Jones from the department of Connecticut!

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. JONES: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. JONES: Thank you so much for this incredible honor inviting me here. I bring greetings from the Department of Connecticut Juniors. I truly feel so blessed to be part of such a wonderful organization that set such inspiring examples for young people like me.

I would like to thank the Department of Connecticut President Marge Sunbury and President Elect Laura Santino for making me feel like an important part of the Department and not just a kid.

(Applause.)

MS. JONES: By making me feel included, I have been more willing to put myself out there and have achieved more of my goals. I'd also like to thank Past Department President and Gulford Unit 48 President Julie Carney for being such a great mentor.

By teaching me what the organization is about it has opened up new experiences for me and has taught me an important lesson, service not self. This is a lesson that will be carried in my heart throughout my life. I would especially like to thank my mom for always being there for me, setting such a wonderful example and inspiring me every day.

All of these people, including all of you wonderful American Legion member -- American Legion Auxiliary members remind me of a famous quote by Winston Churchill. "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give". Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Cassidy.  
(Indiscernible). So I have a little something for you. It's called an "Umbrella". Have you heard of those?

MS. JONES: No.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So this is it. Let me show you how it works. Let's go over here and get a picture taken. We'll put it behind us.

Come over here a little bit. It's not your typical umbrella. You get to do this (indiscernible). It says "American Legion Auxiliary".

MS. JONES: Oh, that is so cool.

(Indiscernible). UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mary, turn and

(Indiscernible). PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. All the way through.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: (Indiscernible).

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This year Juniors had the opportunity to attend not one, but 6 national junior meetings which meant we were able to reach more Juniors! Attendees were enthusiastic as they participated in a variety of leadership activities, including flag folding and poppy making. Here to tell us more is National Junior Activities Committee Chairman, Pam Ray.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Madam National President Mary, from coast to coast Juniors have been showing their member pride this year. From Maine to California and North Dakota to Texas, our Juniors have been serving our veterans and active military. Great teamwork made us 100 percent in reporting both at mid-year and at the end of the year.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: It takes all of us to make it happen, so a huge thank you goes out to all division and Department Chairman. Because of these reports, I am able to share so many exciting programs being supported by our Juniors. Jean Haverhill from Unit 28 in the --

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- Department of Delaware won a \$500 grant from the Walt Disney Company for her project, "Home of the Brave Foundation" barbeque event held in conjunction with Earth Day. Jean will use this grant to hold her barbeque again next year and she had the help of many Juniors in her unit.

These girls also folded pocket flags for the Home of the Brave Foundation, a transitional living facility for homeless veterans. Wyoming Juniors are holding bake sales, making holiday cards for veterans and participating in an "Adopt a Vet" program where each Junior has a veteran secret pal.

South Carolina Juniors held a free car wash for police and fire personnel to say thank you for their service to the community. The Department of Kentucky Juniors had great fun with National President Mary. Who would have thought that those same Juniors would have assisted a local food pantry --

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- in making 20,000 macaroni and cheese dinners.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Yeah, 20,000. The Department of Texas Juniors filled and distributed Socks of Love for homeless veterans.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And I'm sure you're wondering, "Why is there a picture of a carrot?" The Department of Wisconsin Juniors set a goal of raising \$3,000 for the vets program, Veterans Equine Trail Services, an organization that has helped over 650 veterans by providing free horse therapy in a non-judgmental environment. They have far exceeded that initial goal.

Atlantic County Juniors, Department of New Jersey --  
(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- were very busy all year. They stuff and distributed backpacks to area kids in need. They had a cookie drive and sent cookies to the troops and they collected items and sent Easter boxes to the troops as well. Way to go Atlantic County, New Jersey!

Wolla Dicks Unit 315 of Burlington Junction, Missouri --  
(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- has 34 active Juniors that truly put together an impressive 424.5 activity hours with projects like having a bake sale to help pay other Juniors' dues. What a way to enhance membership and promote an internal culture of goodwill. In the fall, they all brought some type of item to put into a blessing mix. Then they took a hay back ride through town to deliver the blessings to citizens of their community.

And what a fun project to put together Mayday boxes and deliver them to the veterans. The secret, don't let them see who delivers it and I would certainly make a contribution to the Poppy Program if someone this excited came to my door. What a great way to promote leadership, service and branding by adopting a highway and keeping it clean.

Wolla Dicks Unit 315 Juniors are a great example of working our strategic plan. As you can see, our Juniors are very busy. This year, three new patches have been developed. Star Spangled Kids is a Level II or gold level only patch. The former red and gold national security patch has been renamed the Community and Family Safety Patch while the blue level national security patch has been redesigned to focus more on the ALA National Security Program. We hope this better prepares our older girls to move on to the senior level with more information on the programs.

This year we have also worked to make our patch program American Legion family friendly by offering this program to young SAL members.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Thank you. Many of our Juniors -- many of our Juniors have brothers in the SAL and they're working, so why not receive the patch for their work as well. This year we had six National Division Junior meetings and they were so exciting. We have 144 amazing young women attend meetings this year and they were able to meet some female soldiers that taught them everything from why they chose the military to how to salute and how to do a proper push-up.

They even got us involved in that one day. The girls were very respectful and asked very thoughtful questions. They also had the opportunity to hear the poppy story --

(Cheering.)

MS. RAY: -- write thank you cards to our veterans and participate in a Socks of Love relay to fill socks for the homeless. All of these socks remained in their division for distribution. Next year, we hope to see many more Juniors at our division meetings. The meetings will once again be held along with mission training, so please check your dates and location and plan to bring your Juniors.

Juniors who attended a division meeting this year voted for next year's honorary Junior Vice Presidents for their division and the results are as follows: Central Division, Deanna Woodburn Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Eastern Division, Delaney Oliver Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Northwestern Division, Courtney Rogat Department of Minnesota.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Southern Division, Kayla Scott Department of Texas.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And Western Division, Rachel Yei, Department of Utah.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: Congratulations to our retiring honorary Junior Vice President. Thanks to President Mary's focus on scholarships, each of those young ladies will be receiving a \$2,000 scholarship.

(Applause.)

MS. RAY: And once again, congratulations to Junior Member of the Year, Cassidy Jones from Connecticut. So many accomplishments in her young history. I can only imagine what she will do for the American Legion Auxiliary.

Madam President, with the Juniors I have gotten to meet this year and heard about through reports, I know that our organization has great hope for the future.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Great job.

MS. RAY: Thank you so much. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Pam.

For nearly 50 years, due primarily to generous legacy gifts from our members, American Legion Auxiliary has been able to offer temporary grant assistance to members in need keeping the promise not only to our veterans, but to our members. Please welcome National Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee Chairman, Lisa Williamson.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: You really don't want to hear me sing.

Thank you, Madam National President Mary. "What's your why?" At the Washington, D.C. conference and again at the opening ceremony, we were challenged with that question, "What's your why?" Why do we as American Legion Auxiliary members do what we do? Why do we support the mission of helping our veterans, our military and their families? Why do we support our own members?

German philosopher Frederich Nietzsche once said, "He who has a why can endure any how". Knowing your why is an important first step in figuring out how to achieve your goals. Helen Colby-Small had a why and a how. She left a bequest of \$160,000 to establish the Auxiliary Emergency Fund in 1969. Its purpose then, as it is today, was to provide temporary financial assistance to eligible members during times of financial crisis or weather-related emergencies.

For nearly 50 years, primarily due to generous gifts members such as yourselves, the AAF in true members helping member form has continued to help offer assistance. In just this administrative year alone, 46 Departments showed their generosity by contributing \$183,769 and some pennies.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: Yes. Please, give yourselves a hand.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: However, 61 disaster grants and 71 financial assistant grants were given to ALA members. These grants totaled \$211,388. As you can see, what was given was \$25,000 more than what was put into the coffers.

In a recent interview, former secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said, "If we stayed with what we had, we'd still be using sails". That parallels the efforts by your National Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee as they took a new approach to the ALA In the News e-bulletin by providing a 12-month series of AEF fund-raising ideas that provided different ways to raise funds for the AEF and members thought about that too.

Some ideas were as simple as such as contributing a dollar per member. Thank you, Department of District of Columbia. And others were more complex, but boy were they fun. The Department of New York was an example --

(Cheering.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- of how to have fun when fund-raising. They came up with the AEF Challenge. A member simply challenges someone to do something for a dollar or \$5. If they do it, you donate to the AEF. If they don't, they make the donation. Some challenges included wear a funny hat to a meeting, get a pie in a face, allow a balloon filled with shaving cream to be popped over your head. The ideas were endless. They had fun and with it, the AEF won.

Montana's Department AEF Chairman Jamie Debate sewed aprons and hot pads giving one set to each district president to use as a fund-raiser in any way they chose. The only catch was that 50 percent of those dues, or those funds, raised had to go to AEF.

In one unique fund-raiser at the -- at Unit 136 --  
(Cheering.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- in St. James City, Florida hosted a special spaghetti dinner and music with the theme of "Emergency Medical Madness". Mad scientists greeted members at the door and the venue was decorated as a disaster area complete with IV bottles. Nice touch.

There are a few other units that are deserving of special recognition when it comes to AEF contributions this year. Oak Orchard Riverdale Unit 28 --

(Cheering.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: -- in Delaware. Belizzi Macrae Unit 5 -- or 659 in Iowa.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: And Latonia Unit 203 in Kentucky.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMSON: The members of these units not only know their way, but they follow through with their how and I thank you ladies. And to the 333 members that made personal contributions of \$50 or more received this pin. So please consider making your own generous contribution.

I thank each and every one of you that made a donation this year to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Your gift not only provided help, it provided hope. But I think hearing my thanks doesn't illustrate as well as the word of thanks of some of those grant recipients, so let me read a few.

"I cannot tell you what a blessing it was to open the mailbox and find your letter. It's going to be a very long time before I work again, but at least I have a home to stay in. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Another, "Thank you doesn't seem like much, but thank you. A little kindness makes such a difference in a day. Your thoughtfulness certainly made a difference in mine." And, "A special note of thanks straight from my heart, you can't imagine what it means -- what it meant to me to receive the check. I was able to buy essentials I couldn't have bought on my own. God bless you and God bless America."

So I ask you, what is your why and how will you support the AEF to ensure that we get there? Madam National President, this concludes the platform remarks for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Program.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Lisa. Good job.

MS. WILLIAMSON: You bet.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Lisa.

Strengthening our communities is something American Legion Auxiliary members strive for each and every day. A major outreach

program since 1926, Community Service demonstrates our long standing commitment to improving our communities for our military, veterans, and their families. Please welcome Carol Edwards, National Community Service Committee Chairman.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. EDWARDS: Madam National President, when you attend a sporting event there is never a question as to what team the spectators are supporting. With just a glance, that question can be answered.

As part of Goal 5 of the strategic plan, we need to serve as brand advocates through involvement in community activities, so this year the Community Service Committee challenged members to flaunt who we are, what we do and why we matter and flaunt they did.

Marion Unit 179 from Blanchester, Ohio --

(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- participated in their local Memorial Day parade and they made sure the community knew who they were. In addition, they took part in a community beautification project by planting red, white and blue flowers, supported a bicycle safety program sponsored by the Lions Club and assisted with a flag retirement ceremony conducted by the local Boy Scouts all while being visible in the community and supporting the service projects of other organizations.

During national volunteer week, Unit 82 of Shelby, North Carolina --

(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- honored the local volunteer fire fighters and treated them to homemade goodies and cases of water and gatorade. As a result, they even got to test out some of the equipment. They also participated in a community event at the Shelby High School where veterans and active duty militaries were honored. This military extravaganza concluded with a free picnic and a patriotic concert. Is there any question what team these ladies are on?

The community service action plan encourages us to work with other organization on service projects to heighten awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary. The Tony F. Soza Ray Martinez Unit 41 --

(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- in Phoenix, Arizona --

(Applause.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- distributes sack lunches to the homeless every Sunday. With the help of donations from members and community support, 200 sack lunches are provided each week and since August of 2016, the unit has distributed approximately 4,280 sack lunches.

The Department of Maryland adopted the theme --

(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- Cheering for Our Veterans.

(Applause.)

MS. EDWARDS: Cheerleaders were present to welcome home troops with flags and dinners. They gave out 581 poems entitled "A Cross in My Pocket" to the deploying troops and sent over 150 scarves and 100 hats to Operation Gratitude for troops. They also sponsored a Narcan class on suspected drug overdose situations in the community.

In Minnesota, the American Legion Auxiliary members --  
(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- support Shop with a Hero program --  
(Applause.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- where all first responders are matched up with a family in the community who may have fallen on hard times and cannot provide their children a Christmas gift. ALA members assist with the gift wrapping. Community Service can involve a huge variety of events and meant that memories can (indiscernible).

For example, Wyoming held an awareness walk on Armed Forces Day. South Dakota served lunch on Make a Difference Day to the men that participated in a farming bee for a veteran with heart problems. Mississippi participated in a Pink Out program for breast cancer week.

Massachusetts supported the Out of Darkness Suicide Prevention Program and many Departments participated in road clean-ups. Unit 346 from Four Oaks, North Carolina --  
(Cheering.)

MS. EDWARDS: -- simply does it all. They have their own bargain house that is open every Saturday. This is not only a resource for the community, but they also provide from victims from like -- from disasters like Hurricane Matthew.

They participated in the party of tables for Relay for Life. They delivered snacks to the middle school to the faculty and staff on Valentine's Day. They sponsored a Halloween safety program for the kindergarten students and the list goes on.

This is a very small sample of what you, as American Legion Auxiliary members, can do you in your communities. The Department of Virginia said it best. "Units are starting to see new members join and inactive members becoming interested again because they want to join us in making a difference in their communities.

No one really cares how much you know until they know how much you care. By becoming more interactive with members in our communities, they see how much we care. They know what an amazing organization the American Legion Auxiliary is and they want to be associated with us and that association will grow membership."

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you so much.  
Good job.

MS. EDWARDS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Carol.

Every day, our service members are fighting for our freedom. As advocates for our veterans, it is our duty to ensure legislators are thinking about what our military faces while they're deployed, and what they will need when they return. Please welcome National Legislative Committee Chairman, Elaine Mackenzie.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. MACKENZIE: Madam National President, this program is successful because of the determination and dedication of all of you, our wonderful American Legion Auxiliary members. You very thoughtfully read the American Legion's legislative action alerts, the dispatch and the Legislative Priorities publications as well as the Auxiliary's Advocacy Guide and then took action.

These tools came in handy as countless members hosted legislative coffees, town hall meetings and Meet the Candidate nights. The many different means members use to contact their lawmakers included face-to-face contact, emails, phone calls and social media. If we were to extrapolate the numbers in received reports, more than one telephone call was made to law makers for each and every member of our organization. Nice job, ladies.

(Applause.)

MS. MACKENZIE: Nebraska and Iowa both report that Legionnaires and Auxiliary members attended legislative days at their respective capitals. They use this opportunity to meet their legislators face-to-face. The American Legion family by working together made an impressive show of strength. The Department of Kentucky joined other organizations --

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: -- for an annual legislative dinner with State representatives. Units were told that their voice is crucial as an advocate for veterans and our military families and would be heard. Some Departments and Units report that they were able to recruit new Auxiliary members from their pool of lawmakers, some of whom are veterans as well.

Shenandoah Unit 88 in Iowa --

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: -- hosts monthly coffees inviting their representative and senator. Their U.S. Senator, Joni Ernst is an ALA member and a frequent attendee at unit functions.

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: Dupont-Holmes Unit 82 in New Hampshire concentrated on local legislation to help their veterans. They wanted towns in their areas to accept an expansion of veterans eligible for tax credits, so they circulated the required petitions and those towns agreed to the tax credit expansion. This action resulted in an estimated 20 percent increase in veterans who will now be able to apply for this credit.

Rockdale County, Georgia Unit 77 members receive action alerts and check the American Legion website regularly to keep updated and take action by making telephone calls and writing letters.

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: One of the most impressive accomplishments of the entire legislative program this year at the unit and Department levels was the high quality of the education presented to members. This education included ways in which to read up on the issues, how to contact law makers and contact them again, if needed. The public was educated about our program threw newspaper articles, letters to the editor and social media.

New York had so much fun --

(Cheering.)

MS. MACKENZIE: -- with their legislative program using the cartoon character "Billy" and all his educational materials. The Legislative Committee wants to thank those members currently on the mini council, both the returning members and the new ones. It is vital that we develop working relationships with our lawmakers and their staff.

Members on this mini council agree to develop and maintain a working relationship with a lawmaker on the House and Senate Veteran Affairs Committees. We all know how important this program is for our veterans, our active duty military and their families. You, American Legion Auxiliary members, are showing our lawmakers we know this through our demonstrated passion and our purpose and showing our member pride.

Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Great job.

MS. MACKENZIE: Thank you (indiscernible). You too.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chaplains provide spiritual and emotional guidance often in times when many of us feel lost. They are compassionate listeners who always bring dignity and love to every situation. Please welcome our National Chaplain, Valerie Brown-Debro.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Yes! Madam National President Mary, Auxiliary family, what a mighty God we serve, ladies!

(Applause.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: The first words of our Preamble says "For God and Country". If it wasn't for God, we wouldn't have a country. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He tells us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves and to pray one for another.

Our chaplains are an extension of God's angels, giving of themselves by sharing compassion, empathy and encouragement sharing God's love around the nation. What's your why and what are you willing to give?

Chaplains are prayer warriors for our veterans, active military, their families and communities. There is nothing more rewarding than serving others and not self. Just as soldiers in the army of the Lord, putting on the full armor of God being equipped for the battlefield, though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A three cord fall is not

easily broken. That's who we are and it's why we do what we do when we come together.

Praying one for another in our own faith and belief, walking by faith and not by sight, walking in love, honor and integrity, what a humbling experience, God's servants.

Mark 18:19 says, "If two of you on Earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my father in heaven." We did have a challenging year losing four National Chaplains, 25 past Department Presidents, many members, loved ones and friends.

We started off our National Chaplain's conference. Not too many were able to attend. Given feedback, the timing was too close to convention while others assumed that it was only for incoming Department Chaplains. Ladies, it is an open invitation. We all are encouraged to attend.

At the conference we shared God's word, his purpose, his plan, his will for our lives. We discussed who are chaplains and why we pray. We went over our four chaplains program and the purpose of honoring our POW/MIA at our meetings.

We served together with the American Legion family. We participated in Veterans Day, Independence Day and Memorial Day programs. Our members sent cards to the bereave, they visited the sick and the shut in, shared a smile or a hug, encouraged members in prayer and steadying an agreement for a breakthrough in their lives.

While some were in hospice, we went over the salvation of prayer. There is nothing more priceless in the moments that we share. We engaged in social media posting of prayer requests, praying in our own faith and belief and sealing it with an "amen".

There is power when two or more come together in prayer. During Christmas I sent every Department chaplain a Christmas card enclosed with a heart-shaped pin that read, "God is Love".

Just to highlight a few reports received, California, on Memorial Day, they placed 2,000 carnations on the grave sites for Legion families. Their theme was "A Beacon of Light: Spreading Light, Love, Hope and Prayer".

Nebraska, District 6, earned a shout out from our National President Mary Davis --

(Applause.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: -- National Facebook page. She received inspiration from watching a TV documentary on our veterans crisis line. She took action with her prayer project, Our Soldier's Project. She made a box of toy soldiers distributing throughout the town of Callaway pampering -- partnering with churches, schools and local businesses encouraging them to take a soldier home as an inspiration for us to prayer for -- pray for our veterans.

In New York during --

(Cheering.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: -- memorial services they lit a candle for each branch of service with a patriotic ribbon with an angel on the bottom. Each person that participated wore a scarf that matched the ribbon.

In Georgia, reported during our President's Mary's visit, they laid a wreath on a Poppy Ladies' Moina Michael's headstone while a family member read the poem, The Flanders Fields.

On Memorial's Day, our members get together on a boat in Tybee Island donated by a veteran and before launching, a prayer is extended to the Department Chaplain as a Launch to Poppy Acre in remembrance of our fallen soldiers.

In New Mexico, they use the online prayer chains to communicate with our members. In Kansas, they had a challenge to their chaplains, "Earn Your Wings". South Dakota, they made prayer pillows which had pockets on the front which stuffed prayers, loving words and positive thoughts on the size of a business card.

In South Dakota during National President Mary's visit in April, they spent a few hours sewing and stuffing pillows. The next day, they took the pillows to assisted living VA facilities. Every veteran received a pillow.

In Tennessee, they had a luncheon recognizing 22 --  
(Cheering.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: -- Gold Star mothers and provided them with cards and gift.

In Louisiana, their theme was "Welcome to Flight 2016/2017. We are prepared for takeoff. Captain God has cleared us for takeoff." North Carolina shared "Faith tells me that no matter what lies ahead of me, God is already there. May God's blessing shower on you like a spring shower."

Remember that our members are valued by our members and those we pray for and serve. I want to leave you with this scripture, Proverbs 3:5 through 6. "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not into your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he shall direct your path," and never forget, God is love.

Thank you for praying together with me and for me since my installation and throughout my term as National Chaplain. For God and Country, I thank you. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Beautiful. Thank you so much.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Valerie.

Since 1919 the American Legion Auxiliary's members have been caring for our veterans, military, and their families. Through a collection of documents, books, photos and artifacts, the History Committee conveys our story. Please welcome our National History Committee Chairman, Cathi Taylor.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Madam National President, history, I like to think, is a larger way of looking at life. It is a source of strength, of inspiration. It is about who we are and what we stand for and it's essential to our understanding of what our own role should be in our time. History, as can't be said too often, is human. It is about people and they speak to us across the years."

These words from author and historian David McCullough accurately illustrate the reason we preserve, to give us roots, enhance pride and inspire us to go forward. The story of the American Legion Auxiliary is like no other and it is one that may never have occurred if it had not been for those who came before with their imagination, commitment, creativity, courage and determination.

It is a story about women coming together to tend to the needs of those who protect this nation. But what is that story? Where and how does it begin? Are the needs of our veterans any different today than what they were a hundred years ago? How has the organization evolved to meet those needs and remain relevant? What did those women try? What lessons can we learn from them to keep the Auxiliary around for another hundred years?

To answer these and other questions, we must look to the past, but unless we preserve that history, unless you can come to Indianapolis, those answers may be hard to find until now. In 2016 we were awarded an \$18,000 Heritage Support Grant by the Indiana Historical Society with funding from Lilly Endowment and we've been putting that money to good use.

We've purchased scanners, supplies and software. We've been sorting and organizing photos and magazine. The rolled panoramic photos have been reconditioned through rehumidification and returned to their original flattened form. Just like libraries and museums, the items are being inventoried and cataloged into a database and we're digitizing them. Not only for our records, but to share with you.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you. Coming this fall to a device near you will be the American Legion Auxiliary Digital Archive website.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Here you will see the Cavalcade of Memories Museum, photos and the Auxiliary's magazine from its beginnings in 1927 through 1959. Exploring the site can be done in three ways. The "keyword" search allows you to perform a general search across all of the collections. The "advanced search" provides you the opportunity to be more specific and the "random images" search where you can wander around the collection in no particular order. It's a great way to discover rarely seen treasures.

When you see something you like, click on the image to view a larger version, but don't keep your finds to yourself. Share them with friends. Simply click on the "email to a friend" button and complete the form.

Wish to provide some feedback on an item? Click on the "send us feedback" link. We would love to hear from you.

We are excited to offer online access to the Auxiliary's collections. While there will be over 500 items available at the time of the unveiling, they are a small representation of the Auxiliary's complete collection. We invite you to visit the website often as additional entries will be made.

Yes, the Auxiliary's story is like no other, one in which we are a part of today. Mr. McCullough reminds us that we are the beneficiaries of those who went before us who gave up their time and service and who kept faith in the possibilities of the mind and the human spirit. In these items, you will learn the story. We hope you will share it and remain a part of it for future generations because you too have given up your time and service and kept faith.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

MS. TAYLOR: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Cathi.

MS. TAYLOR: Oh, I'm sorry.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Good job.

MS. TAYLOR: You too.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I'll take that. Thanks.

Thank you, Cathi.

Preserving, displaying and sharing our history, traditions, and milestones is the purpose behind our History program. The Auxiliary's 97th anniversary year has been a special time for members to look back and reconnect with our organization's rich past. Here to tell us more about it is National Historian, Dr. Coral May Grout.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: The National History 2016 to 2017 is well on its way to completion. Thanks to the Department historians, national office staff and Department Secretaries and Presidents in those departments without a historian.

I'm happy to announce that I received 100 percent reporting

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(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: -- at the mid-year as well as for this annual report. The history this year has six chapters. One, National Auxiliary Officers, NECs and Chairman, American Legion Officers and SAL members. Two, a synopsis of the National President's travels. In addition to two overseas visits, she visited 39 Departments.

Three, leadership activities including mission training information and highlights of the visitations made by the National Vice Presidents. Four, American Legion family events such as the National President's homecoming.

(Cheering.)

MS. GROUT: Five, the accomplishments of each of our National programs. Six, last but not least, historical events from all 52 Departments. I sincerely hope that the history, once completed, will be available online for you to read. By reading this history, or your Unit's, or your Department's, you can learn about the successful events and projects to help accomplish your centennial planning.

The members of Unit #46 --

(Cheering.)

MS. GROUT: -- in Jerome, Idaho worked on the veterans history project and helped build and open the Northside Military Museum in Jerome. The museum opened on November 11th, 2016. CVS Pharmacy awarded the Department of Rhode Island a grant for \$5,000 to be used for the health and wellness of veterans. Some of the grant money was used to assist a veteran who needed dentures. The VA Homeless Clinic received 130 winter items from units in the Department including boots, jackets, socks, hats and gloves.

In Virginia, units participated in the Family Support Program helping 76 veterans with a monetary value of \$1,993. One unit donated 20 Thanksgiving baskets valued at \$1,400. Members donated \$5,622 and \$500 in in-kind donations were made to educate 20. And the Department of Virginia established a new scholarship for \$1,000.

During the fall of 2016, severe flooding took place from Louisiana northward. Among the States hit hardest was West Virginia. Units in the 9th District had very little to salvage. Auxiliary officials informed unit members that they could apply for Auxiliary Emergency Funds. Officers distributed forms and spoke directly with members to get the word out about this opportunity. The Department was also saddened to lose the Sons of the American Legion Department Commander to death in December.

Louisiana members helped rebuild homes and business in their worst hit areas as well. Indiana's Juniors demonstrated their future leadership skills --

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT -- by volunteering along side Auxiliary members for veterans and making and distributing gifts for veterans throughout the year.

After a full year of fund-raising, Unit #15 in Glendale, Wyoming dedicated a war memorial. This was held on Veterans Day and was a joint effort of the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion and the communities officials in the town of only 400 people.

Florida's special project was Final Salute --

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: -- Incorporated. This group provides homeless women veterans with safe and suitable transitional housing, homelessness prevention and employment transition assistance. Clearwater SAL Squadron 7 --

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: -- and their Auxiliary Unit hosted a casino night. They raised over \$8,500 to benefit Final Salute and Dunedid Unit 275 members --

(Cheering.)

MS. GROUT: -- got their golf clubs out to raise over \$10,000 for the cause. Thank you so much for electing me as your National Historian this year. Writing your history has truly been a privilege and a whole lot of fun.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Coral. Nice job. Thank you, Coral.

Thanks to the American Legion Auxiliary's enthusiastic members, the beautiful red poppy which symbolizes the sacrifices made by our veterans has come alive across the nation!

Here to tell us more about connecting the symbol of the poppy with the sacrifices made by our veterans is Kathy Daudistel, National Poppy Committee Chairman.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Good morning.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam National President, it has been an exciting and truly historic year for the Poppy Program. Resolution 309 which supports the goals and ideals of a National Poppy Day was introduced to Congress on May 3rd of 2017. In eager anticipation of the Friday before Memorial Day officially becoming National Poppy Day, members across the Departments were already out in full force distributing poppies in their communities to bring awareness to the public.

As an added bonus, a National Poppy Day pin is now available for sale at Emblem Sales. Stop over today and get one or more or you can order them online. Another exciting part of the Poppy Program is the Miss and Little Miss Poppy programs. These programs enable our Junior members to share their ALA pride while spreading the word about the Poppy and why it is so important.

Many Departments host Poppy Princess contests and celebrate the young ladies' contributions. Once Miss and Little Miss Poppy are elected in their respective departments, the girls attend parades, veterans events as well as community events.

One Little Miss Poppy Cameron Steinhardt from the Department of Ohio shared the Poppy story at her school with a full day of activities focused around the poppy. Another activity --

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Another activity used to engage the youth of our communities is the Poppy poster contest. This year over 9,000 posters were judged at the Department levels. All of the winning division-

level entries were remarkably creative and I personally would guess they were very hard to judge. If you would like to check out this year's winners, stop by the ALA office here in the convention center or they will also be online after convention. All winning entries are also considered for the poppy new cards.

If you haven't checked out the ALA Poppy Program Facebook group, you should. This year we asked our members to share ideas and questions in the group. As an edit incentive, we hosted several Facebook contests prompting members to send in pictures of their Poppy creations. Winners were randomly picked and received a set of the poppy new cards.

In the Poppy Facebook group, we learned that the ALA Texas Junior Unit 838 --

(Cheering.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- created the world's largest poppy to celebrate the first National Poppy Day. Several units and even Departments hosted Poppy paint parties to raise awareness of the poppy. The Department of South Dakota President Melanie Martins attended their Girls State program and along with the staff, led the attendees in a poppy paint party and taught the girls how to make poppies. Other units shared their handmade aprons, scarves and pot holders as well as every baked good imaginable decorated with a poppy. Yum!

Each year there are several inquiries as to what the poppy funds can be used for. You can always find information on [alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org) where you will find the ALA poppy guide included a frequently asked question section.

A good rule of thumb to ask yourself is this. Is a veteran involved and if he or she has a financial or medical need, can it be alleviated by the Poppy funds? If so, you can use Poppy funds. If you have a question, don't ever hesitate to ask.

Overall, 141,000 hours of poppy making were reported. \$3,000,915 was raised --

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- through poppy distributions and almost 6 million poppies were distributed.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Pretty impressive. We did have 100 percent reporting --

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- so I am very confident when I say the members take great pride in sharing the poppy story. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks. However, I would like to announce the winners of the Little Miss and the Miss Poppy contest.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Absolutely!

MS. DAUDISTEL: The winner of the Miss Poppy contest for girls ages 13 through 18 is Ms. Susan Ferris from the Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: She wrote that she learned many things being Ms. Poppy this year and she truly enjoyed her year. She attended many functions to promote the poppy and met many wonderful people. She loves working with veterans and is very honored to receive this award. Congratulations Susan!

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: The winner of the Little Miss Poppy contest for girls --

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: -- ages six through 12 is Ms. Carlie Crawfis from Unit 63 in the Department of Ohio.

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Carlie enjoyed her year as Little Miss Poppy and also met many people. One of her favorite things was visiting the local fire department to tell them more about the poppy. She also liked participated in wreath laying activities with her grandfather, a Vietnam veterans. Congratulations Carlie!

(Applause.)

MS. DAUDISTEL: Madam President, that concludes my remarks.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please don't. Thank you. You're doing great.

MS. DAUDISTEL: Thanks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Kathy.

We must always remember that poppies are a memorial tribute to all those who shed their blood for freedom. That's the message we need to be taking to our communities and our future generations. The red poppy symbolizes the price of freedom and your donations support those who've paid the ultimate price.

Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities use the creative arts as treatment to help veterans recover from physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition and selected winners are invited to attend the annual National Creative Arts Festival.

Since 2000, the Auxiliary has played a key role in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival as a cosponsor of the event, along with Department of Veterans Affairs. This year's festival will be held in Buffalo, New York --

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- and we've created a short video to show you what it's all about. Let's take a look.

(Video plays.)

ANNOUNCER: "Never underestimate the healing power of the arts. In VA medical facilities across the country, the creative arts are used

as rehabilitative treatment to help our veterans recover from physical and emotional challenges."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "My involvement in creative arts has -- it has helped me. It has given me hope. It has given me something to live for."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "It's just been a terrific experience and it's just so uplifting, you know. So I'm just grateful. You know, I'm just really, really grateful."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "Well, it has been a challenge to express myself by reading my own poems and my novel of short stories."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "The creative arts me helped me come through a very dark place."

ANNOUNCER: "And your support through donations of time and money is making a difference in the lives of veterans all across the country. The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival co-presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary recognizes the accomplishments and recovery process of America's veterans through the creative arts therapy of dance, art, music, drama and creative writing.

In 2017 the festival will be held in Buffalo and hosted by VA Western New York Health Care System. Over 120 VA medical facilities submit entries into the annual creative arts competition. Gold medal winners from the national competition are invited to attend the national festival for a week of workshops, rehearsals, fellowship culminating in an art and writing exhibition and a live stage show production. The competition is open to veterans who are enrolled at a VA medical center or outpatient clinic before entering local competitions. The therapeutic value to participants is striking."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "I think this is such a great therapy treatment. It has really matched up with my PTSD treatment."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "My involvement in the creative arts has allowed me to look at some of the past trauma that I've experienced in the military to get in touch with a less traumatic way of expressing it and it's allowed me to connect with other veterans that also have similar stories, but yet portray, or express, it in different ways."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "When I first got back from overseas, the ghosts and the demons that were brought back with me held me captive, but through the veterans administration, through their hospital and through the activities I've been able to open up more."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "I'm finally becoming the person that God meant for me to be."

ANNOUNCER: "Teaming with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary is co-presenter of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival providing both significant financial support and volunteers. That support begins at the local level providing resources and volunteering at VA centers across the country. It culminates at the national festival, a moving event that takes place in a new city each year.

Many say American Legion Auxiliary volunteers get nearly as much out of the competition as the veterans often describing it as a life changing experience."

MS. BUCKLER: "Want a great way to make membership in the American Legion Auxiliary meaningful? Become involved in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. There are many ways you can do that. By working with your local VA to encourage their participation. By volunteering either at the local level or at the national festival. By simply attending the festival and supporting the artists there. By donating, either as a unit or an individual and by spreading the word about this fantastic program.

Regardless of how you support veterans in art therapy, you'll be enriched beyond your imagination."

ANNOUNCER: "The public is invited to the art exhibits, writer's meet and greet and (indiscernible) show on Sunday afternoon, October 29th, 2017 at the Center for the Arts at the University at Buffalo. For complimentary tickets, call 716-862-6814. For more information about the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival, go to [www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov](http://www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov). Learn how you can make your ALA membership matter by contacting American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. Use our main line at 317-569-4500 or on the web, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)."

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Go ahead.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Very good. For a veteran, coming home is the beginning of a new journey; a transition to find a "new normal." You've just watched one way we are working to help veterans acclimate when they return home, here to tell you more about how our members comforted and cared for veterans during this transition is National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Chairman, Kathy Dungan.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Madam National President, members showed their ALA pride this year by supporting an advocating for our heroes. The Auxiliary's mission of service not self was shown in countless acts of kindness. One unit demonstrating these acts of kindness is Jesse C. Lynch Memorial Unit 71 of South Carolina.

Some of their activities and events included in honor of veterans they purchased 118 wreaths for the Wreaths Across America project. Members attended and distributed Auxiliary information at their Veterans Village Forum. Christmas gift shops were at the top of their list as members volunteered at several gift shops in South Carolina and more in August, Georgia.

They participated in the annual Christmas tree selecting a veteran's name and purchasing the gift that was requested. They remembered the fallen at the Memorial Day service. Members purchased and delivered

poinsettias to 60 veterans in nursing homes. Great job Unit 71 of South Carolina!

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Another outstanding unit is Roy J. Hunter Unit 505 of North Carolina. President Judy Phillips said, "Members supported veterans with service projects from our rural location with a focus on homeless veterans. They created an online contribution campaign to collect the most requested item for their stand down which was pants for the homeless."

Junior members made blessing bags for homeless veterans and filled them with toiletry items, socks and necessities. Members made waterproof sleeping mats for the homeless. A video created by their junior member explaining how to make the sleeping mat on a loom was posted on Facebook and was seen by 2,115 people in just ten days.

Spreading Christmas cheer, members made ornamental Christmas trees and delivered them along with gift bags to four nursing homes. The extra trees were given to family members of veterans. They supported the VA homeless veterans resource expo by donating food and cleaning products. Great job Unit 505 of North Carolina!

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: The above is just two of the many awesome units that showed their ALA pride this year. Unit members across the country volunteered countless hours at VA medical facilities. Members supported our Service to Veterans Initiative --

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: -- by sewing and donating quilts of valor and hosting baby showers for veterans. Care givers of veterans were supported. Homeless veterans were furnished clothing --

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: -- meals and laundry services.

(Cheering.)

MS. DUNGAN: Stand downs were held. Units and Departments supported veteran rehabilitation and healing through the arts by donating to their local festivals and to the National VA Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Quoting Pablo, "Never underestimate the difference you can make in the lives of others. Step forward, reach out and help. Our members reach out every day and remain committed to making the lives of our military heroes a little better.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Good job.

MS. DUNGAN: You're welcome. Here.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Kathy. Wow, we made it! What a packed morning of great guests and informative reports! Before

we adjourn for the day, I'd like to briefly tell you that we -- just a reminder -- that we're being live streamed.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- and I hope that each of you will help me give a large hello to our National Treasurer who is not able to be with us this week, Marta Hedding. Can we all give her a big round?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Marta, we're thinking about you. We miss you and we look forward to seeing you here next year. Well, wherever we have convention next year.

(Cheering.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So the Chair asked National Secretary to briefly announce any convention updates. Dubbie?

(Music.)

MS. BUCKLER: Okay. Announcements. Installation rehearsal will take place in this room immediately following our adjournment. So if you have a role in installation, kind of make your way up around this area and there will be people to direct you.

A reminder that we have several breakout sessions going on this afternoon and a special announcement that one of the breakout sessions is a premiere advanced screening of "The Letters Home". First series in "The Letter Home" video series sponsored by USAA and that's today at 3:15 here in the convention center Rooms A19 and A20. And can we just briefly say thank you to USAA for making it possible that you get to see the premiere viewing of "Letters Home" film.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And regarding that Annual Report/National Convention Guide, we want to shout out a congratulations to the first state to submit the Department report for this publication, New Hampshire --

(Cheering.)

MS. BUCKLER: -- and well ahead of the deadline which we greatly appreciated and a second shout out to Arizona for being only second in place by two days.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Everyone has a positive ALA mission outreach story to tell and yours may be the one that inspires members to continue serving or encourages a new member to join, volunteer or donate. Please stop by the story booth and find out how you can share your story.

You just saw -- heard a report from Kathy about the Veterans Creative Arts Festival. A couple of things I want to point out, in the video one of the veterans you saw was a veteran named Mike McCann going like that. Mike won a gold medal in the performing arts category and he's been winning different categories over the years and he was featured. He's the guy in that, I believe the brand is Little Caesars, the pizza commercial where the little boy is up in front saying, "This is my dream" and then there's a guy sitting back with his feet on a desk saying, "It's already been done, kid."

That's one of the gold medalist winners, Mike McCann from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Isn't that pretty cool?

Past Department Presidents who served 1999 to 2000, please meet at the back of the room upon adjournment with Past National President Lib Stewart.

The 2017-18 National Americanism Committee will meet Tuesday following the Women of the Year Luncheon in the banquet room.

The convention center has a lost and found department or -- and also if you lose anything or want information or you find anything and want information about it, please go to the office. I know there have been two or three pins lost and you just need to contact the convention center lost and found or you need to go to our National Headquarters office and they can direct you how to do that.

And finally, as Mary said we're live streaming, so one more time, let's look upward and let's do a big shout out "ALA rocks". So get that in your head. So let's on, like, the count of three, do a big shout out, "ALA rocks!"

ALL: ALA rocks!

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Dubbie.

Thank you to the national chairmen who presented and to all of our special guests including those from the American Legion, and the Sons of the American Legion.

This concludes the opening session of the 2017 National Convention. We are now adjourned.

(Gavel bangs.)

(Music.)

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2017, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2017**

VOICEOVER: Welcome to day two of Make Membership Matter, the 97th American Legion Auxiliary National Convention. Here to begin our session is your National President Mary Davis.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The 97th National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will come to order.

(Rap of gavel.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please be seated. Before we begin, please take a moment to ensure your electronic devices are in silent mode. I'm not sure that we've come to order yet, ladies. Find your seats as quickly and quietly as possible.

Will our National Chaplin, Valerie Brown-Debro, please come forward to lead us in our invocation?

(Rap of gavel.)

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. BROWN-DEBRO: This is a day that the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in this day. Let us pray.

Father God, we thank you for another day, another opportunity that we're together again. We ask for your blessings on this convention, every person that's under the sound of my voice. Your word says "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things shall be added to you."

Father God, we just thank you for our guide and for our decision. By faith we believe that our steps are already ordered. Let this day be prosperous and pleasing in your sight as we serve together and share the memories and mission of our purpose of the American Legion family, for God and country. These things we ask in your holy name. Amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please be seated.

(Rap of gavel.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Just a quick reminder before we go on with business that if you are a delegate, you sit in your delegate section. If you are an alternate, you sit in the alternate section. If you are a visitor, you sit in the visitors section.

If a delegate needs to be replaced because they're going to the restroom or leaving the room, then an alternate will be selected and will come to the position of the delegate. But no alternates are to be seated in the delegate selection -- section unless they are taking the place of a delegate. Okay? Did I say that right?

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is to positively impact the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by

funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary today and for future generations.

Because of you, our generous donors and supporters, we are able to make a positive impact on veterans and their families. With a little help from the Foundation's Veterans Projects Fund grant, the ALA Department of California made a positive change for the families and children housed at the U.S. Vets Long Beach facility. And we are especially proud that three of the children who had been living in their car and fallen behind in school were able to use the computers to do home-schooled work.

Want to know more? Well, let's take a look.

(Video.)

ANNOUNCER: Imagine a place where homeless veterans, female homeless veterans, female homeless veterans with children are given the opportunity to heal, cope, and thrive. Welcome to U.S. Vets Long Beach.

MALE VOICE: U.S. Vets started in 1993 with the idea that we had to do a few things in order to rehabilitate homeless veterans. We had to provide housing, of course, to get them off the street, and we also had to provide counseling to deal with their emotional issues, and employment to get them back to work. Since then, we have grown to 11 sites in 5 states and District of Columbia serving about 3,000 veterans every night.

FEMALE VOICE: U.S. Vets Long Beach houses over 550 homeless veterans, 42 of those veterans are females, and 9 of our female veterans currently are female veterans with children.

MALE VOICE: In order to serve the number of veterans that we serve every night, we get financial support from a variety of sources; the Government, of course, private foundations, corporations. Eighty-eight cents of every dollar that we raise is spent directly on veterans. So we think we're very efficient, even though we've become the largest program in the Country providing services specifically to homeless veterans.

ANNOUNCER: As many American Legion Auxiliary members know, helping homeless veterans is a daunting task. Helping homeless female veterans, especially with children, is challenging with a multiplier.

FEMALE VOICE: It's very difficult for a female veteran who is homeless to navigate life. And that difficulty is compounded when you are a female veteran who is homeless with children.

ANNOUNCER: And what better group to help tackle the problem than American Legion Auxiliary members?

FEMALE VOICE: I've been volunteering at U.S. Vets Long Beach for about three years now.

(Cheering.)

FEMALE VOICE: And we came upon the idea to pair the women veteran mothers and their children with the creative outlook.

ANNOUNCER: The result? The Children's Learning Center Project, funded by a generous grant from the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

FEMALE VOICE: We first heard about the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation grant program a couple years ago at National Convention. We were excited at the ease of filling out the paperwork. A couple months later, we heard back that we were given the grant. Our own Department of California matched the amount. And now, here we are.

ANNOUNCER: The new Children's Learning Center provides a myriad of learning opportunities for children who live at the facility. Computers and educational software, games, books, toys, art supplies all in a room dedicated to kids.

Children, who at one time, if they were lucky, lived in cars but usually on the street, existing with no regular meals, with little or no regular access to health care, much less running water, and certainly without educational opportunities in a safe, loving environment. Helping these children thrive, and witnessing moms on the road to a productive, stable life is beyond heart warming. It's why the American Legion Auxiliary exists.

FEMALE VOICE: My kids love (indiscernible) computers, books, anything that you can name that's educational for two thriving minds.

ANNOUNCER: And it wouldn't have been possible without an Auxiliary member with a dream made possible by an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation grant.

FEMALE VOICE: Thank you American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. The challenges that homeless female veterans with children face have been lessened by your generous gift.

MALE VOICE: Thank you American Legion Auxiliary Foundation for the support that you've given our program, particularly our women's program here in Long Beach. Woman veterans need a lot of assistance, we have a very complex program here, and your support means everything to us. Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: For more information on how your ALA unit or department can apply for a Veterans Projects fund grant, visit [alafoundation.org](http://alafoundation.org). Find a need, come up with an idea, apply for a grant, and witness something great.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please welcome from the Department of California the Auxiliary member who requested the grant, Tami Bell, and the 2016/17 NEC for California, Susie Tozier.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Wasn't that fantastic? Talk about making membership matter. Thank you, ladies. And now with more information about the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, please welcome Foundation President Linda Boone.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

MS. BOONE: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. BOONE: How did you like that video?

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: What a great story. But the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation didn't stop there. We continued to award grants for a variety of emerging needs to units and departments through our Veteran Projects Fund.

The Department of Illinois received over \$2,500 to purchase laptop computers, desk top computers, a lawn mower, a lawn edger, a leaf blower, table and chairs, and outdoor gliders for a 15-bed shelter for homeless veterans located in Springfield.

Delaware unit received \$4,800 to purchase six guitars and six Android tablets with Lessons software, plus a guitar instructor who will provide 16 one-on-one classes for the residents of Home of Brave in Milford Delaware.

The goal is to build self-assurance and esteem for those veterans dealing with PTSD and other mental challenges using music education to help as a coping mechanism. Because of your continued support, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation was able to award the following Veteran Creative Arts Festival grants.

The Department of Vermont received \$2,500 for promotional materials --

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: -- printing, postage, and art kits. The Department of Iowa --

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: -- received \$2,500 for promotional materials, awards, easels, art supplies, and musical instruments. D.C. Unit 1 received \$2,500 for rental space, awards, promotional materials, art supplies, and transportation for veterans.

By using the Foundation's IRS 501(c)3 status, we were able to provide an easier way for corporations and foundations to donate money to deliver our mission. California Unit 222 received \$5,000 to improve their meeting space. The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters received \$25,000 for the Women of the Holocaust film project.

Wisconsin Unit 53 received \$500 for their stand down. The Department of Oregon received \$25,000 for Oregon Girl's State.

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Mission Endowment Fund is a permanently restricted fund. The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation distributes the net investment earnings back to the programs supported by the American Legion Auxiliary. For FY '17 we are expected to provide over \$20,000 to support the American Legion Auxiliary Girl's Nation Program.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: We know that, with your support, we have accomplished a lot since our founding in 2007. We have grown stronger since our infancy and are now celebrating ten years of giving.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: In our first decade, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has developed its board of directors, transitioned from founders focused on the process of organizing to the doers focused on raising funds.

We educate members, supporters on the benefits of having a foundation and raising money to support our mission. And now we are starting to see the efforts pay off. We are focused and we know that our job is to raise money. In just ten years, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation has awarded nearly \$500,000 toward Auxiliary mission outreach programs.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Which includes \$78,500 for Veteran Project Fund grants, almost \$19,000 for Veteran Creative Arts Festival grants, over \$220,000 to the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival, and \$97,250 to sub-grants, and \$60,00 for our investment earnings of the mission endowment fund have been giving back to the Auxiliary to support our projects.

After Hurricane Sandy pummeled across the Northeast, Home of the Brave, a veterans homeless shelter, experienced significant damage to its exterior. The shelter was in need of new windows, siding, insulation. The Department of Delaware was awarded a grant to help with the critical new need.

Getting outdoors for regular physical activity helps deliver a positive mental, emotional, and physical well-being, especially for veterans who suffer from PTSD. Thanks to the Foundation grant to the Department of Kansas, the Leavenworth City Veterans Therapeutic Fitness Trail has three fitness stations where veterans can enjoy a well-balanced workout when walking or jogging along the outdoor path located at the Leavenworth VA Medical Center. Each fitness station includes scientifically designed exercises along the fitness trail.

Sometimes the most simple of projects turn out to be extremely meaningful. Often residents at VA hospitals don't want to give up their favorite or most comfortable items of clothing for fear they will be lost. This composed a health problem and -- when articles of clothing are not cleaned regularly.

The Department of Connecticut saw this need and applied for a grant for a clothing label maker. Now, more that 500 veterans, 200 in the hospital or home, and more than 300 living on the grounds of the Rocky Hill VA Home and Hospital now feel more assured that their items will be safely returned to them after being laundered.

Each of these lives would not have been touched without the help of our generous donors and supporters. Every time you shop through Amazon Smile and select the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation as your charity, it makes a difference.

Each time you send a check after receiving a direct mail appeal, it impacts our veterans, military, and their families. Every dollar and cent given at the Giving Tuesday booth changes a life. You make a difference.

You've heard the old saying that behind every great man is a great woman. Well, behind every great foundation is a great board of directors. The driving force behind the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is its board of directors comprised of 14 individuals passionate about the American Legion Auxiliary mission and committed to ensuring the Foundation continues to grow.

Each board member has a professional background and brings a unique perspective to the table. Please welcome to the stage Marybeth Revoir, Foundation Vice-President from the Department of Illinois.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Unfortunately with us -- not with us today is Cathleen MacInnes from the Department of New York who is the Foundation's secretary.

(Cheering.)

MS. BOONE: Marta Hedding is the Foundation Treasurer from the Department of Indiana, and she's not with us today either. Gina Callicotte from the Department of Georgia.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Dory Hammeke from the Department of Kansas.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Not with us today is Anne Hathaway from the Department of Indiana. Also not with us is Shirl Hendley from the Department of Maryland.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: With us is Terri Wallace from the Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Diane Duscheck from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Dubbie Buckler from the Department of Indiana.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Sharon Conatser from the Department of Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: National President Mary Davis from the Department of Washington.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: And our honorary director David Rehbein, Past National Commander from American Legion from 2008-2009.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Thanks to each of you for being an integral part of our team working to positively impact the lives we serve. It has been

an exciting ten years, and we look forward to the next ten. With your continued help, we can ensure our mission of service endures.

And with that in mind, ten years is worthy of a little celebration, don't you think?

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. BOONE: If you haven't already figured it out, this cake is about our ten years. So I would like you all to stand and we're going to sing happy birthday. And we're going to sing it twice and the second time, the third line is a little complicated. So cue the lights, starts the bubbles, and let's sing. Okay. Happy birthday.

(Music.)

(All singing happy birthday.)

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Well that was pretty good. You can sit. That was great. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. BOONE: Thank you for helping us celebrate. Thank you, Board members, you may take your seats now. Thank you so much. To learn more about the Foundation, including its board of directors, be sure to visit the Foundation website.

We also invite you to read a feature article about the Foundation in the August 2017 issue of the Auxiliary magazine. It's a fantastic article with -- and that's the issue with the birthday cake on the front and the back. Also, don't forget to come visit our Giving Tuesday booth right outside the doors. Madam President, this concludes our platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Linda, that was the best. Wasn't that fantastic? Talking about making membership matter. We're doing it not just for us but we're making a difference in others' lives. Thank you, ladies.

And now with more information about the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation -- whoopsie, let me move to the next page. Thank you, Linda. Sorry. It was those bubbles.

American Patriotism is a fundamental value of the American Legion Auxiliary. Americanism programs teach respect for our country and our nation's flag in the hopes of creating life-long patriotic citizens. Please welcome to the stage National Americanism Committee Chairman Sue Britton.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

VOICE: Love you.

MS. BRITTON: Madam National President. Good morning, everyone.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. BRITTON: I am excited to share with you some of the happenings involving the Americanism Committee this year. Let's take a little trip and check out some highlights.

The primary focus of the Americanism Committee revolves around flag education and etiquette, the proper way to fold the flag, and the meaning behind each fold promotes a love of country, the flag, and the freedoms it represents. Betsy Ross even made special arrangements to get the job done.

Various resource tools and comic books offer a fun way to learn about patriotism. Hats off to Unit 40 in the Department of Nevada for reaching out to 775 students and sharing flag educational information.

Americanism even made it into patriotic music classes. What a great combination idea. Isn't that an awesome idea? Thousands of pocket flags sent out reminded our front-line troops that they are not forgotten and allows them a little piece of home to carry with them daily. What an engaging opportunity this project gives us to enlist the support of our junior members, and girl and boy scouts.

The Americanism Essay Contest challenged our students to explore their role as future guardians and delve into what liberties or rights and privileges they could protect. Winners were awarded with certificates, ribbons, and medals for their accomplishments. Luke Gamere (phonetic) won the Class 6 award locally through Unit 40 in North Carolina and then went on to win both department and National level awards. His parents told Unit 40 members that the ALA had created a monster by recognizing him so well.

An ongoing push to pass legislation to prohibit flag desecration previously fell short by one vote. With the change in administration, it was felt that perhaps this was the time to put forth another effort. A national survey was commissioned by the Citizens Flag Alliance, and stats show that for various reasons this might not be the best time to pursue legislation, but we will continue to advocate for an amendment when events dictate.

Congratulations to Morris-Little Unit number 8 in Georgia for their winning entry for the Dorothy Pearl Americanism Award. They really captured the essence of the award by targeting children and youth as they focused on Americanism by working the essay contest, the oratorical, the junior shooting sports, supporting the flag amendment, and hosting a junior summer sleep over themed Celebrate America.

Patriotic holidays are always a time --  
(Cheering.)

MS. BRITTON: -- to display our true patriotism and instill Americanism in our fellow citizens. Flag Day allows us to show off the red, white, and blue. July 4th gives us another opportunity to participate in parades, local celebrations, and events.

With the presidential election this past November, the get out the vote program was promoted with great enthusiasm. Our members found numerous ways to encourage our citizens to make their voices heard and make their vote count. As we all know, the touch of that personal phone call make all the difference. The ALA fully supports the Americanism programs of the American Legion. American Legion Baseball --

(Cheering.)

MS. BRITTON: -- hosted the 2017 World Series in Shelby, North Carolina on August 10 to the 5th (sic). And congratulations to the first place team from Nevada.

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest showcased amazing oratorical skills from department finalists across the U.S. I was privileged this year to serve as both a quarter final a semi-final judge. And I came away with such a renewed sense of pride for what our youth has to offer. Congratulations to Andrew Steinberg from the Department of Minnesota for first place. I'm sorry, Department of Massachusetts. Department of Massachusetts.

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: The junior shooting sports event competitions gave our members another opportunity to assist the American Legion. We were again reminded this year regarding the practice of cutting the stars from American flags. This practice is prohibited and not endorsed by the American Legion who notes that the flag began as a whole, therefore it is to be disposed of as a whole.

What an awesome Americanism idea from Unit number 355 in the Department of Wisconsin who made and presented red, white, and blue cords to seniors who would be entering the military upon graduation. Great idea.

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: And Wisconsin hit it out of the park again with a clever idea called I Spy Stars and Stripes. A game that captured the essence of promoting the true spirit of Americanism with recognition for flying Old Glory. Countless ideas gave way to displaying our Americanism ideals and values with a spirit that was contagious. Our patriotic pride has shown throughout the nation this year. Congratulations --

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: Congratulations to every department on 100 percent mid-year and year-end reporting. Awesome job, ladies.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. BRITTON: Our demonstration of love of country is proudly shared with our citizens, both old and young, by sharing our founding principle and serving as role models to promote patriotic values.

Americanism is what lives deep within each of our hearts and spurs on the drive for us to promote patriotism, love of country, and love of our flag. Keep that love within you and wear your patriotic pride proudly wherever you go.

Our preamble continues to remind us that we must foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism, and it's never too early to start. God bless the USA. Madam President --

(Applause.)

MS. BRITTON: -- Madam President, that concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Sue. Please welcome from the Department of -- from the Veterans Affairs Council of the Republic of China -- are we ready -- Vice Minister Lu.

(Applause.)

MR. LU: National President Ms. Davis, distinguished guests, and the most of all, the outstanding members of the American Legion Auxiliary, good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MR. LU: It is my great honor to be here with the privilege to being able to address all of you. On behalf of the Veterans' Affairs Council of the Republic of China I hereby express our sincerest respect and the regards to all of you.

I have learned a lot from the dedication you have made for the country. You advocate for veterans, advocate the citizens, mentor the young generations, and the promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and the security.

It is undeniable that the role of the American Legion Auxiliary is exceptional and irreplaceable. Your hard work in the (indiscernible) service have supported millions of veterans, service members, and their families, and the communities both at home and abroad.

It is because of the vision you embrace and the mission you carry out that has brought substantial benefits to their leaders. It is because of you constant (indiscernible) and the care that honors their sacrifice and the contributions. The (indiscernible) of service you hold not for yourself but for veterans, God, and the country has stabilized the sociality and the bright -- a bright future. Your dedication to the nation is truly beyond words.

I always believe that there is no boundary that women can achieve. No matter in politicals, military, or other fields. And it is true, historically women have challenged the gender stereotype. Vote for equal rights, broken the traditional role of assistant, and became leaders in their own right.

As we have witnessed, many strong females set up as role models. For example, the current Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, Prime Minister of U.K., Theresa May, and the President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, are all outstanding women.

Finally, (indiscernible) my close by showing my appreciation to the American Legion Auxiliary for the constant support to the R.O.C., and I extend my sincerest welcome to you to visit Formosa, Taiwan. Where I believe that you will appreciate the beautiful scenery, the cuisine, and also the hospitality of Taiwanese people. Thank you so much. And I wish you all health and happiness. Thank you.

(Applause.)

(President Davis confers with Vice Minister Lu off microphone.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. I'm careful with the paper here. Hang on, I'm not good with paper. Thank you so much. It's very kind of you. Okay.

(President Davis confers with Vice Minister Lu off microphone.)

These box makers are good. Oh, beautiful. Oh, isn't that pretty. Oh, it's beautiful. Thank you.

MR. LU: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much.

MR. LU: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: That was special. Through our National Security Program, members support our armed forces and their families. Here to tell us more about Auxiliary members who are volunteering to help military families is National Security Chairman Beth McGinn.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. MCGINN: Madam National President. Keeping true to the American Legion Auxiliary mission statement of enhancing the lives of our military and their families and the purpose of the National Security Program, members found various and original ways to support service members within their departments and units.

Auxiliary members joined with their legion posts to host POW/MIA ceremonies on National POW Recognition Day in September. Unit 293 in the Department of Virginia, besides having permanent and window displays, found a creative way to construct a portable POW/MIA empty chair that is used several times during the year substituting plastic items for the -- listed in the ceremony.

They package it up for easy transport to community events to create awareness and the reason we remember those still in captivity or missing. Daniel W. Byrd Unit 23 in Aberdeen, Mississippi, included Aberdeen High School Air Force JROTC in their candlelight ceremony with special guest speaker John McKendry of Rolling Thunder, whose mission, like the ALA's, is to ensure that POW/MIAs are not forgotten. These are just a few of the examples of the ceremonies held in all departments.

Wearing red on Fridays to remember everyone deployed was embraced by members across the nation, and was promoted heavily on Facebook and social media. Oak Orchard Riverdale Unit 28, Department of Delaware -- yoohoo -- created a small red lamented shirt explaining red shirt Fridays that is placed prominently in the dining room tables for all guests to see. Every Friday there is a sea of red shirts at the post dancing and having fun while remembering those deployed.

For the Department of Nebraska --

(Cheering.)

MS. MCGINN: -- wearing red on Fridays is an easy task especially during football season where Herbie Husker leads by example. Our

members were generous in their donations of comfort items, holiday packages, and cards to support those who are deployed far and wide.

Unit 470 in Department of Wisconsin sent care packages to those serving overseas that included items for the K-9s serving with them. Their camo quilt project provided quilts, cooling scarves, handmade cards, and pocket flags to deploying troops.

Unit 47 in Hammon, Louisiana, encouraged ninth grade students studying history at Ponchatoula High School to write letters and cards to the soldiers stationed overseas.

Many departments encourage their unit members to complete community emergency response training and involve their state's emergency personnel in the training. They prepared emergency kits and plans not only for their communities but for military families moving into their local neighborhoods.

The Department of Wyoming had 24 units participate in a state-wide advertising campaign donating to local blood drives and manning sandbag detail in strategic areas during the flood season. Blood drives were also held in other departments during times of low supply and disaster.

From presenting blue star and gold star banners, to holding welcome home events, to showing patriotic support in the form of yellow ribbons, and signing up for the American Legion's Action Alerts, members promoted the National security programs of the American Legion actively and passionately, building brand loyalty and awareness of who we are.

One great story that illustrates why we, as Auxiliary members, do what we do came from Unit 34 in Department of Kentucky where the American Legion Post 34 family came together to honor the request of Staff Sergeant Aaron Halverson. Aaron wrote to his grandmother that some of the soldiers stationed with him at Osan Air Base South Korea were away from home for the first time and he wanted to provide them with a Christmas meal.

Not only Post 34 members but other units in Kentucky sent donations, and Aaron reported that the soldiers in the 34th -- 35th Air Defense Artillery would carry with them the memory of this special Christmas dinner in Korea.

(Applause.)

MS. MCGINN: The stories contained in all of the all the reports I received should make every member proud to belong to the American Legion Auxiliary and value the impact we make in the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, our children, and our communities. Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Very nice. Thank you.

MS. MCGINN: Oh, thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Beth. One of our biggest organizational challenges is to increase the visibility in community as we serve veterans, our military, and their families. We rely heavily on strong

grassroots public relations efforts to meet this challenge. Here with her report is National Public Relations Committee Chairman Brenda Collins.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: Good morning, Madam National President Mary. When I was a little girl, my mom told me a story. As a small girl, the only communication she had was letters and newspapers. It would take several days to weeks to get the results of a presidential election. When I was a girl, it took a couple of days to get the same information.

In this day and age, we usually know the winner before the last votes are cast. This is how far communications has evolved. And as public relations managers, it's our job to understand the puzzle of the new and old tools and use evolving technology to better tell our story, because it's essential to tell our story in order to grow our organization. We can't fulfil our mission without it.

Our departments and units have worked this year with all forms of communications. Department newsletters, unit bulletins, letters to the editor, articles in the newspaper, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, department and National websites.

There was a picture posted in the Nevada Journal Newspaper of juniors from the sixth district in Iowa as they held their spring conference in March.

(Cheering.)

MS. COLLINS: Four of the officers elected were from a Nevada Unit 48. April Goodwin won the wheelchair dance in Maryland at their department creative arts festival. April went on to win a gold medal at the National Creative Arts Festival this year. She also won two silver medals

--

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: -- one for dance and one for a dramatic reading. April is an Army veteran. South Dakota had a campaign this year --

(Cheering.)

MS. COLLINS: -- entitled Toot Your Horn for a press book promotion of newspaper articles, photographs, and all forms of public relations materials for the functions to be held in the units.

Noelle Bonjour, public relations chairman for Charles R. Doman ALA Unit 131 received a certificate and a monetary gift as winner of the best press book. The Department of Louisiana had over 2,000 inches of press in local newspapers throughout the state.

(Applause.)

MS. COLLINS: One newspaper publishes an article every two weeks requesting plastic bags for Vermillion Unit 29 in Abbeville, Louisiana. The bags are used for compassion mats for the homeless. Those articles have generated many donations and favorable recognition for the ALA.

At Christmas, Washington Unit 54 members worked with the children during Gess Elementary ornament night and made Christmas

ornaments. The unit members also prepared 30 gift bags for veterans who lived alone in the community.

The gift bags were filled with baked goods, a ham, canned fruits, vegetables, pads and pens, a calendar, and other gifts. Items valued at over \$50 each. The gifts were able to bring Christmas to 30 veterans in the area.

Units from East to West show their member pride and have taken advantage of public relations material along with the tool kits on the National website at [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org). Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Brenda. The American Legion Auxiliary believes education is vital to democracy. Investing time and money to educate our youth is one of the best investments in our future. Please welcome to the stage National Education Committee Chairman Norma Tramm.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: Madam National President. Solomon Ortiz said, "Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students." Giving INTO education is one of the most supported in the education program.

Do you remember the Scholastic book order catalog and the fun it was picking out your own books to order? Many students do not have that opportunity. Unit 70 Department of Montana allowed 24 grade school children the chance to spend \$8 and order their own books. The education chairman sat down with each child to ensure they would find the books that they wanted. And then the unit placed a sticker in the books with a ALA unit name and number.

Members in Hamstead Unit 167 North Carolina prepared much needed supplies for two local Midland high schools. Notice the headsets in the picture? They really make a difference and help students stay focused on their projects or their daily work.

Tyler Cates Unit 281 Tennessee provided shoes and socks to a needed veterans family as they only had flip flops and were not allowed to participate in physical education classes.

A unit in Iowa assisted a veteran's family that had gotten behind in their school lunch program. Franklin Unit 73 Virginia purchased 114 light bulbs to provide students with adequate light while at home studying and doing homework.

Pleasantdale Unit 354 Nebraska donated --

(Cheering.)

MS. TRAMM: -- donated ten plus books to their school that reflected information about Veteran's Day, Constitution Day, Education -- Election Day, and U.S. flag history and etiquette. Unit number 18 Department of Nevada donated 35 pocket-sized copies of the Constitution to a local high school.

Hurricane Matthew disrupted education for many students. The American Legion Auxiliary unit stepped up and provided what students needed. They served meals to students and brought backpacks full of school supplies. Many schools were closed so students were found getting their education in community and building -- buildings and churches. Our members not only found the needed items for their learning, but also provided group time in shelters as well as tutoring.

Service, Not Self. Our members are the best. Benjamin Franklin said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Many units invested in the future of our youth. This has been a great year for scholarships. Units not only donated to the National scholarships, but also provided local and department scholarships. Congratulations, and know that you have made college life a bit easier for these students.

Thanks to National President Mary we were able to distribute larger National scholarships to assist students in the educational opportunities. I want you to see the faces of our future. The future that is a bit brighter because of your generous spirit.

Non-traditional Scholarship recipient Hannah Travatt said in part, "Your generosity has blessed my family and me so very much. My husband and I are both students with two small children. This scholarship is easing the burden for our family, and I am so grateful to you and the ALA for the opportunity."

Spirit of Youth recipient Michaela Clunkner said, "Thank you so much for selecting me as a Spirit of Youth scholarship recipient. I'm very proud to be part of the American Legion Auxiliary, and I'm humbled by this scholarship."

Children of Warriors National President's Scholarship recipient Gabriella White said in part, "I'm honored to have been chosen as a recipient. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and I will strive to prove myself worthy of this opportunity you have given me."

Sydney Long said in part, "This was a fantastic scholarship award, which I'm most grateful for. I will make you proud of your investment in my future."

Caitlyn Orkin said in part, "I feel extremely humbled and honored and appreciative for receiving this significant award which boosts my confidence and inspiration to realize my dream of becoming an aerospace engineer. I'm also leaving for basic training the day after I graduate high school to become an engineer in the Minnesota Air National Guard. Your generosity --

(Applause.)

MS. TRAMM: -- truly makes a difference." Yoohoo. Amy Glover said in part, "I know it would have been an honor for my grandfather to know that I, his granddaughter, was awarded this scholarship. I will be able to become a high school history teacher and be able to teach the youth all about the amazing things veterans have done for our country. Thank you so much."

There is much pride in knowing that you, we, made a difference in the lives of these young people. Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Norma. Here with her request -- oops, I'm sorry. Yeah, here with her report, please welcome National Secretary Dubbie Buckler.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Because we know how much you want to hear some of this stuff. Madam President, and wonderful people out in the audience, we are half-way through the American Legion Auxiliary's 5-Year Centennial Strategic Plan.

Everything we do at National Headquarters is geared toward achieving the five goals adopted by the National Executive Committee. And staff members are volunteering their time right alongside the goal and strategy team members to ensure the ALA's future. And I'm being told, you're getting glare.

Resourcing the strategies require investing in the ALA from our reserve funds and adopting a due structure that addresses our financial needs in a practical, respectful way. The findings of the Organizational Effective Assessment survey are pretty clear; members think our dues are modest to low; dues are not a factor in membership decline; we must improve our effectiveness to strengthen the ALA and develop good leadership at all levels; and we must improve how we treat each other to make membership meaningful.

Goal center successes include presentation and publications on clarifying the roles of governance and management; civility; the Constitution & Bylaws as a framework for civility; DEC 101, an orientation for your department governing board members, and fiduciary stewardship, plus the department secretary training at National Headquarters.

We provided three copies to each department of the updates to the ALA Department Operations Guide, that very small, 8-pound, 600-page document that took 4 years to create and another year to update. And I will just say, if you have the original version, everything in it is correct, the updates just added additional information.

We updated the Poppy Guide and other ALA branding PR and Foundation resources, expanded foundation resources, and there are now many ALA branded marketing resources such as the 100th anniversary year logo, banner, and signage templates that can be downloaded and customized by departments and units. The ALA National website has over 2,000 resource materials online free for members. No, we're not going to go through all 2,000.

(Laughter.)

MS. BUCKLER: But what you just saw is only a sample of the things that are available for you. The online dues renewal payment option continuously grows in popularity. Twenty-five percent more members paid online or over the phone this year.

The ALAforVeterans.org national website can be accessed by simply tapping an icon on your tablet or smart phone. We can text replacement membership cards. And now over a third of our website access comes via smart phones or mobile devices. The number of online users has increased 66 percent over 3 years. People can donate online and new members can join online, it's all about member empowerment and convenience.

This year the ALA Call to Service Corps AmeriCorps VISTA grants came to an end. It was a great seven-year run. And because we did such a wonderful job in the veteran space, those grants were extended and extended until literally the money ran out.

The ALA received over \$4 million in grants from the Corporation for National Community Service, resulting in the ALA placing over 300 ALA AmeriCorps VISTAs in some 60 ALA departments and organizations, and external organizations. The program greatly expanded awareness about the American Legion Auxiliary.

Now many of you hear me say this, I'm going to say it again. We're a big corporation, and you can be proud that your National Headquarters has a stellar record of audits. Our external audits have earned us again the highest marks on our National finances, National Headquarter financial processes, grant compliance, foundation finances benefits, and the magazine which is also audited.

Proudly, your National Headquarters received A-plus results from every entity that audits us. And, again, no criticism from regulatory or watchdog groups, no 60 Minutes camera crews showing up on our doorsteps.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: I'm going to take a moment to brag a little bit on behalf of everyone at National Headquarters. We've had a great track record of external audits. And our great track record, we seem to take it for granted. I just want to remind you, other national organizations would give their eye teeth to be able to give that report that I just delivered.

ALA departments exist because ALA National has granted each department a charter which allows the departments to use our name and trademarks. Departments are also tax exempt because departments are included under the ALA National IRS group exemption.

So without National, departments and units wouldn't and couldn't exist. Everyone here is a part of National, and I hope everyone here is proud of your National Headquarters.

Compared to other national membership organizations, the National Headquarters of the American Legion Auxiliary supports the staff to member ratio that's between 2 to 10 times higher than other membership organizations. That means we serve more members with fewer staff members than any other large national membership organization.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: ALA staff are committed, we put in long hours, especially here at National Convention, and we're paid less than our public and private sector counterparts. Most staff members are also Legion

Family members. They remain at National Headquarters out of devotion to the mission, certainly not because of what we pay them.

Our external auditor has stated that the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters can't get any leaner and still function as required to serve our purpose and comply with corporate and legal regulations. So it's some things that I hope will make you proud. The magazine, do you like it?

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: The magazine is audited with A-plus marks. And I will tell that was not the case a few years ago. And now three years in a row, we've earned Ozzie & Eddie award recognition, and that's tantamount to the Academy Awards of the publishing industry.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And the magazine is now online to wider audiences outside the American Legion Auxiliary. It's now included in the digital military newspaper library, which is a repository of military news and culture from around the country.

So about this good-looking magazine. You're getting a better-looking magazine with a glossy cover at no extra cost, and expanded content because we know how to negotiate contracts, with 33 percent more pages all at a cost that is less per issue than in 2008.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And that also takes into consideration that we provide complimentary copies of *Auxiliary* magazine to every member of Congress, every Legion post, we send five copies to every VA facility, and we recently added all 140 USO locations that now receive complementary copies of *Auxiliary* magazine.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: We think that's a good investment of sharing the importance of who we are. The American Legion Auxiliary's Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 5 is, With The American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty. Brand loyalty, our promise to deliver our mission.

We've engaged a public relations expert -- a public relations firm called MSLGROUP. That's a national news release service that specializes in strategic communications and engagement. We've been doing that for a little over a year now with tremendous return on our investment.

Over a 20 -- over a 12-month period of time they have written five news stories, each one features the ALA. The subject matter so far, American flag etiquette; ALA Girls Nation; the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival; Veterans Day; and how the ALA advocates for veterans.

The distribution of these specially created news articles include small to medium news outlets and to large newspapers such as those in San Francisco, LA, Chicago, Baltimore, San Antonio, and many, many more. All in the areas we serve small, medium, to middle markets.

Now the National Headquarters has always done a good job of preparing and sending out media releases, but I bet you all didn't know that.

Because as one organization out of the more than one million non-profit organizations churning out press releases, when we send them out on our own they're one in a million. And in this case that doesn't make them that special.

Using the professional service has resulted -- going back to that number million -- in millions of reader views about articles about the ALA's mission impact. So here's where resourcing the Centennial Strategic Plan, investing in the American Legion Auxiliary pays off big time.

The cost to the ALA, if we were to buy the equivalent advertising space in print and in -- take three -- electronic outlets for these five stories, if we had had to pay for the exposure we've gotten that had been about \$1.6 billion. That's the value of doing this. What we actually paid, the cost for MSL to develop the stories and Brand Point to distribute the five stories, \$121,000.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: That's a return on our investment, for those of you quickly trying to do the math in your head, and I know you all are, that's a return on our investment of 1,135 to 1. That is a great investment of our reserve funds, ladies.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: The annual impact of the American Legion Auxiliary in your National Convention Guide and Annual Report, I really hope you look up this page in there, it's near the front. The annual impact of the American Legion Auxiliary is almost \$2 billion.

That's the value of everything you do, everything you raise, everything you give out, everything you spend all across -- all around the world for American Legion Auxiliary members. That's a huge impact. We matter.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: I shared with Mary recently this factoid that I thought you would find interesting. ALA members began paying dues in 1922. Seniors and Juniors alike paid 75 cents to National. Now, dues were not increased until 1938, and ironically when the National President was Clara Douglas from the Department of Washington.

Now according to US inflation value of the dollar calculator, and you all know what I'm talking about that, those of you who purchased a home many years ago know that if you went to purchase that home today it'd be a lot more money, right? So there's an inflation calculator that shows what the value of that home in, you know, the birthday cards that if you were born in 1963 this is -- these were the highlights and this is what things cost, and today they cost a little more, don't they?

So according to the US Government's inflation value of dollar calculator, 75 cents in 1938 is the equivalent of \$12.60 in 2017. So had the ALA implemented an inflation-based due structure in 1938 with the first dues increase, the annual dues for all members in 2017 would be \$12.60 per annum.

Now Norma just mentioned Ben Franklin quote about investing in knowledge, I'd like to take just a quick investment in knowledge

moment. I've heard a lot of comments and had a lot of questions the last couple of days, so this is just an educational moment. And that is the role of a governing board.

I started out by saying the American Legion Auxiliary is a big corporation. That means as a corporation it is governed by corporate laws and it has to have a corporate board of directors. That is what your National Executive Committee is. It is the corporation's board of directors.

Each member of the NEC is a representative of your department. They represent you to the National Board with the purpose of serving and looking out for the entire organization because their role and purpose is to protect and preserve the American Legion Auxiliary and make sure it is adequately funded and adequately resourced. That is their legal responsibility.

And that's not the legal responsibility of a convention delegate. You can't be sued for actions you take, the NEC can. So I just want to bring that up because comments are, why would the NEC have the responsibility, or have the authority, be given the authority to make incremental dues increases? It's because it is their legal responsibility under the law to make sure the American Legion Auxiliary is adequately funded to serve its mission.

Your opinion on the proposal that will be before your later on is your opinion. But please understand that the NEC is an appropriate body as a corporate board of directors to have that responsibility. The other -- (Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: The other thing that I have been asked about a lot, so this is our second Ben Franklin investment and knowledge moment, and that's the difference between reserve funds or the purpose of reserve funds and the purpose of dues.

A membership organization is required to be -- have its operations funded by dues, that's why, da-da, we're a membership organization; the membership supports the operations of the organization. Any responsible organization also should have adequate reserve funds. And the benchmark for all organizations is that you should have two-and-a-half times your annual budget held in reserve funds for emergencies, for income shortfalls, and for special projects.

So that's why it's appropriate for a building purchase to come from reserve funds, that's a special project, and for a centennial strategic plan to be resourced from reserve funds, because that's a special project. So those are my little two Ben Franklin educational moments based on, literally, hundreds of questions I've been asked since I've been here.

So going back to calculating inflation from the ALA's founding today -- to today, our current dues rate is 30 percent less than what members were comparably paying 70 years ago. National Headquarters is 30 percent more cost efficient today than we were 70 years ago all while serving 30 percent more members.

So I would leave all of you that -- with this comment. I started out by saying everything we do at National Headquarters is driven by

the Centennial Strategic Plan and achieving the five goals. American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, we have 1.5 million incoming emails this past year. About 25 percent of those go to Marta and me. And those are the ones that make it all through the filters.

So a comment about our need to foster an internal culture of goodwill. I'm human, we're all human, we try to answer every email, sometimes they get lost in cyberspace. If you -- I say this all the time, if there's a burning question that needs to be asked of your National Headquarter staff and you don't get an answer right away, then please remind us or contact us again. And it's not always reasonable to think you're going to get an answer in two hours. I'm just saying.

So in the spirit of Goal 2. Remember, enhancing membership strength requires that we achieve the other four goals. The main issue facing this organization the brutal fact is that by year three of a new member joining this organization, 45 percent of those new members drop out.

Members will renew if they enjoy the experience of belonging or because they are so proud of what they see the American Legion Auxiliary doing that they want to financially support it.

I want to thank all of you for everything you do to advance the five goals of the American Legion Auxiliary, and thank you for being wonderful stewards of our mission.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And on a moment of personal privilege, National President Mary, it has been a ride. And for those of you who don't know the little back story on that, we have jokingly referred to each other as Thelma and Louise, and I will leave your imaginations to some of the driving excursions that might have led to that little story.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Just so you know, I was not driving.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Past Presidents Parley is a form that brings together the experience of former Auxiliary presidents to utilize their expertise in action -- I'm sorry, in active service to the organization. Virginia Hobbs, national Past Presidents Parley Committee chairman, please come forward to give your report.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. HOBBS: National President Mary and Delegates, parley is a verb meaning to speak with another. As we use this to describe this committee, we have our past presidents speaking to others. In this connotation, we have past presidents mentoring others, talking about how to manage our growing governing documents, and recapping successful ways of promoting our programs.

These are the ways of our past presidents engaging and developing leaders at all levels of the Auxiliary. Sounds a little bit like goal

three of our strategic plan. This development is vital to our survival. Since the Past Presidents Parley is an activity as opposed to a program, reports are not required.

Special thanks are extended to the 27 departments and hundreds of units who did submit reports. Without reports, we would be unable to share accomplishments or other ideas from units and departments.

Past Presidents Parley continued to support health care scholarships with the departments of Illinois, Texas, California, and Michigan

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(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- each reporting scholarships totaling \$10,000 or more. And among these, the Department of California awarded a single scholarship that was \$4,000.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: Units across the country continue to recognize and support our female veterans. While every report mentions this phase of the activity, special accolades go to the Departments of California and Florida --

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- for the efforts of their units. These efforts are not focused on one day a year of recognition but provide luncheons, cards, gift cards, gift bags of toiletries, and stand downs.

Florida's Department president selected her special project, A Final Salute, which assists and support homeless female veterans and their children. Efforts on this project raised a total of over \$30,0000.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Great job, Florida.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: During the Woman of the Year luncheon, 21 department unit members of the year will be recognized for their outstanding accomplishments of this past year. While these members have not attained leadership positions beyond that of unit president, who knows, we may see them in the future holding higher leadership positions.

Shortly, you'll hear from the five service women selected as this year's honorees in our service -- Salute to Active Duty Service Women. Many thanks to the departments and units who participated in this activity. Thanks to a little extra push, we're able to have a representative from each of the five branches of service this year.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Since 2003, the American Legion Auxiliary has recognized female service members for their dedication to the service of our nation. Today, we have five outstanding female members of our armed forces to recognize through our salute to active duty service women.

This year's recipients reflect the balancing of military life, community service, and family. We are pleased to introduce each service branch's representative. First, we will hear from our Coast Guard service

woman. This year's honoree from the Coast Guard is Lieutenant Commander Sarah Janaro, who originally hails from Winchester, Illinois.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: And, Illinois, you may want to talk to her, she told me she had been a Legionnaire, but it sounds like she needs to pay some Legion dues. And she said it was through her home town. Lieutenant Commander Janaro is a 2006 graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, and presently serves as a public affairs officer and as a response officer in the field.

Additionally, she serves as a Coast Guard fellow for Senator Gary Peters as part of the Coast Guard's Congressional Affairs Program. Lieutenant Commander Janaro holds an exceptional reputation among subordinate commands and superiors for impeccable decision making alike.

As a public affairs officer, Janaro expertly managed service reputation responding to hundreds of global media inquiries. Her improvements to the Coast Guard's first ever broadcast program, the Paratus Report, increased viewership 90 percent and raised awareness of senior leader initiatives.

Janaro demonstrates an impressive desire to enhance herself, the Coast Guard, and others around her. Lieutenant Commander Janaro is actively involved in her community. She demonstrates a unique ability to foster a team environment in any situation. She assumed a lead role for her church's service project team that aids the local community, much like our community service program does. She also mentored college students interning in Washington, D.C. through the Fund of American Studies.

In 2013, the Janaro started the Damascus Road Foundation, a non-profit whose mission is to facilitate transformative global service experiences for young adults and have a commitment to lead and serve others in their communities.

To date, the foundation has provided support to young adults on mission in Rwanda, Uganda, Dominican Republic, South Africa, Thailand, and Slovakia. Lieutenant Commander Janaro and her husband Jeff, a Coast Guard JAG officer, have a two-year daughter, Juliette, who's precious as can be, I met her back stage. Please join me in welcoming Lieutenant Commander Sarah Janaro of the United States Coast Guard.

(Applause.)

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JANARO: Good morning, everyone. I am truly honored to be here with you today. As an Illinois Girl State alumna --

(Cheering and applause.)

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JANARO: -- and now a Coast Guard officer, a military spouse, and a mother, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do for service members, veterans, their families, and our youth.

You motto, Service, Not Self, speaks volumes because you carry it out. Your commitment to volunteerism has an impact on the lives of many. Your support and encouragement are so appreciated. And so as the

American Legion Auxiliary is approaching 100 years of service, I want to leave you all with encouragement as well.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." And that it was I hope to instill in my two-year-old who is backstage, and I hope she's behaving well, so I'm going to keep this short. I also want to save time for the phenomenal ladies who are going to be coming out on stage as well. But, again, thank you for all that you do. And I am honored to be here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Our second honoree today is from the United States Navy.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: Representing the Navy in our salute to service women is Aviation Ordnance Technician 1st Class Susana Saenz. I say -- I put the emphasis on 1st Class because someone got a recent promotion.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Woohoo. Petty Officer Saenz is in her 11th year of Naval service. She is a command career counselor with the responsibility for tracking and coordinating career intentions for 163 sailors and ensuring that each is provided the resources needed through career development boards.

Saenz is heavily involved in community service activities for youth and diversity. She is a member of American Legion Auxiliary Unit 138 of Holtville, California.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Her commanding officer stated that Saenz is number 1 out of 28 highly competitive petty officer second class. Her commitment and reliability out shines all her peers. I think that's a given considering she's gotten a promotion in two months.

In discussing support of women's roles in the armed services, Saenz states, "The increase in roles of military women leaders is raising cohesion, morale, readiness, and effectiveness within units. Women are masters at team work and bringing their peers work together at peace."

Please join me in welcoming Aviation Ordnance Technician 1st Class Susana Saenz.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:  
Ladies, lovely ladies out there, how you all doing today?

(Cheering.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:  
That's right. I want to start off by saying, God bless America.

(Cheering.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:  
Whoop. Right. Because I can say that here, right? Yes. Amen. Standing up for America means standing up for God, for God who blessed our land. The

one issue I do still see, though, is many people want God to bless America today, they just don't want to be one nation under God. The issue is that you can't have one without the other. Right?

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

That's right. But all of you here know that and understand that. Because your core values is to honor God, love your family, and defend our country.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

This is the reason why I am involved with the American Legion Auxiliary, because of the heart that all you women have for this organization. There's no better organization than this one.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

That's right. You guys uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of choice, preserve and defend the Constitution, and, above all, foster patriotism.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Which is the strongest weapon the United States has is the patriotism in America.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

The more united we stand, the more threat we become. Our forces are strong, ladies, they're strong because of you.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Let us keep in mind Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms." All right.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

This isn't a battle with us, this is a battle above us. Not all nations and their leaders understand that. Freedom is not the right to do as we please, but it's the opportunity to do what is right.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

And doing what is right got me here today, ladies. Doing what is right and my desire to stand for liberty, freedom, and fairness is what led me to join the Navy.

A little bit about me. First generation of my family, the youngest of four, the baby girl that decided to join the Navy. I'm telling you, my mother about had a heart attack, all right.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

She wanted to cry, she went on depression, so much happened to her but God

bless her because she's still here today and she loves the Navy as much as I do. All right.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

The biggest thing I have learned is liberty, freedom, and fairness are things worth fighting for, devoting our lives for. Some people dream the dream, some people live the dream, some people defend the dream. God bless the defenders and those that support the defenders.

(Cheering and applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Galatians 5:13, "For you have been called to live in freedom. Use your freedom to serve one another in love." In love. This is the love that you guys give all service women and men out there. Thank you, guys. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

One day we will turn on the news -- and I hold onto this belief because lately we've been seeing a lot of chaos out there, haven't we, ladies? Yes? Recently one of the ships that wrecked, sailors that are missing, God bless them and their family. Hopefully we find them, hopefully.

One day we will turn on the news and hear that there's peace on Earth. Until that day, so I hold onto the things I believe in; my faith, your love, and our freedom.

(Applause.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Thank you, American Legion Auxiliary. I want to thank Mary E. Davis, National President, Department of California President --

(Cheering.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Amen. Wendy O'Brien and all the ladies that work under her. A special thanks to Anita Biggs --

(Cheering.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Yes. I know she's out there somewhere, can't see. Right there, baby girl. Love you. Anita Biggs. And my lovely mentor who's unable to be here today, from 138 Unit, Kim Benson. We love you, girl.

(Cheering.)

AVIATION ORDNANCE TECH 1ST CLASS SAENZ:

Above all, I want to thank my parents and my son who's back there, too, holding it down. Probably flirting with the ladies back there. He's nine. He's a charmer. But thank you so much. I am so blessed to be here, I love you all, I look forward to speaking with you guys whenever we run into each other. Thank you. God bless you guys.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: From the Marine Corps we have Captain Amanda Matthew. Captain Matthew was raised in Imperial Beach, California, and Roatan Bay Islands, Honduras.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: After graduating from high school in California, she attended the University of Arizona --

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- through a Naval ROTC scholarship. In May 2011 she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps.

Second Lieutenant Matthew completed the basics school in January 2012, after which she attended the logistics officers school in Camp Johnson, North Carolina. Following that school --

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- Captain Matthew returned to the First Combat Engineer Battalion, First Marine Division as the first female to serve at this combat arms unit in accordance with the exception to policy, and she's -- that's the end of a sentence.

In May 2013, Matthew completed the animal packers course in Bridgeport, California, not Connecticut --

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- as the first female to complete this course. In August 2013, Matthew completed logistics for the 21st century at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill through the Institute of Defense and Business.

As a First Lieutenant, in October 2013, Matthew deployed in the support of Operation Enduring Freedom 13.2 to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, as the battalion assistant logistics officer and maintenance management officer.

Re-deploying in April 2014, Matthew was transferred to service as the motor transport platoon commander and executive officer for Engineers Support Company. In December 2014, she was transferred to serve as the arms ammunition and explosive officer and armory officer for the battalion.

In May 2015, Matthew was awarded the 2015 United States Marine Corps Motor Transport Officer of the Year and promoted to the rank of Captain. In June 2015, Captain Matthew reported to Savannah State University where she currently serves as the Marine officer instructor. She is pursuing her MBA there, and is scheduled to earn that MBA in December 2017. Captain Matthew is married and is currently eight months pregnant with her first born.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Please join me in welcoming Captain Amanda Matthew of the United States Marine Corps.

(Cheering and applause.)

CAPTAIN MATTHEW: Thank you all so much for being here today. I am truly humbled to be in a room full of some of the most influential civilian and military leaders of our time. First, I would like to thank the American Legion Auxiliary for what you all do day in and day out is tremendous. And most of this, I truly was not fully aware of, and I've shared

with the Marines as well as the mid-shipmen that I'm working with and I have quite a bit of interest now in our local post for American Legion.

(Cheering and applause.)

CAPTAIN MATTHEW: I would like to thank Ms. Mary Davis, whom, if it were not for, I would not be here today. So thank you so much. For my brother who's sitting in the audience, he traveled from San Diego to be here and sharing this occasion with all of you.

(Applause.)

CAPTAIN MATTHEW: Thank you. And I would like to thank ultimately the United States Marine Corps who has afforded me an unprecedented amount of opportunities and experiences in a short six year period. And that's a couple -- a personal and professional story I'd like to share with you all.

So I was first slated to attend -- my first duty station was supposed to be in Japan and a couple weeks before I was informed that I'd actually be serving in California with First Combat Engineer Battalion as part of that exception to policy.

And it would be an understatement if I said that the transition for the Marines was easy because all change is different. But it wasn't necessarily difficult either, it was just different for them. And what I realized very quickly was that I didn't need to prove myself to anybody, I had earned the title Marine the day that I commissioned. And, instead --

(Applause.)

CAPTAIN MATTHEW: Instead, what I needed to do was hold to the values of a leader that I had been taught were going to make you successful. And that meant taking care of the Marines, and pushing them hard, and holding them to high standards. That meant mission accomplishment, and that meant empathy and consideration.

And I would say as we went through different missions in Afghanistan, we became -- the more I focused on those, the more tighter knit, more successful that we became both deployed and in garrison. And those Marines there are forever my brothers, and that brotherhood will forever stay with me as the human being and the person that I am today.

Fast forward now, I'm serving as a Marine officer/instructor at Savannah State University in Southern Georgia, which is a historically black college university, and I'm the first Caucasian to serve there. And what I found --

(Applause.)

CAPTAIN MATTHEW: What I have found is that exact same mindset that was successful there -- is identically successful there, and our unit is doing amazing as far as our numbers, our quotas, and the things that we're doing as far as pursuing commissioning United States Marine officers.

And I chose to share those two seemingly different stories with you all because I think what it underlined to me was much of what the beliefs that I understand the American Legion Auxiliary represent is that it wasn't female or male, and it wasn't black or white, ultimately it's taking care

of those underneath you, service above self, that is what's making those experiences the most successful and the most influential to me in my personal life.

And I have learned a tremendous amount from you all in the short time that I've been associated. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunities with you all as well as in the United States Marine Corps, and I couldn't thank you more for being here today.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Madam President, I need to interrupt this for -- program for just a moment. I have a note from the Department of Florida.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: They told me that the donation to Final Salute was more than \$30,000, that it was actually \$110,000.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Sorry for the interruption, but I thought it was worth it.

From the United States Army, our honoree -- for the 2017 Salute to Service Women is Major Malukah Morgan. Major Morgan is a native of Neptune, New Jersey --

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: -- where her family has a long history of government and military service. Major Morgan received an ROTC scholarship to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. After commissioning in 2005, Major Morgan attended the military intelligence officer basic course at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: She earned a Master's degree in health science with a concentration in emergency and disaster management from Touro University in Cypress, California. Major Morgan recently graduated from the command and general staff college at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, while simultaneously attending Central Michigan University and earning a graduate certificate in cyber security.

Major Morgan's assignments included unmanned aerial vehicle platoon leader with 4th Brigade -- it's an Army term, I should be able to get that one out -- 4th Brigade --

(Laughter.)

MS. HOBBS: -- 1st Calvary Division at Fort Bliss, Texas. She deployed with her soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from October 2006 to January 2008. While deployed, Major Morgan became the military intelligence company executive officer. Major Morgan was assigned to Aberdeen Proving Ground in June 2008 where she worked for the Army Evaluation Center as an evaluator testing intelligence systems.

After graduating at the top of her class in the military intelligence captain career course, Morgan was assigned to the United States Army Pacific Command in Hawaii. Morgan works -- currently works for the

National Security Agency at Fort Mead, Maryland for the Army Cryptologic Center as the European desk officer.

Her awards and decorations are impressive, and too lengthy to mention. But I will say -- mention that she does hold a Bronze Star Medal.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: In addition to serving our country, Major Morgan also makes time to serve her community. While living in Hawaii, she raised over \$20,000 in scholarships funds for her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated, volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, and raised awareness for human trafficking victims throughout the Pacific.

Major Morgan enters the volunteer ranks at each of her duty stations and returned to her roots during spring break to speak to the Neptune High School Naval Junior Officer Training Corps --

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: -- cadets from the military and in-college groups. She later returned to Neptune to be the senior ranking judge for their annual drill meet. In her current duty assignment at the NSA, Major Morgan has developed -- has devoted her time as an alumni of Morgan State University to her loved Bear battalion.

She has formally mentored over six ROTC cadets and informally mentored many others throughout the year. She was named mentor of the year for the 2016-2017 academic year and was the guest speaker at the ROTC Women Leaders forum attended by female cadets from Towson University, Wyola College, and Bowey University.

Major Morgan imparted her experience to the young cadets about the challenges and rewards being a soldier, mother, and wife. Major Morgan firmly believes that it is important to give back to the community you came from, and the community in which you live. She truly has a servant's heart, and believes in the giving back both in and out of uniform.

Major Morgan's husband is a regional director at the University of Maryland University College. They have two children, one three, and one seven months old. She attends -- enjoys attending Mommy and Me swim lessons with her sons and being on the soccer mom's snack committee. Please join me in a warm welcome for U.S. Army Major Malikh Morgan.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

MAJOR MORGAN: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MAJOR MORGAN: That was a lot.

(Laughter.)

MAJOR MORGAN: Thank you. Thank you very much. It is truly a blessing for me to be here today and I just want to thank God for allowing me to be here amongst all you beautiful women. I want to thank the American Legion Auxiliary. I was taken back by how much you do throughout each of your units, and your communities, and to make our nation great.

Truly thank you all for your service, your constant commitment to service members and their families. I can't thank you for doing all that you do effortlessly. So first, my applause and thanks goes to every single woman represented in this audience today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MAJOR MORGAN: I would also like to thank Unit 4346 --

(Cheering.)

MAJOR MORGAN: -- from Neptune, New Jersey. As a past Girl State delegate from '99, uhh, uhh, short while ago, this unit was my first example of what true service looked like in a community. It was more than just the small parades, it was the outpouring that they took care of our small community in Neptune, New Jersey.

I also like to thank Doreen Gallagher who nominated me for this award, a past president. She was an upper classman when I was in high school, and I looked up to her then. And through her continued service, I continue to look up to her now.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank my husband, my right-hand man, my best friend, the father of my two amazing boys for all that he does as a service spouse and supporting me in this career. Without him, it would be impossible to be an active duty service member and have any type of success without such a great spouse who supports me. So thank you.

(Applause.)

MAJOR MORGAN: My mother told me, "Always leave something better than the way you found it." I took that to heart not only in deciding to join the military, but in every aspect of every part in my life. I decided then that I would always take a community, an organization, a job, or even a kitchen and leave it better than the way I found it.

(Laughter.)

MAJOR MORGAN: When I was a young girl, many people took the time, their efforts, and their talents to pour into me. Whether it was through advice, through a meal, or just a compliment, they took the time to make sure I was uplifted, I was upheld, and I was pushed forward.

Now my goal in life is not measured by success, titles, or ranks, or any monetary gain, but through the legacy that I get to leave in my home town, the community in which I live, and the nation in which I serve.

I leave you with this quote which I thought was profound when I first read it. "Measuring our life by what others do for us may disappoint us. But measuring our lives by what we do will add meaning to the life in which we live."

I don't know who said that, but I truly believe that is the truth. So thank you all again for your commitment to your units, to your communities, and to this nation, service members and their families, and it's an honor to represent the Army today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Our final honoree today is from the United States Air Force.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: Brigadier General Christine Burckle is the Assistant Adjutant General for Air and serves as the Commander of the Utah Air National Guard. General Burckle is the first woman to serve as the Commander of the Utah Air National Guard and is the first woman to hold the rank of Brigadier General on either of the Army or Air side.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: In her current position, her responsibilities include ensuring combat readiness and mission capacity of the 151st Air Refueling Wing and its tenant units. General Burckle is also responsible for working with authorities at all levels on all aspects of the operations, personnel, equipment, and funding of the Utah Air National Guard. She is highly involved in her local community.

Her inclusive leadership style, open door communication policy, and support for professional development place her in high esteem with all echelons of the organization. General Burckle received her commission through the ROTC program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: She graduated first in her undergraduate navigation school at Chapel Air Force Base, Texas, and Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho.

(Cheering.)

MS. HOBBS: In August 1996, she joined the Utah Air National Guard as a KC 135 Stratotanker navigator. She deployed for Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Uphold Democracy, Joint Forge, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, and Operation Noble Eagle. General Burckle logged over 3,000 flight hours in the KC 135.

During her time in the Air Force, General Burckle's service has included roles as director of personnel, community manager, state human resources officer, 151st Air Refueling Wing vice commander, and Joint Force Headquarters director of staff.

General Burckle's list of awards and commendations is distinguished and too lengthy to list in detail. She believes that the work/life balance affects both men and women in their efforts to combine professional and educational demands with the challenges of marriage and children.

She manages her roles with the Utah Air Guard as well as those of being a wife, mother, step-mother, and grandmother. Please join me in welcoming Brigadier General Christine Burckle.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: Wow. Wow. First, I just want to applaud these ladies on this stage for just being amazingly inspirational, I've had such a great time talking to them back stage.

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: Wow. Let's say that again. I am humbled and honored to accept this award, and I want to thank the American Legion Auxiliary for recognizing all of our women in uniform,

and also for your service to all the veterans and all of our service members and their families. I also had no idea how much you do for us. Thank you.

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: Last summer I was given two opportunities of a lifetime. First, to be promoted to Brigadier General. And, second, to be the Commander of the Utah Air National Guard. Both were things --

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: -- I never would have though possible 29 years ago when I first raised my right hand. At that time, I have to admit, that I thought about my military service as a way to pay for college. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, whoo.

(Cheering.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: My plan was to get out once my initial commitment was up, and I never dreamed I'd be standing here today accepting an award like this from a group of amazing women who directly support what I do. So why did I stay in? It's the people. I love this country and I am prepared to die for it. But throughout my service --

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: -- I felt the bond I had with those I served with was the real underlying motivation behind my desire to serve. From the first KC 135 crew I was assigned to at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas -- which, by the way, that was a very old KC 135, they're 60 years old right now, by the way -- to the incredibly professional and dedicated headquarters staff I serve with now.

I am forever indebted to all of the men and women I've had the opportunity to serve with. But I'd have never made it passed those first few years without the support of a few important women in my life. So rather than speaking about my career -- because, frankly, I did my job -- I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge three people who made my career possible.

My mom, Norma. She was one of nine children. She grew up on a farm in mid-western Ohio and never had the opportunity to go to college. She worked hard every day of her life, and she made sure her four children graduated from college, and told all of her kids every day that we could be whatever we wanted to be as long as we worked hard and ate our vegetables.

(Laughter.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: They have vitamins and minerals you'll never find anywhere else. And then there's my first boom operator, Staff Sergeant Diane Avalos. For those of you who don't know, a boom operator is the crew member on the KC 135 who lays in the back of the aircraft and actually passes the gas to the receiver aircraft.

I was fortunate to have Di as my crew mate when I deployed to Desert Storm, which happened within months of my graduation from nav school. And if you ever have to go to war, you want Di by your side. She's the person who called me the night before we deployed and said,

"Pack at least one mini-skirt 'cause you never know if you'll land in place that has a great club."

(Laughter.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: And she's also the person who calmly delivered gas to our B-52 receivers on their way to Bagdad on the initial night of the Iraq war. Thanks, Di, for reminding me that it's actually okay to be a woman while serving in uniform. I've remembered that my whole career.

(Cheering and applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: And lastly my daughter Kate. At 14, maybe she's not quite a woman but she's never complained about me being gone for important things in her life because she knows that freedom isn't free.

She constantly inspires me to work harder and keep dreaming. As an accomplished ballerina, she's already shown herself that she can achieve anything as long as she works hard, has good friends, and keeps her sense of humor. I'm the luckiest mom, and I know Kate not only understands service but she will be a leader whether she ever follows in my footsteps or not.

(Applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: By the way, it was her first day of high school yesterday, and she was like, "Really, Mom, you don't have to walk me to the bus stop, I'm good." But I did.

(Laughter and applause.)

BRIGADIER GENERAL BURCKLE: There are many other women and men, to include my husband, in my life who've influenced and supported my career along the way, too many to list. But to all of you, I challenge you to take a moment to say thanks to those people who support you.

I love wearing this uniform, I couldn't be more proud to be up here representing the thousands of women who proudly serve. I salute them, and I thank you all for saluting me and all of us who serve. Thank you so much.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Ladies, please join me in recognizing these five outstanding service women.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Each has dedicated a portion of her life in service to our nation, and who succeed in balancing the demands of their home, family, and military careers.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. HOBBS: Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sorry. National Vice-President Diane is going to take my chair for a few minutes.

VICE-PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: President Mary is on her way to address the Legion right at this point in time. So she'll be back in a few minutes. But we do want to thank all of those service members so much for allowing us to honor them to today. They're our true heroes. Let's just give them another round of applause for all of our service women.

(Applause.)

VICE-PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And thank you, Virginia, for a wonderful report, for allowing us to honor our service women of the year.

An organization that's been part of our lives for so many years, these dedicated sound financial support, and future planning to ensure its longevity. Steadfast stewardship, our words to describe our National Finance Committee Chairman Peggy Thomas. Please welcome our National Finance Committee Chairman, past National President Peggy Thomas to the stage.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Madam Vice-President Diane. Good morning, all.

AUDIENCE: Good morning.

MS. THOMAS: The National Finance Committee continues to meet the challenges of good fiscal planning to meet today's needs as well as future fiduciary requirements. This committee is comprised of five appointed members, each serving a five-year term.

Currently, the committee is made up of three past National Presidents, including a retired corporation vice-president, plus a retired certified public accountant, and a retired credit CEO. The Committee reviews the draft budget, makes any adjustments needed to reflect new or changing goals, and recommends the budget to the National Executive Committee for its adoption.

Also, in carrying out its role as fiduciary stewards, the ALA National Finance Committee is responsible for investment planning, reviewing financial statements, monitoring member benefits and fund raising campaigns, oversees the financial policies of the Organization, reviewing the annual audit of the Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation, and making physical recommendations to the NEC to ensure that the ALA National Organization is meeting non-profit benchmarks and Government requirements.

The National Finance Committee designates one member as the liaison to the ALA Foundation Board, and another as liaison member to the ALA National Audit Committee.

Due to responsible oversight, we were again able to continue to fund visits to departments by five divisional vice-presidents, and continued the Department Secretary training at National Headquarters. Your Finance Committee believes strongly in the value of ALA mission training to our members and the value of the National junior meetings.

In fiscal year 2017, attendance at ALA mission trainings grew 33 percent from the previous year. And the number of juniors attending National junior meetings has more than doubled from previous years.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: The successful fundraising efforts by our direct mail vendor continues this year with three appeals for the ALA and one for the ALA Foundation. This is a benefit to you. Get a credit card from USAA, spend your money, wisely, of course, and here is the application. As of July 31st, direct mail donations for the ALA Foundation totaled a net \$454,000.

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: In 2016, nearly 106,000 direct mail donations were received. Of these gifts, nearly one-third came from non-members, the Auxiliary continues to be fortunate to have such generous donors both inside and outside the ALA.

The number of people applying for and using the Auxiliary USAA credit card continues to increase. Since we started the member benefit, \$40 million has been charged by card holders, \$40 million. Resulting in \$12,500 in revenue every year being split among departments based on the members' usage. And now I am pleased to announce your National Finance Committee voted to change the distribution formula for credit card royalties, or proceeds you may say, starting with the new fiscal year.

Instead of the current 50/50 split between departments and National, the proceeds will now be a 90/10 split with 90 percent split going to departments and 10 percent --

(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: -- and 10 percent retained by National to cover administrative costs. However, in order to continue to fulfil our future obligations to our members and our veterans, action is needed to address the declining operation revenue from dues.

It has been six years since the \$4 annual senior dues increase was adopted, an amount less than was needed then. With that increase, the National Organization also dropped the National 15 cent per capita rehabilitation assessment. The National Organization hasn't charged the National assessment for five straight years, and that has saved members a half million dollars alone.

Over the last five years, the ALA National Budgets have invested extensively in all levels of our organization. We increased the annual Spirit of Youth and Children of Warriors scholarship amounts by \$40,000, with \$130,000 now being awarded and paid out annually. We fund three department leaders to attend the Department Leadership National Conference, we now present six ALA mission trainings, and six National junior meetings each year, and more departments and units members of all ages are now attending.

We continue to fund department visits by National Divisional Vice-Presidents, we fund the operation expenses of the ALA Foundation so that it can offer Veterans Project grants and (indiscernible) many grants to all levels of our organization, and ALA National recently received a grant that enabled us to award 50 9/11 day of service grants for ALA community projects.

By the NEC resourcing the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan, the ALA has invested in itself in many beneficial ways. That increased awareness about the ALA, and improved our ability to deliver our mission at all levels.

ALA National outcomes and expenditures to help departments include presenting an annual department secretary training workshop at no cost to departments; giving cash awards to departments for their achieving implementing department strategic plans; producing an ALA Strategic Planning Guide for departments; creating the ability for members to pay renewal dues online and by phone; creating the ability for new members to join online; developing the ALA Department Operations Guide; and providing three free copies to each department; developing DEC 101, an orientation training guide for department governing board members; enhancing 990 compliance matters training for departments; and, many other ALA Centennial Strategic Plan initiatives aimed at helping the American Legion at all levels.

We can't let up on the momentum to strengthen our ALA. It's been six years since National dues were raised, and in an amount less than what was needed then. To meet the needs of the ALA and keep up with inflations, dues must be raised, and a prudence dues structure adopted.

Starting in the 2019 membership year, the National Finance Committee addressed the reality that to past three National ALA budgets have been in the red. We voted to have the National controller and his staff perform a comprehensive analysis of what kind of increase and due structure is needed to sustain the financial future of the ALA.

He presented the financial analysis to the ALA National Finance Committee for our review. We presented the due structure to the NEC for its consideration. This process was thorough with over 80 ALA members having reviewed the numbers and the due structure needed to keep pace with inflation.

By an overwhelming vote of 53 to 5 in favor, your NEC's department representatives and voting members adopted the due structure recommendation coming before you at this convention. Ladies, it is prudent and it is necessary. The National Finance Committee sincerely thanks the NEC for its diligent manner in which it's fulfilled its duty of fiduciary stewardship and for recognizing that a due structure was needed that safeguards our future and moves the ALA forward toward creating an internal culture of good will.

We urge each Auxiliary member to recognize her duty of fiduciary stewardship so that the ALA will be -- to be here for another generation, to serve our mission, and help our veterans for years to come. Madam President -- or, Vice President, this concludes my platform remarks. (Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are there any resolutions?

MS. THOMAS: No, ma'am. I think there is something coming from the Constitution and Bylaws, that will be later.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. Thank you for your report, Peggy.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: During this past year national Constitution & Bylaws Chairman Vickie Koutz had the privilege of working alongside departments and units determined to update their governing documents.

Departments and units shared these revising -- or, shared that revising these documents helped to create a sense of goodwill among members. Please welcome to the stage Vickie Koutz, national Constitution & Bylaws chairman.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: Madam National President Mary, you have changed.

(Laughter.)

MS. KOUTZ: The Constitution & Bylaws, otherwise known as our governing documents, are a very important part of our organization. A great idea from several units this year was to make sure the new members have access to one of the most important tools we have. So when you send their membership card, insert a copy of the unit's Constitution & Bylaws.

Several departments have a Constitution & Bylaws fillable template on the website for units to use and keep their own updated. New York shared the history of the preamble and established the Constitution & Bylaws, emphasizing the value of the governing documents and fostering a culture of goodwill.

(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: Rhode Island now has standing rules.

(Cheering.)

MS. KOUTZ: And Ohio came up with a great idea, to have a gathering of their best girlfriends, to review their Constitution & Bylaws, and enjoy a spirit or two.

(Laughter.)

MS. KOUTZ: And, of course, this year we did have quite a few questions. When a department has a secretary and a treasurer, are they both considered officers? The answer is yes.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Constitution requires that each department have the following officers. The Department President, the Department Secretary, Department Treasurer or Department Secretary/Treasurer, an NEC member, and an alternate NEC member.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Constitution & Bylaws is specific in describing these required positions as officers. If your department is incorporated, corporate law requires a corporation have a corporate secretary and a corporate treasurer. The Department Secretary absolutely is an officer position. And as an officer, she must attend the Corporation's board meetings and conventions.

If the position department secretary/treasurer is separated into two positions, both the secretary and the treasurer are corporate officers. And as such, both would be required to attend all board meetings, department executive committee meetings, and department conventions.

When a change is made at National Convention, is it up to the department to change it in their own constitution and bylaws, or should they bring it to a vote of the delegation for the change? Even though you are updating a section so as not to be in conflict with the National Constitution and Bylaws, you should always put to a vote.

These were just a couple of the many questions asked this year. Also worth noting, there are now 28 American Legion Auxiliary departments that have provisions in their governing documents that allow their NEC members to serve longer than a one -- single one-year term on the NEC.

(Applause.)

MS. KOUTZ: That's 54 percent of our ALA departments and this is a remarkable accomplishment. This number is based on the results Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 4A. Our organization is well known around the world for the many good things we do for our veterans and their families. So, therefore, we should always live up to a certain standard.

All units, districts, and departments should follow the National Constitution Bylaws and Standing Rules when creating their own. When you hear the word constitution and bylaws, the first words that come to my mind are intimidating, uhh, maybe; mind boggling, absolutely; overwhelming, most definitely. But in the end, very rewarding. Madam President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

VICE-PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are there any proposed amendments?

MS. KOUTZ: There is one amendment to the National Bylaws and Standing Rules.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Vickie. Before we proceed, the Chair asks the National Secretary to read Convention Standing Rules 9, 10, and 11 as they pertain to the processing of convention business.

MS. BUCKLER: So a refresher from the rules that you adopted earlier, only voting delegates of the convention may make motions and address the National Convention and debate except when the chairman of a National Committee is also an employee of the National Headquarters, in which case, as a National Committee chair, she may make a motion on behalf of the committee she chairs and address the National Convention on matters specific to motions and proposals emanating from the committee she chairs.

To address the convention, the voting delegate shall rise and proceed to the microphone, address the chair, wait to be recognized by the chair, and upon being recognized by the chair shall state her name and department.

All main motions, resolutions, and amendments shall be presented in writing immediately to both the Chair and the Secretary on the motion forms provided. Signed with the full names of both the person making the motion and the person making the second.

The completed motion form is then to be handed to the nearest presidential page for immediate delivery to both the Chair and the Secretary. Only the presidential pages can deliver the completed forms to the platform.

Debate on any question shall be limited to two minutes for each delegate. No person shall speak on the same question more than twice without the consent of the Convention. No delegate may address the Convention a second time on the same question until all delegates who desire to speak on the topic have spoken.

During debate, delegates, alternates, and guests are to remain seated within their own delegation or assigned seating area unless they are approaching the microphone, completing a motion form, or entering or exiting the general session. Pages may deliver messages to the stage and to other delegations at any time.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Dubbie. There are four microphones in the audience, one in each aisle. They actually start with number 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each microphone is numbered. To facilitate a balanced discussion, we ask that anyone speaking for a motion use the even numbered microphones; those would be 2 and 4. And anyone speaking against the motion, use the odd numbered microphones; those would be microphones 1 and 3.

If you're wishing to make any other type of motion such as an amendment, or call the question, or ask a question pertaining to the motion, you may use any microphone. Are there any questions?

(Chatter.)

VOICE: Madam President, your discussion was just the exact opposite of what you told us, so what should we do?

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I'm going to ask you to listen to me and I'm going to tell you again.

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Due to technical errors, there's a little bit of fixing going on behind us and it will be taken care of in a minute. However, back to the issue at hand. If you're going to speak for the motion, please use the even microphones 2 and 4. And if you're speaking against the motion, please use the odd microphones 1 and 3.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I love technology. Now do you have any questions? I didn't know this was going to be so entertaining. Vickie, would you please proceed with presenting the amendment?

MS. KOUTZ: It is the responsibility of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee to bring all proposed amendments to the floor for

deliberation, apart from the endorsement status by the pre-convention committee.

Therefore, regardless of the Pre-Convention Committee's recommendation on the adoption of the amendments, I will, on behalf of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, move for the adoption of all amendments. And the proposed amendment is as follows.

Amend National Bylaws Article 9, Finance, sections 1 and 2. Authorize the ALA National Governing Board, the National Executive Committee to make small incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues only if needed as determined by the NEC based on the Federal inflation index Cost-of-Living Adjustment, COLA, and the NEC's dutiful fiduciary review of budget needs.

Not to exceed an amount of 4 percent, rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment, with a proviso that this authority will be affective in the 2019 membership year, and that any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later.

Amend National Standing Rules section 5, National Executive Committee. By adding a new subsection referencing bylaw -- referencing the bylaws changed and amending section 12, Dues and Assessments, subsection 3.

National per capita senior dues increase to \$12 per annum, and the per annum National per capita junior dues increase to \$2.50. With the proviso that the National per capita dues increase will be effective in the 2019 ALA membership year.

And that the National Executive Committee be authorized to make future increases and keeping with inflation and budget needs not to exceed 4 percent per annum with the proviso that this authority will be effective in the 2019 membership year. And that any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later.

The proposal encompasses striking existing wording in both the bylaws and standing rules, and replacing certain subsections with wording. If the amendment is adopted, ALA National Bylaws Article 9, Finance section 1 and section 2, plus the newly added section 3 will read:

Section 1. The revenue of the American Legion Auxiliary shall be derived from annual memberships dues in a per capita amount established by the National Convention delegates, and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Modification to the National per capita dues for members in an amount greater than 4 percent per capita per annum as described in article 9 section 3 shall require a two-thirds vote in the affirmative by the National Convention delegates. Dues shall be payable in amounts as provided in the standing rules. A member's status is dependent upon timely payment of dues as provided in the standing rules.

Section 2. The fiduciary responsibility of the National Executive Committee shall include adoption of the National organization's

budget. The authority to adopt small incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues not to exceed an amount of 4 percent, as described below in article 9 section 3, and review and acceptance of financial reports in the annual audit.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee, or NEC, shall have the authority to adopt incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment.

The NEC may adopt such nominal increases only when necessary as determined by the NEC based on the Federal inflation index Cost-of-Living Adjustment and the NEC's dutiful fiduciary review of budget needs. Any such nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase is adopted.

Proviso, the NEC's authority to adopt incremental dues increases. As provided in section 3, shall be effective at the 2019 mid-winter NEC meeting. And any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later. The current subsequent sections 3 and 4 in bylaws article 9 will be renumbered accordingly.

If the amendment is adopted, ALA National Standing Rule section 5, National Executive Committee, will add a new subsection 5 and read:

The National Executive Committee may make nominal increases to the per annum National per capita dues as provided in the bylaws and in Standing Rules section 12, Dues and Assessments. The current subsequent subsections in Standing Rules section 12 will be renumbered accordingly.

If the amendment is adopted, ALA National Standing Rules section 12, Dues and Assessments, subsections 1 and 2, plus the newly added subsection 3 will read:

The National per capita dues shall be \$12 per annum for senior members and \$2.50 per annum for junior members. The per capita dues for senior members shall include a complementary subscription to the American Legion Auxiliary National magazine. Each department shall remit the National per capita dues promptly to the National Treasurer at least monthly.

The proviso. If adopted, the National per capita dues increase will be effective in the 2019 ALA membership year.

As provided in the National Bylaws, modification to the National per capita dues greater than 4 percent per annum for senior and junior members shall require a two-thirds vote in the affirmative by the National Convention delegates.

As provided in the National Bylaws, the National Executive Committee, or NEC, shall have the authority to adopt incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment.

The NEC shall adopt such nominal increases only when necessary as determined by the NEC based on the Federal inflation index Cost-of-Living Adjustment, and the NEC's dutiful fiduciary review of budget needs. Any such nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase is adopted.

Any such increase in per annum ALA National per capita dues shall be consider by the NEC at its mid-winter meeting. Departments shall be notified within ten business days of the NEC adopting a nominal increase to the per annum National capita -- National per capita dues that will take effect in the dues statements prepared for the membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase is adopted.

Proviso. The NEC's authority to adopt incremental dues increases as provided in section 3 shall be effective at the 2019 mid-winter NEC meeting, and any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later. The current subsequent subsections in Standing Rules section 12 will be renumbered accordingly.

The Constitution & Bylaws Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the amendment be adopted.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The question is on the proposed amendment number 1 as presented. Since the question was asked during Saturday's pre-convention meeting, if this proposal could be divided, and there have been subsequent inquires of a similar nature, if there is not objection, the proposal will be divided into two components.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: One, increasing the dollar amount of the current dues. Two, authorizing the NEC to make incremental increases not to exceed 4 percent.

Are there any objections to that?

AUDIENCE: No.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Hearing no objection, the question is divided.

We will first consider increasing the dollar amount that amends section 12 of the ALA National Standing Rules by striking \$9 and inserting \$12 per annum for senior members, and striking \$1.25 and inserting \$2.50 per annum for junior members.

With the proviso that, if adopted, the National per capita dues increase will be effective in the 2019 ALA membership year.

Is there discussion?

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Madam President?

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Microphone number 2.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan from the Department of Wisconsin. I stand in support of the \$3 increase. Yesterday at the opening we had this wonderful speaker who talked about our why. For me, my why was attending an awesome Badger Girl State program

as a junior in high school. And I was always hoping that in some way I could pay back to the organization that sponsored such a worthwhile program.

I was lucky enough to marry the right veteran so I could achieve that goal. Through that process, I have been involved from unit up to National on a constant and continuing basis because I believe so much in the organization, the veterans we serve, and the families that go along with it. So that became my how.

So today I say, it's less than a penny a day for the \$3 increase for senior members or the price of a cup of coffee of \$3.25, which I paid today before I left the hotel. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. FOSTER: Madam Vice-President.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Microphone 2.

MS. FOSTER: I am Liz Foster from the Department of New Mexico and a current member of the National Finance Committee. I'm here to speak in favor of the dues increase and asking for your vote in the affirmative to vote for that.

As you've already heard, the \$3 increase in the year amounts to 25 cents a month. Junior dues will increase \$1.25, or 10 cents a month. The last time junior dues were increased was 22 years ago. Last year 89 percent of your dues money went to Mission Outreach and only 11 percent went to administrative costs.

This is well below the 25 percent National standard for non-profits. Actually, this is quite phenomenal and proves how prudent and frugal your National Organization has been. For the last three years we've ended our fiscal years in a deficit and had to rely on reserves to operate, we can no longer afford to do this.

Take it to a personal level. Let's say every month you were taking money out of your savings to meet your operating expenses. Before long, your savings will be depleted, and then what do you do? We would be in the same position.

Did you know that 22 million veterans rely on this organization? A lot of people, including some members, do not hesitate to spend a check of \$19 to \$25 a month to the Wounded Warrior Project. Don't our 22 million veterans deserve another 25 cents a month? Please vote yes for the dues increase. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I only see people at microphone 2, so if you're at 1 or 3 you're going to have to shout because I don't see anyone there.

Microphone 2.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Rita Navarreté, duly elected delegate to this convention from the Department of New Mexico. I'm speaking for God and Country. This is the right thing to do at this time. We do it knowing that all the hard work that we do we get our strength from God. May you just

reflect on what got us here and why we join. We know who we are, we know what we do, and we know why we matter. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Microphone number 2.

MS. BROWN-PARK: Madam President, Nancy Brown-Park Department of California. Looking at the lineup at the microphones, I call for the question.

(Cheering and applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Is there any objection to ending debate?

AUDIENCE: No.

VICE-PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are you ready for the question?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The question is on the adoption of the amendment to change the senior dues to \$12 and junior dues to \$2.50. This requires a two-thirds vote in the affirmative for adoption.

All those in favor, please press the number one on your voting keypad. Those opposed, press two. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The voting is closed. Please show the results.

(Cheering and applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: 651 in favor, 98 opposed.

(Rap of gavel one time.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The amendment is adopted.

Now we will consider the components authorizing the NEC to make incremental increases no greater than 4 percent. To review, if the amendment is adopted, ALA National Bylaws article 9, Finance section 1 and section 2, plus the newly added section 3 will read:

Section 1. The revenue of the American Legion Auxiliary shall be derived from annual membership dues in a per capita amount established by the National Convention delegates and from such other sources as may be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Modification to the National per capita dues for members in an amount greater than 4 percent per capita per annum as described in article 9 section 3 shall require a two-thirds vote in the affirmative by the National Convention delegates. Dues shall be payable in amounts as provided in the Standing Rules. A member's status is dependent upon timely payment of dues as provided in the Standing Rules.

Section 2. The fiduciary responsibility of the National Executive Committee shall include adoption of the National Organization's budget. The authority to adopt small incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues not to exceed an amount of 4 percent as described below in article 9 section 3, and review and acceptance of financial reports and the annual audit.

Section 3. The National Executive Committee, NEC, shall have the authority to adopt incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment.

The NEC may adopt such nominal increases only when necessary as determined by the NEC based on the Federal inflation index Cost-of-Living Adjustment and the NEC's dutiful fiduciary review of budget needs. Any such nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase is adopted.

Proviso. The NEC's authority to adopt incremental dues increases as provided in section 3 shall be effective at the 2019 mid-winter NEC meeting, and any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later. The current subsequent sections 3 and 4 in bylaws article 9 will be renumbered accordingly.

If the amendment is adopted, ALA National Standing Rules section 5, National Executive Committee, will add a new subsection 5 and read:

The National Executive Committee may make nominal increases to the per annum National per capita dues as provided by the bylaws and in Standing Rules section 12, Dues and Assessments.

The current subsequent subsections in Standing Rules section 12 will be renumbered accordingly, and the ALA National Standing Rules section 12, Dues and Assessments, subsections 2 plus the newly added subsection 3 will read:

2. As provided in the National Bylaws, modification to the National per capita dues greater than 4 percent per annum for senior and junior members shall require a two-thirds vote in the affirmative by the National Convention delegates.

3. As provided in the National Bylaws the National Executive Committee, NEC, shall have the authority to adopt incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment.

The NEC may adopt such nominal increases only when necessary as determined by the NEC based on the federal inflation index Cost-of-Living Adjustment, and the NEC's dutiful fiduciary review of budget needs. Any such nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase was adopted.

Any such increase in per annum ALA National per capita dues shall be considered by the NEC at its mid-winter meeting. Departments shall be notified within ten days of the NEC adopting a nominal increase to the per annum National per capita dues that will take effect in the dues statements prepared for the membership year two years following the membership year in which the increase was adopted.

Proviso. The NEC's authority to adopt incremental dues increases as provided in section 3 shall be effective in the 2019 mid-winter NEC meeting, and any such future nominal increase so adopted by the NEC shall not take effect until the ALA membership year two years later. The current subsequent subsections in Standing Rules section 12 will be renumbered accordingly.

Is there any discussion?

And just a reminder, isn't there a fourth mic over here (indicating)? Make sure you state your name, that you are a delegate, and then I will recognize you.

MS. CARLTON: Frank Carlton, the Department of Florida.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: What mic are you at?

MS. CARLTON: I'm at mic 1, so I'm speaking opposed to -

-

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And you are a delegate?

MS. CARLTON: -- the change. Yes, ma'am, I'm a delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All right. Go ahead.

MS. CARLTON: At the Constitution and Bylaws meeting it was stated that when the delegates vote on dues increases, there's drama. And I think we can see from today's vote that that's not necessarily the case because there was no one opposed to a dues increase.

(Applause.)

MS. CARLTON: The other points I would like to make opposed to the this change is that dues could actually be raised by 4 percent every year, they would just be -- come effective the two years later. I think that would create a lot of confusion in the units with not knowing how much dues they're going to have to have.

It's much easier, I believe, for units to have a dues increase of \$3, or \$5, or whatever it is so they can plan ahead with their unit dues increases. And I know it seems like 4 percent is not much --

(Applause.)

MS. CARLTON: -- but we have to remember that the 4 percent is going to go on top of the 4 percent that was put on last year. So if people are looking at what was handed out, it shows \$12 and then it shows \$12.50, it does not go on to say that the next four percent is going to go on top of \$12.50, and the following 4 percent would go on top of 13. So I really think that needs to be considered.

(Applause.)

MS. CARLTON: Fiduciary responsibility of the NEC has been discussed multiple times and I understand they have a responsibility but I believe that responsibility is met once they propose a dues increase to the convention body. And for 95 years we've not had a problem running this organizations with the delegates voting for dues increases.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. CARLTON: So my final comment is, I would like to encourage the delegates at this convention to vote no to this change.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes mic 3. Could you please state your name and if you're a delegate?

MS. NEWMAN: Rosie Newman, yes, I'm a delegate from Indiana.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You're recognized. The Chair recognizes you.

MS. NEWMAN: I too am opposed because the NEC is there between conventions to make decisions. We, the 700 plus delegates should be the ones deciding, not 57 women.

(Applause.)

MS. NEWMAN: There would be no reason for us to attend this convention if we cannot have the power to vote for our members at home.

(Cheering and applause.)

MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Madam President.

MS. RANEY: Madam President.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The next person I will call on who is somebody speaking in the affirmative.

MS. RANEY: Mic 2.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 2?

MS. RANEY: Yes, ma'am.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes mic 2.

MS. RANEY: Paula Raney, the Department of Texas.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And you're a delegate, correct?

MS. RANEY: And I am a delegate, yes, ma'am.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. RANEY: Thank you. I speak in support of the incremental dues increase.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You'll need to speak up.

MS. RANEY: Speak louder? Yes. Thank you. I speak in support of the incremental dues ins -- incremental dues structure so that we don't have to come before the Body every few years to argue over a dues increase that is less than 25 cents a month. We have 22 million veterans that need our support now.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes mic 1.

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, Janet Jefford delegate from Connecticut.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chair recognizes Janet Jefford.

MS. JEFFORD: I rise to propose an amendment. I move to amend the bylaws article 9, Finance, new section 3 by inserting the words, by a two-thirds vote at an in-person mid-winter meeting of the NEC providing that a 60-day notice of the proposed increase be given, after the word adopt in the first sentence.

If adopted, the first sentence in the new section 3 will read:

The National Executive Committee, NEC, shall have the authority to adopt by a two-thirds vote at an in-person mid-winter meeting of

the NEC providing that a 60-day notice of the proposed increase be given, incremental increases to the per annum ALA National dues -- National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 cent increment.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there a copy of that amendment?  
I have a second.

MS. JEFFORD: Shall I bring it forward because I would like to speak on my proposal.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I'll repeat it. Can I have a copy of the amendment, please?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's been moved and second to amend the motion to read:

To amend the bylaws article 9, Finance, new section 3 by inserting the words; by a two-thirds vote in an in-person mid-winter meeting of the NEC, providing that a 60-day notice of the proposed increase be given, after the word adopt in the first sentence.

If the adopter --

MS. JEFFORD: If the amendment is adopted.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: If the amendment is passed, approved, the new sentence will read:

The National Executive Committee shall have the authority to adopt by a two-thirds vote at an in-person mid-winter meeting of the NEC providing that a 60-day notice of the proposed increase be given, incremental increases to the per annum ALA National per capita dues in an amount not to exceed 4 percent rounded to the nearest 10 percent (sic) increment.

The discussion now is on the amendment to the main motion. The floor is open for discussion.

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And the maker of the motion will speak first at microphone number 1.

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you. I propose this motion because I have heard many delegates are fearful or concerned about giving up their right to vote for dues increase at the National convention.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: So I propose this as some safeguards. Since it takes a two-thirds majority vote by convention delegates to propose an increase, I wanted to assure that the NEC vote would be by a two-thirds.

Second, by having it at an in-person meeting, I think it will assure us that there will be adequate discussion and debate face-to-face among the NEC before this -- any increase is approved.

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Third, I put in for the 60-day notice so that it will give time for the members in each department to speak with their NECs, have their voices heard, so that when the NECs do come together they

will come with the -- all the information they need to make a decision that will be right for this organization.

And so, therefore, I have said from the beginning that I am in favor of the dues increase and the incremental increases, but I think this motion -- or this amendment will help put some safeguards in place. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Microphone 3.

MS. STENSON: Bernice Stenson from Massachusetts.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And you're a delegate?

MS. STENSON: I am a delegate --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. STENSON: -- and I'm proud to have been a delegate three times to your conventions. But I feel if we do not -- if we go for the motion, delegates would have --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is on --

MS. STENSON: -- little reason to come to the convention.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Excuse me. Are you speaking on the amendment? This is merely a discussion on the amendment.

MS. STENSON: She still -- it's still want -- they still want to use the increase by the NEC, right?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This is a discussion on the amendment, which addresses a two-thirds vote.

MS. STENSON: You want -- by her amendment, you're only changing one word?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's still -- you have discuss the amendment before you can discuss -- you have to address the amendment before you can address the initial motion.

MS. STENSON: We are against the amendment because we feel it's only changing one word to make it still go ahead with the original motion.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. STENSON: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there anyone else at one of the mics? Is there any further discussion?

Then if -- is there any objection to voting on the motion? It will be on the amendment to the motion. You want -- would you like it read again?

AUDIENCE: No.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. All those in favor of the amendment you will press one. Those opposed, please press two. Voting starts now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The voting is closed. Please show the results.

So this needs a majority, the yes -- can you put the numbers back up again -- is 433 votes, the no 317 votes. The amendment is passed.

(Rap of gavel one time.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: An amendment needs a simple majority. Now we go back to the initial motion as amended. Is there further discussion on the motion as amended? Mic 1.

MS. GRINIS: Madam Chair, this is Denice Grinis, 142 Pompano Beach, Department of Florida, a duly elected delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. GRINIS: I vote against this amendment. It still takes the vote away from the governing body and gives it to the NEC.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Mic 2. Are you an affirmative?

MS. STIFF: Yes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 2?

MS. STIFF: Yes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay.

MS. STIFF: Madam President, Sarah Stiff, Department of Wisconsin, I am a delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chair recognizes you.

MS. STIFF: Thank you. I want to make an important point as we think about the need for a dues increase. We just voted very much in clear agreement that we would like to raise our dues \$3, it's been six years since our last increase in National dues.

I want to, without giving a economics lesson, let you know what the cost of living increase actually is if you haven't taken the time to look that up. In the past several years we've had 3.6 percent, 1.7, 1.5, 1.7, 0, and .3. That gives us a very nominal increase in our dues if we did them every year, which is much less than what we just agreed to pay for.

If we did the maximum increase of .4 percent, we -- sorry, of 4 percent, we would have just voted -- or the NEC would have automatically increased our 2019 dues to \$11.40. You -- as a body we just agreed to raise them \$12.00.

I understand that you're concerned we're taking away the members' privilege to vote on our dues, but we also put our trust in our NEC just like we put our trust in our Congress to make those decisions for us.

(Applause.)

MS. STIFF: No, it is the same thing. The NEC is our governing body when we cannot meet as a whole, and we trust that they make the decisions that are right for our Body to continue as a organization. Those incremental increases are minimal, and I can guarantee that if in six or ten years we need to increase our dues again, you will choose to increase them.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Time. Thank you very much.

MS. STIFF: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Ladies, before we go on, I'm a little dismayed at this point. And the reason I am dismayed is you only have a

certain amount of time to speak on a pro or con of a subject. And when you take that time up with you in the audience voicing your disapproval of what that person is talking on, that takes up their time and that's not fair either.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So if you'd please allow those recognized at the mic to have their time, I would appreciate it.

Is there a con at a mic? Mic 1.

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

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You are --

MS. CASADEI: I rise in opposition to this --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes you.

MS. CASADEI: Thank you. I rise in opposition to this. I feel that we are taking some of the responsibility of our membership away. We've just proved that we can do what is right when we see it and we understand it. I think part of the problem with this is that the information wasn't given to the departments early enough to digest this and to see how it was going to effect us in the long run.

We just got this information at almost the end of our department convention. I think that if we had more time and more answers to the questions that we have presented, we could make an informed decision. So at this point in time I rise in opposition to this.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there a pro comment? Is it mic?

MS. WASHINGTON: Mic 4.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 4. Tina, where's mic 4?

MS. WASHINGTON: Right here.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. Mic 4, the Chair recognizes Tina Washington, you are a delegate?

MS. WASHINGTON: (Inaudible)

AUDIENCE: Can't hear.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: A little louder, closer.

MS. WASHINGTON: (Inaudible).

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's on just get closer.

MS. WASHINGTON: It's on. Okay. I would just like to add to the comment made earlier about us sending our officials, our company body officials, which are the NEC to represent us at conferences and at this body, too, for the pre-convention conference.

We are now electing those members for longer terms so that they may be able to more effectively make the decisions that we're asking them to make. Fifty-eight percent of us have already done that. And the others, I know, will soon do that because you can see the value of having NEC members who really understand their fiduciary responsibility and their responsibility to the whole American Legion Auxiliary 600,000 members.

There is no organization whether it is a non-profit or a profit organization that lets the ranking file make all of those important decisions that determine the health and welfare of their organization. I stand in approval of this amendment.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there someone speaking against the amendment?

MS. FLANDERS: Madam President, Joyce Flanders --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 3?

MS. FLANDERS: Yes. Joyce --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: State your name.

MS. FLANDERS: Joyce Flanders, Department of New Hampshire.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes you.

MS. FLANDERS: I speak in opposition of this because in our department I am sure that our department and our units are not going to want to change their Constitution and Bylaws every year after that vote.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Is there someone speaking in favor of the motion?

MS. CHINN: Yes, ma'am.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Which mic?

MS. CHINN: Microphone 2. Patsy Chinn, delegate for the Department of Oklahoma.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes the person at mic 2.

MS. CHINN: Thank you. I think the delegates are failing to recognize the real reason this motion is being put to the floor. You do not want to continually, or every year or two, go in and change your governing documents to increase dues. By approving this motion, we are allowing our NEC, who is our representative just like these delegates are representing their unit members at home at this convention, the ability to make increases without us having to come back and redo our governing documents. And, yes, this is set up like Congress. The delegates represent their membership, the NEC is representing them. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there someone speaking against the motion? Mic 1 are you for or against?

MS. TUCKER: In the middle.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: No. Mic 1, looks --

MS. TUCKER: I'm against, I guess.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. Mic 3?

MS. HARMON: I'm against.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All right. Mic -- Chair recognizes mic 3. Please state your name and if you're a delegate.

MS. HARMON: My name is Linda Harmon, I'm a delegate

--

MS. TUCKER: (Indiscernible)?

MS. HARMON: -- from California. Is that okay? Okay. I am against this, and I'm glad the young lady just made the comment about Congress because that was my thought in that Congress makes decisions based on what they want and not what we people want.

(Applause.)

MS. HARMON: And if you look around, and I'm one of them, a lot of us are on fixed incomes. And this constant changing every two years of what the dues are could very well cut into our ability to continue. And I just -- I just feel that this part of the motion is not a good thing. I agree with a raising of the dues, but if need to be raised again I think they need to come back to the whole body.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The chair recognizes microphone 1.

MS. TUCKER: Katie Tucker from the Department of Ohio.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Are you for or against?

MS. TUCKER: Against, I guess.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. Let me get one more pro first. I thought the lady over there was half and half, or was that you?

MS. TUCKER: That's me. I'm half and half.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. Well, go ahead and speak then, Katie.

MS. TUCKER: Okay. So I guess my concern is the implementation part of the amendment, not necessarily the process of allowing the NEC versus the delegation body. My concern is when we implement this at the department and the unit level, the logistics that goes into that 1 1/2 percent, 3 percent, 3.2 percent, and it's happening -- it may be happening every three years, it may be happening every two years.

At the department level we have to process back dues, so it becomes an issue with how we -- what that person's back dues were. Are they paying the current year's back dues? Are they paying the year that they were there? There's just a lot of implementation that I guess I'm little concerned with from a logistics perspective.

And so if I think it was a set amount versus a percentage, it might be something more I would be in support of because of a 10 cent, 50 cent, 20 cent, incremental instead of a percentage, and maybe even on a set timeline versus whether they decide they need it or not.

So I guess I speak in opposition because I don't necessarily feel that the process that we have in this amendment will work out as far as the logistics and the implementation go. But I do support an incremental dues increase whether it be the decision of the body and we pass it and give that authority to the NEC. I mean, I think it's definitely something that will allow for continuity through the years.

And, you know, we elect these people, we vote for them to be in office. I mean, I think it's a good idea that we allow them to make those decisions, I just --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Time. Thank you. Microphone 2.

MS. NAVARRETE: Yes. And I will confirm that I'm a --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please state your name.

MS. NAVARRETE: Rita Navarrete.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And you're a delegate?

MS. NAVARRETE: Yes, I am, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chair recognizes.

MS. NAVARRETE: I'm speaking from the grassroots level. I'm a 63-year member. I have grown through leadership, and one thing I learned, you better get educated. It's your responsibility as a member, whatever level. Our elected NEC, we -- ladies, I think a lot of us have not done due diligence to educate of what the governing board means.

The governing board, the NEC, is in between conventions. I sit here today proud to vote as a delegate. And the NEC past National Presidents served with voice not vote, but here I have a vote because my unit believes in me, my department believes in me, and we educate our NECs. We voted two years ago to elect our NEC so we would have that continuity.

So if we haven't done our due diligence, that's our fault as upcoming leaders. Okay? Perhaps we didn't have the information at the Washington Conference, okay, but I know in New Mexico I'm going to trust the leaders that were there because they've been trained by someone, this fuzzy wuzzy, okay?

And so we need to do our education, and I have professed this last year with new leadership in New Mexico, to engage all members, and now I'm adding to educate all members.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Rita.

MS. NAVARRETE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 3, are you pro or con?

MS. OWENS: Con.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay.

MS. OWENS: Okay.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: State your name and your --

MS. OWENS: I'm Anita Owens, I'm from the Department of Georgia, I am a delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. OWENS: I'm against this. We talked about Congress, that we allow them to do our vote. But I don't know about you, but our Congressmen get out and contact us voters when there is something coming up so we're allowed to give our view. We can call them, we can go up there, so we -- they hear from us, the people. And that's what we're talking about here.

Nobody told any of us that this was coming up before we got here. We knew we -- everybody realized that we had to go for a dues

increase. You saw how fast that post, no problem at all. But none of us got a chance to talk with our units out there about this possibility. Our NEC did not even know about this possibility.

So today, it's not our NEC voting for this 4 percent, it is us representing our units. So we don't have that agreement with our units this is a good way to go. If this were to come up next year, I have no problem with my NEC voting which way we should go. But today, she didn't know it, I didn't know it. So I'd like to know what my Unit and how they're going to handle this.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Mic 4, are you pro or con?

MS. SLAGLE: I just had -- I just have a question, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Sure. State your name and are you a delegate.

MS. SLAGLE: My name is Betty Slagle, I'm a delegate from the Department of Indiana.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Chair recognizes you.

MS. SLAGLE: Thank you. What happens if our numbers decide to increase instead of continuing to decline? Does this 4 percent still apply or is that something that might be set aside for several years?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you for your question, let me find somebody to answer it. I'm just the -- I just point to people.

MS. THOMAS: To answer the questions. If there is more income coming in, we would not ask for an increase.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Do we have a pro amendment? Is there someone at a mic?

MS. BARYLSKI: Rita Barylski, delegate from the Department of Connecticut.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I need to know what microphone.

MS. BARYLSKI: Two.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Two? Microphone 2, would you state your name again? I'm sorry.

MS. BARYLSKI: Rita Barylski, Department of Connecticut, delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes you.

MS. BARYLSKI: Thank you. What I would like to speak on is everyone says agreed that you elect your NEC -- that you elect your NEC because you believe in what they're going to do what the delegates from their state would like. If you --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You need to get closer, I'm sorry.

MS. BARYLSKI: If you read the amendment that was proposed and accepted, it gives them a 60-day notice before their meeting that you're going to ask for an increase. That gives the NEC time to go back to

their department to find out how they would like the NEC to vote. So with the amendment I am in agreement with the proposal.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Is there another pro comment?

MS. HARVEY: Mic 4.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Mic 4, the Chair -- mic 4.

MS. HARVEY: Chris Harvey, the Department of Colorado.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And you're a delegate?

MS. HARVEY: I am a delegate.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair recognizes.

MS. HARVEY: I would like to say I'm in favor of this and call for the question.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Is there a second to the call?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Yelling) second.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All those in favor for ending the debate, please press one. All those opposed, please press two. The voting starts now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. The voting is closed. I think I'm the only one that keeps forgetting to vote. Please show the results.

(Cheering and applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The debate is ended. 641 to 114.

We now will vote on the main motion as amended. Would you like it reread?

AUDIENCE: No.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I can't imagine why.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The question is on the adoption of the amendment as amended to authorize the NEC the authority to make incremental increases no greater than 4 percent. This requires a two-thirds vote in the affirmative for adoption. All those in favor, please press the number one key on your voting pad. Those opposed, please press the number two. Please vote now.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is closed. Please show the results. This amendment is not adopted.

(Rap gavel one time.)

(Cheering and applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Vickie. Convention updates. Announcements, announcements. Would the National Secretary please give us the Convention updates?

So Dobbie doesn't get to come right yet. Oh. Thank you. We're going to do something else really, really special. And we're just waiting for the computer stuff to work.

(Music.)

(Video.)

ANNOUNCER: The American Legion Auxiliary proudly presents the National President's Award for Excellence. This exclusive honor is awarded to the best of our best. The award epitomizes Service, Not Self by recognizing efforts in planning and implementation of our programs. Here to present is your National President Mary Davis.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And here I am. The National President's Award for Excellence gives me the opportunity to highlight four units and one department that are doing amazing things in order to carry out the mission of our organization.

This year I selected shining examples of what it means to make membership matter. These winners understand that membership is the backbone of our organization, and in order to keep our members we must show them the importance of their membership.

I also looked for projects and activities that furthered our Centennial Strategic Plan, bringing us closer to accomplishing our five goals. Finally, I looked for stories about mission outreach, those projects that offered services directly to our military, veterans, and their families.

Before we get today's winners, I would like to recognize all of the units and departments working the Auxiliary's mission and programs every single day. Your hard work day in and day out is what will help us achieve the five goals of our Centennial Strategic Plan which ultimately will keep our organization alive and able to carry out its mission. And I applaud you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The first winner of the National President's Award for Excellence is --

(Hand beating out drum roll.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- is -- oh, I'm supposed to say it first? Rolla Dicks Unit 315 in Burlington Junction, Missouri, Unit President Sharon Slagle.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The members of Unit 315 work tirelessly for veterans in active duty, service men and women, all while creating an environment that focuses on making membership matter. This year, Unit 315 created hygiene bags for transitioning homeless veterans moving through Kansas City, Virginia, and -- oh, Kansas City VA, and drove 180 miles round trip every month to make the deliveries. That's a lot of miles.

In order to keep an active juniors program for their 91 junior members -- yes, I said 91 junior members --

(Cheering and applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: -- Unit 315 dedicates themselves to creating opportunities for juniors to be involved with the unit's activities. From essay contest participation, to Poppy distribution, and bake sales, Unit 315 is making junior membership matter. If I continued telling you all about the great things Unit 315 is doing, we'd be here all day. So I will just share this final story.

Like many of us, Unit 315 sends care packages to troops deployed overseas. Now here's where it gets interesting. When an officer from the area gets deployed overseas, Unit 315 not only sends the officer a care package, they also send a care package to the officer's family. It's just like a little something to let the family know that the ALA is with them overseas and on the home front. What a great idea.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Unit 315 members are working the mission, making membership matter, and creating a culture of good will. Congratulations Rolla Dicks Unit 315, we are very proud of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's just a little -- oops. The second unit to receive the National President's Award for Excellence, with a big round of applause let's welcome to the stage Rose-Harms Unit 355 in Grafton, Wisconsin, Department President Catherine Brunnequell.

(Applause.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Unit 355 makes a point to always work goal 2 of our ALA Centennial Strategic Plan by making sure to include everyone. They cultivate a culture of goodwill by doing simple things like having a variety of events and projects so that every member has an opportunity to serve in a way that makes her feel comfortable.

They send cards of encouragement and friendship to members that cannot attend meetings because they are homebound or ill. Unit 355 also takes time to introduce new members at each meeting and present them with a new member packet, including a list of acronyms used by the ALA, which means American Legion Auxiliary. Now that's something we all need when we first join the ALA, right?

In addition to all of their good work, they also present appreciation certificates to local businesses that fly the American flag, and they attached flag etiquette stickers to hand-held flags they passed out during their 4th of July parade.

Finally, they created a project I love, it's called Trees From Home, and it involved decorating many trees -- many Christmas trees and sending them to deployed service members. What a great alternative to the usual holiday cookie care package.

Congratulations Rose-Harms Unit 355. We're so proud of the impact you're making in your community. Thank you for showing your town who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Congratulations on such a successful year.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Our next winner joining me on stage is Tony Soza and Ray Martinez Unit 41, Phoenix, Arizona, Unit President Ester Garcia.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Whose substitute name is Jan.

Last August, the City of Phoenix homeless shelter shut down forcing all of the residents including veterans out on the streets. With temperatures soaring over 120 degrees, Unit 41 knew they had to step in and serve our veterans and community.

At first they began small with senior members buying water bottles to distribute to the displaced homeless. Then, the junior members got involved and started hosting ice cream socials as a means of raising money for the homeless veteran project. Ultimately, they turned it into a community service project by involving the community and collecting donations.

Unit 41 now -- has now handed out over 4,000 lunches, and too many bottles of water and Gatorades to count. Unit 41, you've done an excellent job of letting your community know who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Congratulations on an extremely successful year.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The fourth unit to receive the National President's award for excellence is Palmer-Roberts Unit 214 in Willoughby, Ohio, Unit President Sue Fratio.

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: When Unit 214 received their membership goal of 209 it seemed a bit daunting. Fast forward to present day, and this unit has a membership of 223. Not only did they achieve they membership goal, they smashed it.

So how did they do it? Actually it started out with a simple request. One unit member made a list of non-renewals and asked if anyone would be willing to call or visit these ladies to ask them about renewing their membership.

Working together, they called everyone on their list. And to their surprise, many of them renewed. Then they decided to keep the momentum going and started mailing out thank you cards with every membership card. Gosh, what a great idea.

This unit has worked together on membership recruiting campaigns and community service projects like their yard crew that works on yards of veterans every fall and spring. That's a new weight loss thing, working out in the yard.

They've also created some amazing fund raisers, like the one where, along with their post, they raised and donated over \$9,000 from the Ohio Veterans Home. This unit understands that working as a team, being inclusive rather than exclusive, and building brand recognition in the community is the key to membership growth and success. Ladies of Unit 214, you are truly a model of making membership matter. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: And now for the moment you've all been waiting for, it's time to celebrate the department recipient. This department reported nearly 3,500 VA volunteer hours with direct benefit to over 11,000 veterans as well as nearly 9,000 hours of mission focused

volunteerism that directly benefitted over 7,000 additional veterans outside the VA system.

It is my absolute pleasure to announce the 2017 department recipient of the National President's Award for Excellence is, the Department of South Dakota, Department President Melanie Martens.

(Cheering and applause.)

(Music.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Department of South Dakota was involved in so many amazing projects this year. Let me just share a few things with you. One of my favorite South Dakota project was their prayer pillow project that I got to take part in. It was fabulous. Oh, and I'm not reading this. It was fabulous. In fact, I was able to lend a hand with these pillows when I visited in April.

These prayer pillows have a small pocket sewn on the front, a perfect place for members to insert written prayers and thank you's. Then these pillows are delivered to veterans living in VA facilities and assisted living facilities. And I have to tell you, they let me make one for my mom as well.

The Department of South Dakota is also very proud of their Poppy program. All of their Poppies are handmade by veterans in the Poppy room of the Hot Springs VA, and this year they paid veterans for making nearly 5,000 hours of Poppy making.

As you can see, these members are extremely dedicated to serving veterans. But let me tell you, they are just as passionate about making membership matter. It's not that they do anything fancy, it's that they actually practice what they preach.

Units that reach a hundred percent of their membership goal receive a personalized congratulatory letter from the department membership chairman thanking them for their hard work. During their district meetings they have ALA MIS training for any unit that is interested in using the program. And during those same meetings, they have a workshop titled Members Rights, Everyone Deserves Respect.

During these sessions they discuss civility, goodwill, bullying, and the importance of inclusion for all members. Everyone who completes this session is rewarded with individual packs of M&M Candies -- my favorite -- so that they're always reminded that membership matters.

Department of South Dakota, I am thankful for all your effort and for your being passionate, active, and engaged members of the American Legion Auxiliary. You have so much to celebrate.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: It's difficult to be limited by time and only able to share briefly about these amazing achievements, but there is good news; you'll be able to read a full story on our National President's Award for Excellence winners on our website. So let me encourage all of you to consider joining these units and the Department of South Dakota on the

path to excellence by planning now to submit your application for next year's awards.

Our National Headquarters team created a system that allows members to apply for this award online. It takes a matter of seconds to upload your entire report with pictures. Remember? Tell your stories with pictures. Let's give all of our National President's Award for Excellence recipients one more round of applause.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So, wasn't that terrific?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So next year I'm thinking that each and every one of your units and your departments are going to go online and tell us all the great things that you've been doing, tell your stories.

Now, would the National Secretary please give us a Convention update?

(Music.)

MS. BUCKLER: Well, for our wonderful honorees, congratulations. There is a unit member of the year reception in Room A7 at 11:30. Yes, we know what time it is. So it would be as soon as we -- as we depart here. And that would be, for many of you going to the women of the year luncheon at 12:30, that is in Room C1 through C4. To get you oriented, if that's near where the shuttle drop is on the -- sorry for reverberation -- on Virginia Street.

It's where the C&B, the Constitution and Bylaws, pre-convention meeting was held. To help you get your bearings on that. The National Commanders Head table reception is at 5:15 in Convention Center Rooms D1 through D3. And the banquet starts at 6:00 p.m. in Hall 3.

There's been some confusion about lost and found. So from the head of the Convention Center, if you have lost something or found something go to a house phone in the Convention Center and ask for building security, building security. The building is collecting the lost and found items and notifying the Legion office information desk if they have anything. So please do not turn anything into the staff offices, please call building security.

Now, some of you may remember, we have a distinguished visit from the President of the United States tomorrow. So tomorrow, Wednesday, August 23rd, this is the -- heads up for all of this. The following procedures will be in place for tomorrow.

Please watch your emails and texts as we will be sending out a more detailed message later today. And if there are any updates, we will push those out through the system that you're all using as attendees at this convention.

Regarding shuttles and parking. Shuttles will start at 6:00 in the morning. All pick-up and drop-off for shuttles, just for Wednesday, will be at the north entrance, which is near Hall 1. If you're driving, you're advised -- or you have people who are driving in, we're not sure when road lock-down

will occur, but you're advised to be, if you're driving, to be anywhere you need to be driving to to park before 8:00 a.m.

Procedures for accessing the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The Convention Center's only entrance that will be open will be the north entrance and the Atlanta Skywalk by Hall 1. Listen carefully. If you go to any other door, it will be locked. All other doors will be for exit only. So tomorrow you can only enter the Convention Center tomorrow morning at the north entrance by Hall 1.

You need to have your name badge or your distinguished guest badge to enter any checkpoint. The checkpoints are going to be at the Atlantis Hotel Skywalk and at the bottom of the escalators in the Convention Center.

You do not need to have your photo ID open and available. But I need to emphasize this because it has been emphasized to me. If you do not have your name badge on, you will be stopped and not allowed to proceed. So be very careful tomorrow, that's not something you want to leave at your hotel room.

Everyone must have their convention name badges or distinguished guest badges on in order to obtain entry. If you do not have your name badge, you will not be granted access to the building. The Convention Center will open at 6:00 a.m. Doors to Hall 1 will open no later than 7:15.

Tomorrow, the American Legion Auxiliary convention session will begin promptly at 7:30 a.m. We'll be starting a half hour earlier tomorrow. Security procedures for this special joint session, and you heard from the National Commander yesterday that there will actually be a Bill signing, which is historical for this organization. So you would be witnessing history to actually have a Bill signed in front of a joint session of the American Legion/American Legion Auxiliary.

It is recommended that everyone be in Hall 4 no later than 10:10 a.m. And I'll just be candid. By 10:15, you're pushing your luck. Plastic bottles of water or soda and food may be brought into Hall 4. Metal detectors will be placed outside of Hall 4. If you choose to leave Hall 4 after entering, you will have to go through the metal detectors again to get back into Hall 4, and Hall 4 is where the Legion is holding their National Convention, obviously.

You may not bring backpacks, or large bags, or purses, they will not be allowed. I think that affects many of us. Okay. That's what we have right now, be watching for an email with more detailed information coming out later on.

The following 2017/18 National Committee Appointees will be meeting today after the Women of the Year Luncheon. Membership will meet outside of Room C1 with Donna Rae. Legislative will meet after the luncheon at Table 29 with Carol Edwards. Americanism will be meeting after the luncheon at the back of the room with Martha Corriher.

National Community Service will be meeting after the luncheon at Table 65 with Beth McGinn. Poppy Committee will be meeting

after the luncheon at Table 37 with Carol T. Robinson. The VA and our committee will be meeting after the luncheon at the back of the room with Nicole Clapp. And the Education Committee will be meeting at the back of the room -- excuse me. The Education Committee will be meeting at Table 53 with Vickie Koutz.

And, Madam President, I'm going to just take a moment of personal privilege with your permission and I would like to -- because I know the National President believes this also, thank Nicole Clapp. You all have heard during the course of this convention that Past National President Linda Newsom has been hospitalized.

Nicole Clapp has been going over there every day as she is a registered nurse in addition to being a CEO of a hospital, a hospital administrator. And so on top of everything else going on, she has been making sure that our former National President Linda Newsom has been taken care of. And she's having another procedure today. So we all have our thoughts and prayers with her. She's doing what she's -- doing as she's told, and some of you know, that's a wonderful accomplishment.

I want to mention one other thing, we've had reference to the National Veterans Creative Art Festival. The veterans who attend the Veterans Creative Arts Festival, obviously, many of them do not have the financial means to fly to that event on their own.

Transportation is -- for most of the veterans is provided using hero miles by the Hero Miles Program. And last year there were not enough miles to accommodate every veteran. So various VAs and many of our wonderful departments out there stepped up to help make sure that there was airfare available for our gold medalists in the Veterans Creative Arts Festival to attend.

So many of us collect airline miles on airlines we don't use very often. You all get those year-end statements, here's your miles, and you look at it and you say, I can't do anything with those miles; yes, you can. You can donate them to Hero Miles which is a program of Fisher House.

So all you have to do is Google Hero Miles or go to the Fisher House website and it will tell you how to do that. And I do it every year, and it's -- I mean, it just takes seconds, it does not take any time at all. So, and not all airlines participate, but many of them do.

And, finally, I want to remind everyone, we have been live streaming. We're still live streaming. So, I would like to do a couple of shout outs. I'd like to do another one to our National Treasurer Marta, who just got so excited about this convention that her eyes went blurry. And so she can't fly until they get unblurred.

This is her first National convention to miss in 24 years. And she's watching because she has been texting me as I've been up here. So could we all look up a little bit and give a big shout out and say, hi, Marta?

AUDIENCE: Hi, Marta.

MS. BUCKLER: And we're going to do one more shout out, with your indulgence, and that is -- this is an awesome organization, and

we rock, so how about doing one more shout out on the count of three to do ALA rocks.

AUDIENCE: ALA rocks.

MS. BUCKLER: Thank you, Madam President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. This meeting is adjourned until tomorrow morning at -- did you say 7:30?

MS. BUCKLER: I did.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: 7:30, when I will see you back in this room.

(Rap of gavel one time.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, ladies.

(Whereupon, at 11:58 p.m. on Tuesday, August 22, 2017, the above-entitled meeting was concluded.)

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017**

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you all. I hope you had a lovely evening last night.

The 97th Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary will come to order. Welcome to today's session. Please remember to silence all of your electronic devices. I, of course, forgot to bring mine so I don't have to silence it today. But if you'll do that, we'd appreciate it. Thank you.

National Chaplain Valerie Brown-Debro will give the invocation. Please stand.

CHAPLAIN BROWN-DEBRO: Great morning, family. Let us pray. Father God, all praises and glory for another day, another opportunity, and another privilege that we're here together again serving you, our veterans, active military, their families, and our communities.

You told us in your word to pray one for another. In Matthew 7:7, you told us to ask and we shall receive; seek and we shall find; knock and doors shall be opened. So, Lord, we're asking today for your presence to fill this room. Bless every person that's under the sound of my voice. As we seek your guidance today, may we find favor with God and with man. Let your will and your purpose go forth, piercing our hearts with love, and our minds with wisdom.

We ask that you open up doors that no man can shut, that it may be prosperous and pleasing in your sight. These things we ask in your Holy name. Amen.

ATTENDEES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please be seated. Soldier's Wish is an organization that is dedicated to meet the needs for military personnel, veterans, and their families. By the authority of our National Executive Committee, the American Legion has established an official relationship with this outstanding group.

Please welcome the Executive Director of Soldier's Wish, Mark Ochsenbein, and past Department President of New York, Jan Mahoney.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: All right. It is great to be here today. My name's Mark Ochsenbein, as she said, and I am the volunteer executive director of Soldier's Wish.

But before I start, what I'd like to do is show a short two-minute video clip.

(Video presentation.)

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Thank you so much. I tell you, that was a great wish, but we could not have done that wish without the Auxiliary, and especially Jan Mahoney as the past president out of New York Auxiliary there. And her project was to go out and raise money for those that are

suffering from the effects of Agent Orange, and I'd like to introduce Jan right now.

(Applause.)

MS. MAHONEY: Good morning. I'm Jan Mahoney, past department president from the great Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. MAHONEY: Auxiliary sisters, I want to say this is my why. My President's Project was changing the legacy of Agent Orange. Many of our Vietnam veterans were exposed to a herbicide called dioxin, better known as Agent Orange, causing 17 different kinds of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and many atrocities to our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines.

I am proud and fortunate the Soldier's Wish partnered with me using funds raised by my Legion family from New York. I am here to proudly say thank you for your service -- I'm getting teared up here -- thank you for your service and welcome home. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Thanks, Jan. Well, we're here today to give a wish, and we have a Vietnam veteran sitting up here with us. He has no idea what is going on. He does not know he is getting a wish today.

So he can blame that on a couple of people, one, his wife, and Linda -- Linda Dixon, and she is the president of the local Vietnam Veterans Association. And so we found Pat Moran through her, and we contacted his wife.

Now, this guy was a Vietnam veteran, 101st Airborne. He was a paratrooper.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: Absolutely.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: He is suffering from the effects of Agent Orange as a result of being in Vietnam, and when he was there in combat his best friend saved his life, but his best friend was killed doing it, and he remembers that to this day and he remembers it every day, and the effects of Agent Orange that are affecting him.

So he doesn't know that he's getting a wish, but he's going to know it right now. And his wish is -- and what we're going to do for him -- he's got a beautiful lab -- Labrador dog named Blue, and what we're going to do is we're going to train his dog to be a therapy dog for him.

(Applause.)

MR. OCHSENBEIN: And with him is his wife, Sandy. Let me tell you, those that are back home -- the families, the care givers -- you all know all about that. Thank you for what you do.

Would you like to say a couple of words?

MR. MORAN: I got hoodwinked into this.

MR. OCHSENBEIN: He said he got hoodwinked into this. Again, thank you so much for this wish. We couldn't have done it without

you. Through the funds that Jan has been able to collect, we are able to give this wish and help him.

It's not about the wish, it's about making lives better, and you all are doing it every day. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Well, you know, this year I have totally enjoyed the individuals that I have met -- our members -- the members who selflessly every day find a veteran to make a difference in their lives, and who help our active duty whenever they can -- help the families, help the children in their communities. Excuse me.

So anyway -- skip that page -- but I really mean it, and I've enjoyed my visits with every single one of you that I've been able to meet with. It's been a joy this year.

The next item of -- and for me to give this gentleman from Vietnam, who so selflessly went to Vietnam, to be able to award him something was absolutely phenomenal. It just shows the great work that our members do, and I'm proud of each and every one of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The next item of business this morning is the nomination of national officers for 2017-2018 administrative year. Representatives making the nominations, as well as candidates, are seated on the stage.

Dubbie Buckler, National Secretary, will read the rules governing nominations and elections.

MS. BUCKLER: Rule 19, Nomination of candidates for National Division Vice President shall be at the caucuses on Saturday, August 19, 2017. Nomination of candidates for the office of National President, National Vice President, National Chaplain, and National Historian shall be on Wednesday, August 23, 2017. Nomination of national officers shall be made from the floor.

Nominating speeches shall be limited to two minutes for each candidate except the National President candidate. She will be allowed four minutes. There will be no seconding speeches.

Following nominating speeches for national officers on Wednesday, each of the nominees for National President, National Vice President, National Chaplain, National Historian shall be introduced to the assembly by the auxiliary member making her nomination. Said introduction to be only by name and department affiliation. And in response to the introduction, the nominee for office shall be allowed a maximum of two minutes for remarks.

The election of national officers shall be held on Wednesday, August 23, 2017. When there is but one candidate for any office, the nominee may be elected by voice. When there is more than one candidate for a national office, the election shall be by electronic ballot as determined by the Chair.

A majority of votes cast shall elect each officer. When no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, a second ballot will

be taken between the candidates receiving the two highest number of votes, and the candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot shall be elected.

Madam National President, this completes the reading of the nomination election rules.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Oh, she's good. She knows short. Nominations are now in order for the office of National President. The National Secretary will call departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Wisconsin has an announced candidate for the office of National President. The delegation chairman shall ask the chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of a nomination.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The chair recognizes the delegate from Wisconsin for the purpose of making a nomination.

MS. JAKUBCZYK: Bonnie Jakubczyk, Department Chairman from the proud Department of Wisconsin. Would the Chair please recognize Wisconsin's Senior Vice President, Char Kiesling for the purposes for nomination for National President?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The Chair so recognizes.

MS. KIESLING: Good morning.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. KIESLING: I'm Char Kiesling, Senior Vice President for the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. KIESLING: Madam President, delegates, and guests, the time has finally arrived. All of the planning and preparation has come to fruition. I am overwhelmed that I have been given this opportunity and great honor to present Diane Duscheck for the high office of National President of the American Legion Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MS. KIESLING: Like many of us, Diane was active as a junior member and began taking on leadership roles in the senior auxiliary 38 years ago when her mother asked her to fill in as a district junior activities chairman for just three short months.

Since that time she has continually held chairmanships and offices at the district and department levels. In 1995, Diane began her service to the national organization as the Constitution and Bylaws Chairman, followed by 11 more national chairmanships and the offices of Central Division National Vice President and National Vice President.

Diane has not taken her responsibility to the American Legion Auxiliary lightly. When making decisions, she carefully weighs all sides of the situation and asks "what is this?" for the organization. As a lifelong learner, Diane immerses herself in each activity so she can gain as much information as possible.

She makes a point of reading leadership and motivational books, taking webinars through the Servant Leadership Institute, and recently

completed an organizational governance class. For Diane, every day is an opportunity to do better than the day before.

This year Diane is on the Future Focus Committee, the Central Strategic Plan Goal 3 Team, and a designated director for the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. She has represented the national organization several times this year.

Having a bowl of chili with veterans living in transitional housing in downtown Indianapolis was the high point of her Veteran's Day activities, driving home the obligations, organizations like the American Legion Auxiliary have to help our veterans who are suffering after their wartime service.

Diane's inquisitive and analytical personality led her to a 34 year teaching career as a middle school science teacher. She loves hearing from her former students, like the well-respected oncologist who said to her, "Ms. Duscheck, I dissected my first frog in your class."

She was a leader among her peers, serving as the school's union representative and being active in contract negotiations. She is always well-prepared, dedicated to the task at hand, and freely shares her information and experiences with others.

Looking at the flip side of the coin, you can find Diane actively involved in plumbing and electrical work at her rental property, cutting down trees, gardening, and cleaning animal skulls for a bone collection she started long before she began teaching, and cleaning carcasses is only the tip of the iceberg in the measure she will take to teach her students.

Diane is a 56-year member, paid up for life, of Unit 282, Markesan -- a tiny town in Wisconsin, with her eligibility from the World War II service of her late father, Roland, and through the Vietnam service of her brother, Philip.

On behalf of the members of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin, I am honored to place into nomination Diane Duscheck for the high office of National President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Diane Duscheck is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of National President?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Hearing none, nominations for National President are now closed.

Nominations are in order for the office of National Vice President. The National Secretary will call departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Mississippi has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

MS. BLANCHARD: Madam President -- microphone one. Rose Blanchard, alternate NEC for the Department of Mississippi.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes.

MS. BLANCHARD: Would the Chair please recognize June Laws for the purpose of a nomination for the office of National Vice President?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So recognized.

MS. LAWS: Madam President, officers, delegates, I am June Laws. It is with great pride and honor on behalf of the Department of Mississippi to present Kathy Dungan for the office of National Vice President.

She is a member of the (indiscernible) Unit 79, Wesson, Mississippi. She is eligible through the service of her father who served in World War II. Kathy always has the Auxiliary mission at heart, and has dedicated 40 years working on all levels of this great organization.

She is currently serving as National Chairman of Veterans Affairs and (indiscernible) Committee. She has been active on the national level since 2003, serving as NEC and has held ten national chairmanships.

She is a member of the National Future Focus Committee, the 100th Anniversary Committee, and served as co-captain of Go-To Strategy A (phonetic) for several years. She served her department with distinction, holding all elected offices. She also served as Mississippi Girls State Director for three years. Kathy retired after 22 years with the Mississippi Supreme Court, serving as a judicial assistant to a Supreme Court justice.

Kathy believes in our motto -- service, not self -- and is passionate about our mission of serving our heroes, our communities, and our youth. She is inspired by Sophocles' quote "kindness gives birth to kindness." She feels one act of kindness can change a person's life.

On behalf of the Department of Mississippi, it is my honor to nominate our own Kathy Dungan for office of National Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Kathy Dungan is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of National Vice President?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Hearing none, nominations for National Vice President are closed. Nominations are now in order for the office of National Chaplain. The National Secretary will call the departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Oregon has an announced delegate. The delegate chairman shall ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

MS. MARSH: Madam President -- microphone four. Jody Marsh, Department of Oregon Delegation Chair asks you to recognize past National President Linda Boone for the purpose of a nomination.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So recognized.

MS. BOONE: Good morning.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. BOONE: I'm Linda Boone, a delegate from the Department of Oregon, and we place in nomination for the office's National Chaplain, Cheryl Park.

This morning, we're going to give you an outline of the skills and responsibilities required for a chaplain, so that will help you evaluate our candidate's skill set to serve as your National Chaplain.

Chaplains typically serve as in-house spiritual counselors to offer spiritual and religious advice. Chaplains can be from any faith and become called upon to counsel those from faiths other than their own. Chaplains can come from a variety of backgrounds. Chaplains must be empathetic and able to handle situations of great stress and sadness.

They are often involved in some of the most intimate moments of a person's life, and must be able to provide emotional support and the stability in times of both happiness and grief.

Chaplains are often called on to participate in formal ceremonies and the ability to maintain a professional demeanor appropriate of the situation required.

We in Oregon believe that these attributes -- believe Cheryl has these attributes and has demonstrated them in a variety of situations throughout her career of service to this organization, and we encourage your support. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Cheryl Park is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain?

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of Colorado has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

MS. KUNTZ: Microphone four. Laurie Kuntz, delegate of the Department of Colorado. Madam Chairman, I ask that you recognize National Executive Committeewoman Susie Bozella for the purpose of nomination.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So recognized.

MS. BOZELLA: Madam President, ALA members. Good morning, everyone.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. BOZELLA: I am Susie Bozella from the Department of Colorado and it's my honor to nominate Evelyn Espinola from Alamosa, Colorado for the office of American Legion Auxiliary National Chaplain. Evelyn is eligible for the Auxiliary through the service of her husband, Helder (phonetic) Espinola, a Vietnam era veteran. She comes from a military family. Her grandfather, father, and two brothers also served in the military.

Evelyn is currently a member of the Neal Thomas Centennial American Legion Auxiliary Unit 209 in Colorado Springs. Evelyn has served in many unit and district offices and committees. Currently she is co-chaplain of her unit and lead delegate at this convention.

At the department level, Evelyn served as department chaplain for three years, Vice President, President-Elect, and President 2016/2017. Her President's Project was the Crawford House, which is a rehabilitation center for homeless veterans, and her project raised over \$4,000.

But what makes her a good choice for National Chaplain? Let's look at what she gives to others. Evelyn is a 13-year volunteer for the Alamosa Sheriff's Office as a victims advocate. She is there to comfort victims of any crime. She addresses the spiritual needs when there has been a loss of a family member. Evelyn has also counseled the children and women of domestic violence. And naturally prayers are an important part of her position as a victim advocate.

How else do we see her giving? Evelyn is an active member of her church. She holds the position of membership on the Board of Directors. She attends Humble Hands -- a ladies bible study, teaches Sunday school, and works the after school program.

She also gives to veterans. Evelyn is active with the Home Lake Veterans Community Living Center where she visits the veterans and literally makes their day with her smile and compassion.

Last, when we look at her spirit of giving, we see her as an amazing, loving grandma. The Department of Colorado is proud to nominate Evelyn Espinola for the Office of American Legion Auxiliary National Chaplain. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Evelyn Espinola is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of National Chaplain?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Hearing none, nominations for National Chaplain are now closed. Nominations are in order for the office of National Historian. The Secretary will call the departments with announced candidates.

MS. BUCKLER: The Department of North Carolina has an announced candidate. The delegation chairman should ask the Chair to recognize the delegate for the purpose of the nomination.

MS. TOPPIN: She's good. Madam President, microphone four. Brenda Toppin, delegate Chairman for the Department of North Carolina asks that you please recognize Betsy Lee Hodges, delegate from North Carolina for the purpose of nomination.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: So recognized.

MS. TOPPIN: The Department of North Carolina proudly endorses Susan Campbell for the office of National Historian, 2017/2018. Susan has been a member of the Edward G. Bond American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 40, Edenton, North Carolina for 31 years. She is eligible for membership through the service of her deceased husband, Steven Mansion (phonetic), a Vietnam Navy Chief Petty Officer, and through Richard Campbell, an Air Force Vietnam veteran.

Susan has been an active unit member serving most positions, including historian. She has led the American Legion Family Relay Life Team for 14 years, assisted her unit in the weekly bingo kitchen fundraiser, and currently chairs the A & R Children and Youth Girls State and Americanism Committees for the unit.

On the department level, Susan has served 22 positions including two terms as historian, vice president, and president. On the national level, Susan has served as NEC, Public Relations and Community Service Committee member, Southern Division National Security, Children and Youth, Education, VA&R, and Poppy Chairman, Junior Activities Vice Chairman, and Centennial Strategic Planning Goal 1B team member.

Susan is a longstanding member of Cape Colony Church of Christ serving as church secretary and president and secretary of the Ladies Guild. Members of the Department of North Carolina, with pride and confidence in her ability, submit for nomination our outstanding candidate, Susan Campbell, as a 2017/2018 American Legion Auxiliary National Historian.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Susan Campbell is nominated. Are there any further nominations for the office of Historian?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Hearing none, nominations for National Historian are closed. With these nominations and the nominations made during the division caucuses on Saturday, August 19, 2017, nominations for the 2017/2018 national officers are complete.

The convention rules provide that the nominees for national offices of National President, National Vice President, National Chaplain, and National Historian shall be introduced to the assembly. The Auxiliary member who made the nomination will introduce the candidate by name and department affiliation only. Each nominee will be allowed a maximum of two minutes for remarks.

Will the representatives from Wisconsin please introduce the candidate for National President?

MS. KIESLING: Madam President Mary, it is an honor to present to you from the Department of Wisconsin the candidate for the high office of National President, Diane Duscheck.

MS. DUSCHECK: Thank you, Char. Now, we have a great organization here. We're almost 100 years old. We don't feel it yet, but we're almost there, and we just really need to be ready to spring into the next 100 years.

We all need to pitch in and make this a warm and welcoming organization, and we need to be the change that we want to see in our own Auxiliary. So I would appreciate your support as we move forward for our next 100 years. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will the representative from Mississippi please present the candidate for National Vice President?

MS. LAWS: Madam President, I present Kathy Dungan for the office of National Vice President.

(Applause.)

MS. DUNGAN: Thank you, June. Madam National President, officers, and Auxiliary members, I am humbled and honored to be

here today as a candidate for National Vice President of this wonderful organization. I owe many thanks to my family, my friends, and my department. Thank you all for your love and support.

The Auxiliary affords us many opportunities to serve our veterans, military, and our communities. If elected I pledge to continue working our mission of serving our heroes and their families and our goal of making our communities a better place to live and work. I ask for your consideration and support. Thank you, and God bless you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will the representative from Oregon present the candidate for National Chaplain?

MS. BOONE: I present to you Oregon's candidate for National Chaplain, Cheryl Park.

(Applause.)

MS. PARK: Thank you, Linda. Madam President, officers, delegates, and guests, I feel so blessed standing here before you today. God has opened so many doors I never dreamed I would ever walk through.

I joined the ALA as a junior member and as a senior member have served in nearly every office at the unit, district, and department levels. But the office of chaplain was the first office I held at each level. I've also served as NEC Woman, and on the National Poppy Committee.

I would be honored to serve as your 2017-2018 National Chaplain, because sharing our faith strengthens the American Legion family. What we do for our veterans, our military and their families, and our youth, we do for God.

I'm Cheryl Park, and I would appreciate your vote for National Chaplain for the coming year. Thank you, and may God bless each of you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will the representative from Colorado please present the candidate for National Chaplain?

MS. BOZELLO: I present Colorado's candidate for National Chaplain, Evelyn Espinola.

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: Madam President Mary, Auxiliary family, good morning.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. ESPINOLA: For God and country -- these are very strong and powerful words. I live my life by following our Lord's good works. To tell you a little bit about myself, other than what Susie has already told you is that I am a four-time cancer survivor. I strongly believe in the power of prayer.

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: I believe that giving everything up to God and faith and love, prayers are answered. I love to write inspiring poems and my own prayers. My most favorite and joyous position that I have held was

the chaplain position, sending inspiration and caring words to everyone, because I feel everyone can use some uplifting.

I wear a button that says “May I pray for you?” To pray for a person or the many is such a gratifying feeling. I strongly believe that we need God back into our country. God, family, service, then self is how I have lived my life, and to be able to serve as your National Chaplain will be an honor.

To inspire the right words by following the Lord’s graces is what I can bring to our organization. I will be humbled and grateful for your vote. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will the representative from North Carolina present the candidate for National Historian?

MS. TOPPIN: Candidate for National Historian, Susan Campbell.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: Good morning.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. CAMPBELL: It would be my distinct pleasure and honor to serve as your National Historian. I promise to do my very best to make the history of our organization for the year as clear and concise and engaging as possible, but I can’t do it alone. I need all of you to work hard to let me know what you are doing in your departments. In that way, I can highlight your accomplishments.

Therefore, I am asking for your support and your vote. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: This concludes nominations for 2016-2017 [sic] national officers. We will proceed with the election of national officers.

You have nominated Diane Duscheck of Wisconsin for the office of National President. In accordance with the rules you have adopted, if there is but one candidate for an office, the nominee will be elected by voice.

All in favor of electing Diane Duscheck as National President for 2017-2018 administrative year, please say “aye.”

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. The Chair declares Diane Duscheck of Wisconsin duly elected as National President for 2017-2018 administrative year.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Kathy Dungan of Mississippi is the only nominee for the office of National Vice President.

All in favor of Kathy Dungan for the office of National Vice President say “aye.”

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. Kathy Dungan has been duly elected as National Vice President for 2017-2018 administrative year. Please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: On Saturday, at the division caucuses, each division nominated a candidate for National Division Vice President, and the current division National Vice Presidents have certified to the Chair the following nominees.

Trish Ward of Kansas has been nominated for the office of Central Division National Vice President. All those in favor of Trish Ward as National Central Division Vice President please say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. Trish Ward has been duly elected as National Central Division Vice President. Trish, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT WARD: Karyn Porempski of New York has been nominated for the office of National Eastern Division Vice President. All those in favor of Karyn L. Porempski for National Eastern Division Vice President please say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. You have elected Karyn Porempski as National Eastern Division Vice President.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Karyn, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Peggy Miller of Wyoming has been nominated for the office of National Northwestern Division Vice President.

All those in favor of Peggy Miller National Northwestern Division Vice President, please say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. You have elected Peggy Miller as the National Northwestern Division Vice President.

Peggy, please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Diane Spencer of Kentucky has been nominated for the office of National Southern Division Vice President.

All those in favor of Diane Spencer as the National Southern Division Vice President, please say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. Diane Spencer has been elected the National Southern Division Vice President. Will you please stand, Diane?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Nancy Michalski of Nevada has been nominated for the office of National Western Division Vice President.

All those in favor of Nancy Michalski as National Western Division Vice President, please say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. Nancy Michalski has been elected as National Western Division Vice President.

Nancy, will you please stand?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: For the election of National Chaplain, we will be voting with our electronic keypads. Nominees are Cheryl Park, Oregon; Evelyn Espinola, Colorado.

If you would like to vote for Cheryl Park, press 1. If you would like to vote for Evelyn Espinola, press 2. Please vote now.

(Pause.)

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

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Please show the results. We must be having technical errors. We're waiting with baited breath.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: All right, ladies. We get to have fun and re-do it. So get your keypads out. If you would like to vote for Cheryl Park, press 1. If you would like to vote for Evelyn Espinola, vote 2. Please vote now.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Wait, please. Just a minute. Oh, I have to wait until the screen tells you to do that. This is when I get to tap dance. Is everybody -- oh, here we go.

So, if you would like to vote for Cheryl Park, please press 1. If you would like to vote for Evelyn Espinola, please press 2. Please vote again now.

(Pause.)

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

Evelyn Espinola is our new Chaplain -- has been duly elected as Chaplain. Please stand.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Susan Campbell of North Carolina is the only nominee for the office of National Historian.

All in favor of Susan Campbell for the office of National Historian, say "aye."

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Opposed? No. Susan Campbell has been duly elected as National Historian for the 2017-2018 administrative year. Please stand, Susan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will all those just elected please stand? Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you your 2017-2018 American Legion Auxiliary officers.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, ladies.

And a big thank you to the entire Elections and Tally Committee. These women are here every morning distributing keypads. They stay late after every session, verifying all keypads have been returned and troubleshoot any keypad issues.

Please help me give these women a round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: We all recognize the need to recruit new members. Of course, increasing membership helps fund our mission outreach, but new members also help fuel action, especially when we tap into their personal skill sets.

Maybe a new member is proficient with computers, or graphic design, or organizing activities. Maybe they have a public relations background, accounting experience, enjoy working with young people, or have strong leadership skills.

And sometimes, if given the chance, new members have a significant impact right from the very start. Let's take a look.

(Video played.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: From the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Texas, please help me welcome Sylvia Chess.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Okay. That was wonderful, wasn't it? Here with an update on the Centennial Strategic Plan are the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Implementation Team, Past National President Janet Jefford, and Stephanie Abisi.

MS. JEFFORD: Madam National President, this has been a very busy and productive year for everyone involved in implementing our Centennial Plan. It is hoped that today's report will inform you about our progress, encourage you to support the National Plan in your department plans, and remind you of the importance of resourcing the Centennial Strategic Plan.

You have heard much about the Strategic Plan over the last two days, but it is important enough to say it again. So let's get started. Goal 5 With The American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty. Goal champions Rita Navarrete and Mike Butt. This team is dedicated to improving awareness and member public perception of the American Legion Auxiliary.

One of the major first steps made possible by the funding supported by convention delegates and approved by the NEC was the hiring of the a renowned national public relations service. Because of their reputation, they have the resources and the clout to gain additional media coverage that we alone cannot achieve.

Our return on investment is averaging 70 to 1. This is huge. More people are seeing the name of the ALA out there, and our name is tied to what we do and why it matters.

For example, Girls Nation stories were picked up by CBS Radio and NBC News. This is truly building brand loyalty. What does this mean for you and your departments? Well, the next time you ask someone to

join they might have already heard about the American Legion Auxiliary and our mission, making the ask a little easier. Or the next time you're in an elevator, when someone sees the shirt you're wearing they may say to you, "American Legion Auxiliary. I just read the poppy story written by your organization in a magazine. Can you tell me more?"

Now wouldn't that be a nice change from "American Legion Auxiliary? I never heard of you." Now, we need your help. The goal team can only do so much. They need each of you -- me, you, you -- to become brand advocates. Join the growing list of brand ambassadors. You witnessed a great example of that in the video you just watched.

When you are working the mission, or just going shopping, wear something that identifies you as an Auxiliary member. Brand yourself. And brand your gifts. Make sure all donations and gifts you distribute clearly say that they are from the American Legion Auxiliary.

What is on the horizon for the coming year? One strategy team will be looking to help departments with ideas on how to brand their websites. The team will also keep working to arrange a branding summit with the American Legion to talk about branding the Legion family.

We have a golden mission, or should I say a red, white, and blue mission, and we need to brand that to the public.

Goal 4, Strengthen Departments and Units. Goal champions Marybeth Revoir and Tim Bresnahan. A major accomplishment is the promotion and recognition of longer NEC terms. Twenty-eight departments are now onboard. Other good news from this team, 32 departments have engaged in strategic planning activities. Twenty-one of these departments have submitted their plan and completed what is called Phase One. Each received \$1,000 for their effort.

Mentoring teams are being formed to reach out to departments to help them through the phases. More monetary incentives are planned. So what can you do? Download the strategic planning guide from the ALA website. Earn those monetary incentives. We can all use a little more cash.

Guidelines for Department Executive Committee, or better known as DEC 101. How many of you have reviewed it with your department executive committees? Goal teams can only take us so far in reaching our goals. The teams can create training materials such as DEC 101, but only by departments using them can we reach our goal.

Through the efforts of this team, Compliance Matters was offered during mission training as a way to education departments and units on fiduciary responsibilities and stewardship. Now, the team is looking at ways to expand this training to your DECs.

What's happening over the next year? Teams are looking at ways to streamline reporting, and are creating online toolboxes for strategic planning.

Goal 3, Develop Leadership at All Levels. Goal champions, Rosemarie Hauck and Colette Fike. What is leadership? How does it look at

each level? Will role clarification help? What can leaders do to make membership meaningful?

From all the surveys completed by departments, and from conversations at the DLNC, it was evident that there is a need for clear definition of roles and responsibilities at all levels, including defining the leadership roles of the President, the Secretary, and the NEC.

This team is committed to working on the core issues of role clarification and continuity. Role clarification includes role definition, accountability, and an understanding of governance versus management. It includes matching volunteer roles with individual skills and abilities, and helping individuals grow into new roles.

This team, along with Goal Four, was instrumental in helping to create the ALA Academy. They provided major input into the new leadership module. Please welcome Stephanie Abisi, Vice Chairman of the Implementation Team to tell us more about the Academy.

(Applause.)

MS. ABISI: How many you have taken the first ALA Academy courses?

(Show of hands.)

MS. ABISI: Great. During the last two years we gave you a sneak peek at the development of the American Legion Auxiliary Academy, and what a development journey it's been.

In May, the Academy officially launched with the first two online courses -- ALA 101 and the American Legion Auxiliary Communication Methods 201. We have had a tremendous positive feedback. Members from around the country are excited to learn and be willing to try our new way to help train and educate members.

As we keep emphasizing, it is important that these five goals are achieved at every level of the organization, and the Academy curriculum addresses strategies and initiatives in all five goals of the Centennial Strategic Plan, and addresses feedback from the organizational effectiveness assessment.

Members want training to make membership meaningful. They want it simple. They want it high quality and accessible.

The funding for the development of the Academy is part of the NEC's commitment to resource the Centennial Strategic Plan, and funds were budgeted to develop training courses so that a majority of the courses are free and available to any member at any time.

We hired a professional training development company called Brilljent (phonetic) to help our organization develop online and in-person training courses. Professional curriculum development corporations exist and excel in taking organizations' content and creating learning modules for its members.

As you can imagine, there have been some challenges around building a training program for our members. We are a large organization, so we cannot rely on traditional face-to-face training. We simply could not reach all of our members that way.

So the Academy provides a variety of ways to deliver training to all of our members that is consistent and well-constructed. Brilljent has the professional curriculum development expertise, and the ALA has more than 2,000 resources for our members already developed and on our national website, and that is a lot of material that can be overwhelming for the most engaged members and staggering to a new member.

Based on Brilljent's expertise and our members' feedback, the ALA Academy is being developed to include multiple delivery methods to help encourage self-paced learning, peer sharing, and mentoring. Virtual online learning to allow those who may not be able to travel to a classroom or a unit meeting to participate and learn.

Consistent training materials. Everyone will get the same information and opportunities that will deliver consistent messaging. The Academy includes training modules in four basic progressive learning levels, which progress from ALA 101 which focuses on who we are, what we do, and why we matter. This universal course is what we hope all members would want to take, but is especially designed for new members or those members who've never really done much in the ALA.

To 201, there will be about a dozen 201 courses. Many of you took the first 201 course, ALA Communication Methods 201, which is an introduction to how the ALA uses e-communication and provides some basic how-to information about using social media.

The 300 and 400 level courses delve further into these topics at a level necessary for members who are or who will serve in leadership positions at all levels. We actually tested the first 301 class here in Reno, ALA Communication Methods 301, which over 200 of you took. Ultimately this course will become a webinar offered through the Academy.

And we have a surprise for you today. The next online course, ALA Leadership Living Our Motto of Service Not Self, will be available in the Academy by the time you get home.

(Applause.)

MS. ABISI: And you are the first to know. This online course reviews that leadership is not a title; it is helping others to stay mission-focused and leading by our guiding principles of Service Not Self, and to recognize what leadership is and what it is not. By the end of this course, participants will have the tools to develop a personal leadership plan.

Coming in the future, courses planned include Handling Conflict, Member Retention, Diversity, Culture Basics, Changed Reaction Styles, and Marketing Leadership.

Now please welcome back President Mary who has some exciting news that you've all been waiting for.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: At the Department Leadership National Conference, we challenged departments to encourage members to take the first two courses in the ALA Academy, and over 500 members accepted that challenge. And for one department in each division with the

most participation by a percentage of their members, we are rewarding an LCD projector to be used for department training activities.

So, now stay in your seats as we announce the winners, as you will be contacted by National Headquarters after the convention. So for the news you've been waiting for, those five departments are Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Wyoming, Arkansas, and New Mexico.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Congratulations. Please continue to challenge your members to take the ALA Academy courses.

Stephanie, thank you. Janet, what else is happening with the Centennial Plan?

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you, Stephanie and Mary. We lost Connecticut. Oh, well.

Goal 2, Create an Internal Culture of Goodwill. Goal Champions Joyce Endres and Donna Parrott. Creating a culture of goodwill begins with each of us as we lead by example. This team designed goodwill cards with three different messages to be given to those who demonstrate acts of kindness, gratitude, and generosity of spirit.

A template is now available on our website in our members only section, so members may print their own cards. And we're giving you an example of the cards on your chairs this morning.

A new National Goodwill Ambassador Award has been created to recognize members who are true examples of goodwill to their peers. This prestigious award is to be given at National Convention by the National President. Rules, criteria, and an entry form are in their final stages and will be available on the ALA website.

An American Legion Auxiliary Code of Conduct was adopted this past Saturday by the NEC. This Code describes the principles of good behavior expected of ALA members, emphasizing that a member's participation in the American Legion Auxiliary is a privilege, not a right.

For the coming year, this team will be exploring ways to train department leaders in conflict resolution through honest and caring conversations and looking into the possibility of establishing a team building chairman on the unit level. Please remember the words, "Your smile is your logo, your personality is your business card, and how you leave others feeling after having an experience with you becomes your trademark."

(Applause.)

MS. JEFFORD: Goal 1, Enhance Membership Strength. Gold champions, Trish Ward, Anita Biggs, and Marta Hedding. Three important accomplishments of this team are the ability for members to renew online, the ability for new members to join online, and the creation of an online interest form that can be completed by non-members when they visit our national website.

This past year, over 16,000 members renewed online, and more than 400 new members have joined online. Those interest forms? We

are learning that not many units and departments are utilizing them. Follow up on those forms. It is a proven way to grow membership.

North Carolina reached out to one person who completed a form and ending up by having her whole family, daughters, and sisters joined. How easy is that?

Other initiatives coming from Goal One, our recruitment plan for ALA Girls State Alumni, a new member welcome kit, and a Service Not Self volunteer toolbox.

Over the last five years our membership has decreased over 12 percent. Each year we enroll about 50,000 new members. Our renewal rate covers around 90 percent. Our rate of decline is slightly decreasing. Not bad numbers, but our membership is still steadily declining.

All of the strategic planning teams are working hard to provide information, templates, toolkits, training, et cetera, but we can only do so much on our own. To accomplish the outcomes we are striving for, a recognizable brand, strong departments and units, competent leaders at all levels, a culture of goodwill, and a growing membership promoting our mission, we need you.

We need all of us. We need to download and use the information available on the American Legion Auxiliary website. Only 17 percent of our current members have signed in to the members only portal -- 17 percent. That is a shame. This means that only a small percentage even has the ability to access all the information available.

We need you. We need you to ask people to join us. We need to invest in ourselves. We need to continue to resource the Centennial Strategic Plan. Without your help, we are just like these digit spinners, just spinning our wheels and going nowhere.

We need you to keep the momentum moving forward. Will you help? Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you for your reports, Stephanie and Janet. Do we have any resolutions?

MS. JEFFORD: Yes, Madam President. We have one resolution.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Resolutions Chairman Penny Maklary, please proceed with presenting the resolution.

MS. MAKLARY: Madam President, convention delegates. Resolution number one, Resourcing Year Four of American Legion Auxiliary Five-Year Centennial Strategic Plan. This was presented by the Centennial Plan Implementation Team.

Whereas, the American Legion Auxiliary's capacity to deliver our mission is jeopardized by a number of factors, including a 45-year trend in declining and aging membership, with the biggest membership loss occurring among the more than 40 percent of new members who leave the organization within their first three years of joining, and

Whereas, if the American Legion Auxiliary continues to decline at the rate it has over the past 40 years, the organization will have fewer than 300,000 members in 15 years and it will be extinct in 30 years, and

Whereas, to address the critical state of the American Legion Auxiliary, the National Executive Committee in March of 2014 duly adopted the 2014 through 2019/20 vision and five strategic goals for the American Legion Auxiliary, and in February, 2016, amended Goal 1 as follows:

The vision -- by 2019/20, the American Legion Auxiliary's million members will be making a difference for veterans and families in every neighborhood.

Goal 5, with the American Legion, build awareness and loyalty as a brand family; Goal 4, strengthen departments and units; Goal 3, develop leadership at all levels; Goal 2, create an internal culture of goodwill; Goal 1, enhance membership strength; and

Whereas, the 2014, 2015, and 2016 National Conventions of the American Legion Auxiliary voted overwhelmingly to support the American Legion Auxiliary, making investment in itself to accomplish the five goals of the American Legion Auxiliary's five-year Centennial Strategic Plan, and in support of same, the American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee appropriated reserved funds to resource the needs of Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 of the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan; and

Whereas, the five Centennial Plan Goal teams comprised of more than 150 members have identified some 20 crucial strategies and 150 initiatives that must be accomplished in order to achieve the five goals that are interdependent and must be achieved at all levels so that the American Legion Auxiliary can become a thriving organization; and

Whereas, the official findings and recommendations of the Organizational Effectiveness Assessment of the American Legion Auxiliary, professionally conducted by Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates, and based on input from a 70 percent greater than expected response rate of nearly 9,000 members, non-members, and former members, addressing in detail the needs for the American Legion Auxiliary to invest in itself to achieve the five strategic goals to improve the organization; and

Whereas, each year, in order to increase our capacity at all levels of the organization to serve our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan goal teams must add or adjust initiative, plus develop implementation plans to address the finding and recommendations of the professional organizational effectiveness assessment of the American Legion Auxiliary's capacity to serve our mission; and

Whereas, the major steps in Year 4 of the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan are to continue the professional firm's development of customized organizational effectiveness, training modules for the American Legion Auxiliary, objectively based on the needs identified by the members and in the JGA Organizational Effectiveness Assessment of the American Legion Auxiliary, train trainers that can be dispatched to help

districts and departments, and continue the promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary through professional media articles developed and broadcast by the professional media firm, MSL, which so far has yielded the American Legion Auxiliary a massive 2,000 to 1 return on investments; and

Whereas, the fiscal year '18 American Legion Auxiliary national budget proposal for resourcing Year 4 of the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan has been painstakingly and frugally developed and represents an ongoing investment in the American Legion Auxiliary by reallocating \$347,000 from reserved funds to benefit all levels of the American Legion Auxiliary; and

Whereas, the fiscal year '18 American Legion Auxiliary national budget proposal resources each of the five goals, including incentives to departments for various accomplishments towards successfully implementing their departments' strategic plans; now therefore, let it be

Resolved, that the 2017 National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary held August 21 through the 23rd, 2017, in Reno, Nevada, supports the American Legion Auxiliary's sustained investment in itself to accomplish the five goals of the American Legion Auxiliary 2014 through 2019/20 Centennial Strategic Plan, and be it further

Resolved, that upon adoption of this resolution by the 2017 National Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary the first meeting of the 2017/2018 National Executive Committee consider this show of support when considering action to appropriate funds to resource the needs identified to be accomplished in fiscal year '18 of Year 4 of the American Legion Auxiliary 2014 through 2019/20 Centennial Strategic Plan; and be it further

Resolved, that the American Legion Auxiliary National Conventions in 2018 and 2019 be apprised of the achievements of the American Legion Auxiliary's five year Centennial Strategic Plan and be presented resolutions of support based upon success and needs for implementation of the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan over the course of the five-year plan; and be it finally

Resolved, that the national organization and departments continue the commitment to implementing initiatives to accomplish the five goals of the American Legion Auxiliary's five-year Centennial Strategic Plan adopted by the National Executive Committee so that the organization may realize a reversal of its declining membership and increase its ability to deliver the important mission of the American Legion Auxiliary by and beyond the 100th anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary in 2019-2020.

The Pre-Convention Finance Committee recommends that the resolution be adopted. Madam President, on behalf of the Resolution Committee, I move the adoption of the resolutions as just read.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Penny. Thank you. The question is on the adoption of the resolution just read. The Finance Pre-Convention Committee recommends that the resolution be adopted.

Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Are you ready for the question?

ATTENDEES: Yes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Those in favor of the resolutions to support the Centennial Plan, please press the number 1 key on your voting pad. Those opposed, please press number 2 key. Please vote now.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Voting is now closed. Please show the results. The affirmative has it, and the resolution is adopted.

Janet, please continue.

MS. JEFFORD: Madam President, that concludes the Strategic Planning report. Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Janet.

The Membership Program works to ensure the future growth and prosperity of this organization by developing strategies to retain, recruit, and engage members. Here with her report is National Membership Committee Chairman Martha Corriher.

MS. CORRIHER: Madam National President, your membership team across the country has worked hard renewing, recruiting, and rejoining Auxiliary members.

Members have used the National membership Facebook page to share their accomplishments around the country. Departments, districts, divisions, areas, and units have set up their own membership Facebook page to share their story of who we are, what we do, and why we matter. What a great way to brag a little while sharing the ideas on membership.

Elmer's (phonetic) ALA Unit 20 from Kentucky take their show on the road in their community to share the membership opportunities working as a Legion family. Working membership as a family gets the job done for this unit. As the saying goes, the family that sticks together stays together. So as you see in this picture, it looks like they'll be together for a long time.

Units are taking the saying "our juniors are our future" to heart. Pictured is Wisconsin Unit 6 teaching proper flag folding techniques. Teach them young so that they can share the knowledge. Share Americanism in programs in your schools, and it is a great way to reach potential new members.

Becoming involved with your entire American Legion family in your community projects is a sure way to grow your membership. The Landis American Legion family 146 in North Carolina have regular community sponsored events to raise money for various American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary programs.

The ALA Juniors and the SAL's Sons wanted to raise money for the Child Welfare Foundation, and so they decided to hold a missing and exploited children's walk. They raised \$235 in just a couple of hours for the Child Welfare Foundation. This walk not only raised funds, but

it generated a new American Legion family members and Auxiliary interest in the community and we gained new members.

The Art Cymro (phonetic) Unit 28 in Washington used a local bazaar and their junior members to set up membership displays to play games and sell articles for their unit fundraiser. Once again, juniors being able to work with the senior members' projects give them an opportunity to be a leader while being mentored by the senior members.

Sharing responsibilities with the juniors leads us to the National Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Culture of Goodwill. Units across the country have really been working this goal and have seen wonderful and promising results in retaining and growing their membership. The year end report indicated Goal 2 was an important part of our Auxiliary.

Being nice and more accepting of individual ideas helped to boost and retain membership. Many departments reported that trying new ideas suggested by their members was productive and resulted in positive attitudes.

The Department of Nebraska declared the State a no-crab zone. This slogan helped in keeping the atmosphere and light and positive during department functions. The belief is if you are having fun and everyone is kind and happy, then you have the opportunity to grow your membership and accomplish your events and your projects.

The Steve Youngdeer (phonetic) Unit 143 in North Carolina are the movers and shakers in our high country. These ladies show how the mission is worked by the Cherokee Indians. Their tents can be seen at various events sharing membership and the Auxiliary's mission. The Cherokees are proud to have had the Asheville VAMC named after Private First Class Charles George (phonetic), who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his selfless actions in Korea.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: Unit members in New Mexico are recognizing members not only for their volunteerism, but for their continuous years of membership in the ALA. Units presented certificates to honor them for their years of membership to the organization, once again showing appreciation is such a small way and it means the world to those members who receive that certificate. It also continues to support our mission, it works our programs, and it will grow our membership.

When the membership year is all said and done, what better way to show the results of your hard work than displaying your 100 or your goal plus membership ribbons? Way to go Department of Maryland for providing 100 percent in goal plus ribbons to your units. As you can see, Glenarden Unit 275 is beaming with the joy of their accomplishment for 2017. Again, the public recognition of accomplishment for this goal meant the world to the unit.

Auxiliary members again stepped up to the plate to hit home runs in the membership game. 112 members earned the Recruit Ten award. 1,289 members earned the Recruit One award, and 164 members earned the

Rejoin One award. Twenty nine Auxiliary unit members hit a home run by recruiting 25 or more new senior members to their units.

Please join me in a well-deserved round of applause as they are recognized on the big screen.

(Applause.)

(Video played.)

MS. CORRIHER: I challenge each of you to join this elite team and hit your own home run in membership next year.

I issued a challenge for every department to try to reach goal by Memorial Day. There was a positive possibility that we would have five goal winners, one from each division. However, the numbers did slightly rise, but only one department reached goal by that deadline. The only Goal Plus department to reach their goal by Memorial Day was the Department of Maine, increasing their goal that they had set by 86 members, and since reaching their goal, they have sent in 46 more membership. Great job, Maine.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: And so with that, the challenge was a unit that was goal in that department would receive a special gift from me and the winning unit from Maine of the poppy wax warmer was Eugene M. Norwood (phonetic) Unit 69. Pictured are membership Chairman Ann Durost and President Veronica Gurney (phonetic), and they will present the warmer at their September meeting.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: I am also pleased to announce that since our goal project we have another Goal Department Plus and that is the Department of Washington. They reached Goal Plus on June 21, 2017.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: It has been said that membership is every member's responsibility. Members' actions, members' excitement, members' community involvement, and members' passion and dedication to our programs are what will grow our membership.

A membership chairman responsibility is to transmit membership when needed, providing materials and information to units from the national organization, to provide assistance and encouragement, and, yes, even those calls to units, districts, and division presidents inquiring about their membership status help our organization grow and plant the seed for all of our members to rally and go out and actively work membership.

Congratulations go out to the following departments for being selected as the winners of the Best Unit Member experience in their division. They showed respect, interest in their members, listened, and let their members know how value they were as being members in their units.

Our Central Division winner is Wisconsin. They're in Scribner (phonetic) Unit 6. Our Eastern Division winner goes to New York Throngs Neck (phonetic) Memorial Unit 1456. Northwestern Division winner Nebraska's Bryson Booker (phonetic) Unit 59, and in the Southern Division we had Mississippi's Daniel W. Bird (phonetic) Unit 26.

(Applause.)

MS. CORRIHER: And I'm sorry to say the Western Division had no entries for this award. So next year get those entries in for special awards.

Madam President, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your National Membership Chairman, and this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Great job. Thank you, Martha.

Developing knowledgeable and capable leaders is vital to growing the American Legion Auxiliary. By providing women of all ages the opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills, we are advancing the Auxiliary's mission far into the future.

Please welcome National Leadership Committee Chairman, Jeri Brooks Greenwell.

MS. GREENWELL: Good morning.

ATTENDEES: Good morning.

MS. GREENWELL: Madam National President, the bottom line in leadership isn't how far we advance ourselves, but how far we advance others.

As we learned on Monday morning, we must start by clearly articulating the why of our organization to motivate and encourage others to assume leadership roles. We must connect the dots between what we do and why a new infusion of leadership is essential to the future of our organization.

We must be leaders, not bosses. Motivate with a carrot instead of a stick, and treat people as we'd like to be treated. Each of us should strive to help our members grow, adapt, and succeed by providing purpose, direction, and motivation.

Members in Minnesota focused on similarities between the Strategic Plan, membership, and leadership -- how each linked to one another, and how together the three will stimulate membership and develop new leaders in rejuvenating leaders in rejuvenating our organization.

Texas leaders, believing that knowledge should be shared and is the key to our success, set out to pollinate units with information. As we just learned, members were overjoyed at the launch of the ALA Academy, currently offering two of four modules encouraging self-paced learning, peer sharing, and mentoring.

Increased numbers of members have expanded their knowledge of our organization by taking the ALA basics courses. It is hoped that they are applying and/or sharing what they learned with others and that this training is helping in the discovery of new leadership potential.

Personal learning is the responsibility of each member of our organization, and perhaps accounted for attendance at mission training, showing an increase of 33 percent.

The use of member data surveys helped provide a snapshot of demographics, personal information, and member interest enabling units to adapt strategies for greater participation based on members' strengths, interests, and passions.

Numerous trainings and workshops took advantage of team building exercises and created opportunities through games, activities, and skits, helping to illustrate who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Kudos to New York with its appropriate and timely skit, "How to Develop Younger Leaders," presented during their mid-winter conference with an audience of over 450 senior members, and 25 junior members, including 72 new attendees.

And to West Virginia for calling upon an outside presenter in helping its members discover the traits of a good leader.

Mentoring our juniors was apparent throughout the country. A few examples -- New Mexico with their first combined Junior SAL workshop; South Carolina Department Leadership Chairman and Honorary Junior President, teaming up to present their leadership training; and Mississippi reporting that their junior program had nearly doubled and that they are attending area conferences and workshops and getting more and more involved.

Members acknowledge the importance of fostering an atmosphere of goodwill at every opportunity. Two great examples were Michigan suggesting to practice the pause, and Ohio sharing an insight into "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil."

The dictionary defines goodwill among other things as having benevolent interest or concern for others. By its very definition, this involves a myriad of other virtues to include kindness, friendliness, helpfulness, generosity, and support. Minnesota recognized these attributes in honoring a Miss Goodwill Ambassador at their department convention.

They also share -- keep in mind that when you contribute to a positive culture, you are not only enhancing the organization, but also yourself. By every member facilitating the development of others and practicing goodwill to one another, we will ensure the continued legacy of our organization and exhibit by example our ALA member pride.

Madam National President, this concludes my platform remarks.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you so much. Would Eva Wallace from the Department of Washington please come to the podium and present the National President's Scrapbook?

(Applause.)

MS. WALLACE: Mary, it's an honor and a privilege to be able to work on this for you this year. Mary asked for something a little bit different. She wanted some photo books. We're also doing her large scrapbook, but this is the first installment of more to come.

Thank you for giving me the privilege.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Eva. What a great way to look back and remember my year as National President. Thank you. And she'll have it done just as soon as her shoulder is totally healed. She's had some surgery.

I'm pleased to introduce the members of the hardworking Resolutions Committee. Penny Maklary, Chairman; Jacquelynn Boughner, Vice Chairman; and Suzanne Knapp, Member.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Are there any resolutions?

MS. MAKLARY: Madam National President, the Pre-Convention Resolution Committee met on Saturday, August 19th, at the appointed time after the Credentials and Rules Committees. Past National President Janet Jefford is representing the national organization.

One resolution submitted by Strategic Planning was forwarded to the Finance Committee for consideration. With only one resolution to be considered, the meeting was used to educate members and answer questions on the purpose and importance of Resolution Committees, as well as part of Credentials and Rules, and the things they play in formulating basic actions needed for conventions.

Past National Presidents Kris West (phonetic) and Janet Jefford, as well as National Parliamentarian Chris Dickey assisted with clarification and questions when needed.

Madam President, this concludes the Resolution Committee with the exception of courtesy resolutions. Madam President, may we consider courtesy resolutions one and two with one vote? Just say yes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes.

(Laughter.)

MS. MAKLARY: Good. Courtesy resolution number one will be read by Vice Chairman Jacquelynn Boughner, and courtesy resolution number two will be read by Committee Member Suzanne Knapp.

MS. BOUGHNER: Courtesy resolution number one, Whereas, the dedicated delegates, alternates, and guests have gathered in Reno to hear the accomplishments of the volunteers of the world's largest organization of patriotic women and to show their American Legion pride in belonging to the organization and in working the mission under the national leadership of President Mary Davis, along with the devoted attention and consideration of the issues presented to them; and

Whereas, the national officers, the national chairmen have shown their Auxiliary pride by promoting programs and fueling a year of accomplishments by way of the dedicated members and volunteers that have made a difference for veterans, military members, and their families in thousands of neighborhoods and furthering the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary; and

Whereas, our past national presidents inspire the American Legion Auxiliary pride through their unselfish guidance, encouragement, and friendship to all of us; and

Whereas, National Convention Committee Chairman Courtenay Burns, local convention committees, and the members of the Department of Nevada, along with the staff of this convention center, the numerous hotels, restaurants, shops, and venues in the city of Reno and nearby have extended a warm hand of hospitality to all of us; and

Whereas, the dependable members of our national staff show their ALA pride by assisting our members throughout the year in addition to tirelessly working to design an interesting and valuable 97th Annual Convention; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that this courtesy resolution, the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention assembled here in Reno, Nevada, this 23rd day of August, 2017, express our heartfelt appreciate and grateful thanks to each of them for their diligence and hard work by a round of continuous applause.

(Applause.)

MS. KNAPP: Courtesy resolution number two --

Whereas, this 97th National Convention has been honored by the presence of many distinguished guests, led by the American Legion National Commander, Charles E. Schmidt and staff, who have carried the legacy forward through Legion accomplishments, along with the Sons of the American Legion National Commander, Jeff Frain, who proudly led the SAL Knowledge is Power tour; and

Whereas, representatives of Auxiliary programs including Junior Member of the Year, American Legion Youth Champions, Girls Nation President, names of Miss Poppy and Little Miss Poppy winners, department, unit, Members of the Year honorees, active duty service women, and Women of the Year recipient have expressed their appreciation to the honors bestowed upon them and provided us with a sense of pride, excitement, and confidence, to not only reach but exceed our goals; and

Whereas, multiple representatives whose lives were affected by all of our Auxiliary programs have voiced their appreciation for the thousands of hours that were proudly given by our volunteers throughout the world; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that this courtesy resolution of the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention assembled here in Reno, Nevada on this 23rd day of August, 2017, express our heartfelt appreciation and grateful thanks to this distinguished group who shared time with us, by your applause.

(Applause).

MS. MAKLARY: Madam President, I move the adoption of courtesy resolution one and two.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I think by your applause, we'll vote. All those who enjoyed and support the courtesy resolutions, please go ahead and clap.

(Applause.)

MS. MAKLARY: Madam President, may you ask the Vice President to sit in the chair and you assume your box, please?

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Madam Vice President, would you please assume the chair?

(Laughter.)

MS. MAKLARY: This is courtesy resolution number three:

Whereas, one short year ago on August 31st in Cincinnati, Ohio at the 96th Annual Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary, a

proud military wife, daughter, mother, and Auxiliary member from Pat Tillman (phonetic) Memorial 53 in Lacey, Washington, Mary Davis was installed as American Legion Auxiliary National President; and

Whereas, President Mary has asked to join in support of Make Membership Matter and her theme American Legion Auxiliary Member Pride, by our actions of showing pride in our accomplishments, pride in making a difference in another's life, and pride in our membership in the American Legion Auxiliary; and

Whereas, President Mary has traveled thousands of miles through the world sharing the accomplishments of the American Legion Auxiliary and promoting advocacy for veterans, military families, and youth development; and

Whereas, President Mary's kindness, sincerity, and passion have allowed a lifelong bond to be formed with Auxiliary departments and units, and their members, community organizations, and along with Commander Schmidt of the American Legion, and the sense of the American Legion Commander Jeff Frain so they could not only talk the talk but walk the walk of genuine American Legion family and service ambassadors; and

Whereas, her loving husband, Dale, and the Davis family have made a tremendous loving sacrifice by enduring a year without her, but also share in her Auxiliary pride for an admirable year of accomplishment; and therefore, be it

Resolved, that with this courtesy resolution of the American Legion Auxiliary National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada on this 23rd day of August, 2017, we express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to this extraordinary woman, American Legion Auxiliary National President Mary Davis by giving her a standing ovation, demonstrating our love, support, and pride in all her accomplishments, along with the unanimous thank you for a job well done.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you all.  
(Applause.)

MS. MAKLARY: Madam National President, on behalf of the Resolution Committee, I move the adoption of courtesy resolution number three.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: By your applause you will adopt resolution number three.  
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. MAKLARY: Madam National President, that now concludes the Resolution Report. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you all. Thank you.

So I'll make it shorter again. For over five years you've heard Angela DeNiro's voice on a variety of American Legion Auxiliary videos, helping tell our story of service. She has in essence become the voice of the Auxiliary's National Convention, as well.

Angela has learned a great deal about us by simply narrating these videos, and she's developed a connection with the organization. Many members have asked, "who is she?" and "what is her story?"

Angela DeNiro is a jazz vocalist, voiceover artist, and native New Yorker. In addition to Angela's jazz singing and scatting abilities, she has also done extensive studio work with various jingles and albums to her credit. She performs with saxophonist husband Ron Aprea in a quintet, and is featured in a 16-piece big band. If you've ever heard New Jersey, you can see her perform at Trumpets Jazz club. Angela has a short message for you.

MS. DENIRO: (On video.) Hi. This is Angela DeNiro. It's a pleasure to talk personally to all of the wonderful members of the American Legion Auxiliary. First, I want you to know what a pleasure and an honor it's been to voice your National Convention and your heartwarming and inspiring stories for the past five years.

Thank you for all the wonderful work you do to help our veterans and their families. May God bless you all for your service.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: I've been told that Angela is watching live stream from her home in New York. Let's give her a round of applause.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: A huge thank you, Angela, for literally telling our story.

Ladies, this concludes our meeting for this morning. If you will please not go up the aisle here where aisle 3 is. If you're behind where the folks are, just go back. The rest of you, if you'd please exit out aisle 2 I would appreciate it.

We'll see you back here at 2:30 for Installation -- beg your pardon. Oh, wait a minute. Hold it. Hold it. It's not on here, but while you were all waiting I was doing a little video for you. I've had a wonderful year, and each and every department that I have visited has been so extremely gracious, and I appreciate meeting every single one of the members.

So I've done just a short video for you.

(Video played.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you so much. I love you all. I can't tell you how much it means to me that I have made all these new friends, and I'll keep you close to my heart forever. Thank you so much.

So thank you, everyone. We are recessed until Installation Event. Back at 2:30 here in this hall. Thank you.

(Morning session recessed at 9:38 a.m.)

**INSTALLATION CEREMONY  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017**

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The meeting of the 97th Annual National Convention will now come to order. Today we are assembled for the installation of the 2017-2018 newly elected officers.

This is a special day for a proud Department of Wisconsin. We will witness the installation of Diane Duscheck as the 97th American Legion Auxiliary National President.

It is also a special day for the Department of Mississippi. Their member, Kathy Dungan, will be installed as our National Vice President.

It is now my honor to present the installing officer for this ceremony, past National President Jan Pulvermacher Ryan from the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you, Madam President, and good afternoon.

It's a very special privilege and it's with a great deal of pride that I welcome everyone to the installation of Diane Duscheck from the Department of Wisconsin as National President, and the national officers and department presidents who will serve with her this year as we begin a new year of service for God and country.

Participants in this afternoon's program are the following: Sergeants-at-Arms Patricia Smith and Virgie Kodl, past department presidents, Department of Wisconsin. Color Bearers for the flags of the Department of Wisconsin are Bonnie Dorniak, Executive Secretary/Treasurer; and Sixth District President Nancy Helms, both from the Department of Wisconsin.

The soloist for today is Loretta Shellman, past department president also from the Department of Wisconsin. The installing chaplain is past National President Linda Newsome -- I'm sorry.

This afternoon we are going to have someone that has to fill in because our Linda Newsome unfortunately ended up in this hospital this week, too. So it will be Diana Sirovina from the Department of Wisconsin, who will also be giving the pledge of allegiance; and the MC Joyce Endres, past department president from Wisconsin, Diane's campaign manager, and a good friend.

We will also be installing this year Kathy Dungan as the Vice President from the Department of Mississippi.

Members of the audience, I ask that you please remain seated as I ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring forward the incoming National Vice President, Kathy Dungan, from the Department of Mississippi, escorted by Chief Master Sergeant Angela M. Duncan, U.S. Air Force, Past Department Commander, and serving this year as the Department President of Mississippi.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Colors of the Department of Wisconsin are presented.

It is with great delight that I ask you to welcome the National President for the year 2017-2018, Diane Duscheck, escorted by Joanie Dickerson, Retired U.S. Navy as a Chief Petty Officer, and presently serving as First Vice President, the Department of Wisconsin.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: The opening prayer and the pledge of allegiance will be led by Diana Sirovina, past department president from the Department of Wisconsin.

MS. SIROVINA: Dear Heavenly Father, we welcome you to this celebration of our newly elected officers of the American Legion Auxiliary. May you keep watch over them as they guide our organization to great accomplishments as we care for our veterans, our military, and all our families. Please assist the leadership in their deliberations for the good of our entire membership.

Thank you, God, for the blessings you have bestowed on our American Legion family and our friends. Thank you for all of the days we have had together in service to our nation and to thee. Thank you for teaching us that we can do not great things, but we can do small things with great love.

Watch over all our members, but particularly these newly elected officers, and especially grant your grace to our National President, Diane, that she will travel with safety and know the peace of your love as she sometimes may grow weary with her duties and will need your sustaining guidance and comforting presence. In your Holy name we pray. Amen.

Please join me in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

ATTENDEES: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Please be seated. Thank you, Diana.

Would you please welcome Loretta Shellman, past Department President of Wisconsin, singing "It's a Wonderful World."

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: She not only has a beautiful voice, but she added those two extra stanzas. It was a surprise for our incoming National President.

Here with a special reading is Rita Navarrete, past National President, Department of New Mexico, reading "Reflections from Archbishop Oscar Romero, A Step Along the Way."

MS. NAVARRETE: "It helps now and then to step back and take that long view. We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete. No statement says all that could be said. No program accomplishes the mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. That is what we are about.

We plant seeds that will one day grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold the future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that this enables us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not the master builders. We are the prophets of a future not our own.”

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you, Rita.

Diane, it is a personal privilege to share this day with you.

We have shared many events over the past years, but none has been more significant or exciting than today.

I can assure you that this year will be filled with delight and much satisfaction. You will find joy in surprising places, and your life will be enriched by these happenings, with new-found friends and memories to last a lifetime.

Will the newly elected national officers please rise to take your oath of office?

The members of the American Legion Auxiliary have entrusted you with great responsibility. You have been elected to provide guidance in the activities of our organization. You will familiarize yourself with the duties of your respective offices. Always remember that the welfare and success of this organization depends upon you.

Every American Legion Auxiliary member assumes the obligation of preserving the integrity of both the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, contributing to the aims and purposes of our organizations.

Please raise your right hand and repeat after me, giving your name where I give mine. “I, Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office I am about to assume, and I further pledge that I am not a member of and do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.”

You may lower your hands and be seated.

Department Presidents, would you please rise? President Diane, please come forward and give the oath of office to these department presidents who will be serving with you this year.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please raise your right hands. “I, Diane Duscheck, promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office I am about to assume, and I further pledge that I am not a member of and do not subscribe to the principles of any group opposed to our form of government.”

You may lower your hands. Congratulations.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Congratulations, Department Presidents. I hope you have a wonderful year.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: You, the members of the American Legion Auxiliary, have chosen outstanding officers to lead us this year. I have charged them with a serious responsibility, and I likewise charge you.

Would all of the members of the American Legion Auxiliary please stand, raise your right hand and repeat after me?

“I solemnly promise to renew my pledge of service to the American Legion Auxiliary and to give wholehearted support to these newly elected officers.”

Thank you. Please remain standing as I ask the rest of the audience to rise, as well, for a prayer by our installing Chaplain, Diana Sirovina.

MS. SIROVINA: Keep ascending the mountain of cheerfulness by daily scattering seeds of kindness along the way as best as you can, and should the mist hide the mountaintop, continue undaunted and you will reach the sun-tipped heights of your own life experience.

Dear Lord, please guide our new officers in their quest to scatter their seeds of kindness as they embark on another year of service to our communities, our veterans, and our families. Guide each department president and her officers and our national family as they reach towards that mountaintop of service.

A special request -- please keep our newly elected President, Diane, and her officers in your supreme care as they travel this great county to accomplish our share of building toward a better world. In your Holy name we pray. Amen.

ATTENDEES: Amen.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you, Diana, and you may be seated.

The retiring officers will now transfer their pins and ribbons of office to their successors.

(Pause.)

As the outgoing officers return to their seats, past National President Mary will present them with their ribbons and pins. We will begin the introduction of the newly elected officers with the National Chaplain, Valerie Brown-Debro.

It is my distinct honor to present to you our 2017-2018 National Chaplain, Evelyn Espinola.

(Applause.)

MS. ESPINOLA: I just want to say thank you to everybody here and it's a blessing to be here. Department of Colorado, thank you.

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Now it's my pleasure to introduce to you our National Historian 2016-2017, Coral May Grout.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUT: Thank you so much. It's my honor to present the 2017-2018 National Historian from the Department of North Carolina, Susan Campbell.

(Applause.)

MS. CAMPBELL: I want to thank everyone who had the foresight to ask me to run for National Historian, and I want to thank my Department of North Carolina. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: I'd like to introduce the outgoing Central Division National Vice President, Carollee Junge.

(Applause.)

MS. JUNGE: It is my pleasure and honor to introduce to you the 2017-2018 Central Division National Vice President, Trish Ward, from the Department of Kansas.

(Applause.)

MS. WARD: Thank you so much for this amazing honor. It truly is a dream come true, and I can only say that our mission is my life's work, and it is the members and those who we serve that mean so much and truly own my heart.

I would like to thank my amazing husband, Steve Ward, who's watching from home back in the Midwest, and the most amazing committed group of women, the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Kansas. Please stand up and be recognized. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: At this time it is my pleasure to introduce the 2016-2017 Eastern Division National Vice President, Patricia Lach.

(Applause.)

MS. LACH: Two shorties here. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce the 2017-2018 Eastern Division National Vice President, Karyn Porempski. Oh, my Lord -- Karen Porempski from the great Department of New York.

(Applause.)

MS. POREMPSKI: Thank you. Thank you very much, Patty. First of all I'd like to say congratulations to all the new officers, and I'd like to thank all of you for your commitment to service not self. And I look forward to visiting all of the departments in the awesome Eastern Division and meeting you, our members, and I would like to take a moment to ask our great Department of New York to please stand and be recognized.

(Applause.)

MS. POREMPSKI: Thank you all for your support, and would the Eastern Division please stand?

(Applause.)

MS. POREMPSKI: Thank you very much, and God bless America.

MS. LACH: It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce -- no, I think I'm presenting the 2016-2017 Division Vice President from the Northwestern Division, Virginia Nelsen. You know my mind just went pffftt (phonetic).

(Applause.)

MS. NELSEN: Ladies, it is a pleasure to introduce Wyoming's own, Peggy Miller, your new Northwestern Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

MS. MILLER: Thank you, Ginny. I would like to thank the Department of Wyoming. Would you like to stand up and be recognized?

(Applause.)

MS. MILLER: Thank you very much for your support. I also would like to have the Northwest Division stand up for recognition.

(Applause.)

MS. MILLER: Sounds great out there. Thank you. And I would also like to thank all the Legionnaires for all of your support. If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't have this great organization of our American Legion Auxiliary. So thank you very much. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. NELSON: It is now a pleasure to introduce 2016-2017 Southern Division National Vice President Beverly Mulkey.

(Applause.)

MS. MULKEY: It is my honor to present to you your 2017-'18 Southern Division National Vice President, Diane Spencer, from the Department of Kentucky.

(Applause.)

MS. SPENCER: Thank you. It's a great honor and pleasure, and first and foremost I want to thank God. But I would like to ask the Department of Kentucky to please stand and be recognized for all of the hard work and the support they have given me throughout the year. Department of Kentucky, please stand.

(Applause.)

MS. SPENCER: All right. Now, I would love the Southern Division -- please stand up and be recognized.

(Applause.)

MS. SPENCER: Thank you, for God and country, that's where our (phonetic) for. Thank you.

MS. MULKEY: I would now like to introduce Cary Fisher, your Western Division National Vice President.

(Applause.)

MS. FISHER: I am honored to present to you the 2017-2018 Western Division National Vice President, Nancy Michalski from the Department of Nevada.

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: Thank you very much. And I know we're small, but we're mighty. Would the Department of Nevada please stand up?

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: I would like to thank them for electing me to be the Western Division National Vice President this year, and would the Western Division -- all the members please stand up?

(Applause.)

MS. MICHALSKI: Let me tell you, ladies. We're going to be good this year. I am looking forward to visiting all of you and to meeting more of you, and to find out what you're doing for this wonderful, wonderful organization of the American Legion Auxiliary, which I love very much.

And I would also like to thank the American Legion, also, and the Sons of the American Legion who has helped me. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: We also have one member on stage who is an officer of the American Legion Auxiliary who serves as a partner in the National Office and will be nominated to continue her service at the National Executive Committee meeting, which will take place tomorrow morning, that's National Secretary Dubbie Buckler.

Would you please rise? Just stand up.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: The other National Officers are National Treasurer Marta Hedding. She has been at 23 National Conventions. This is the first one she's missed because of some illness that's affecting her. So please keep her in your prayer as well as she's not able to be with us, but is she is watching the live streaming from at home. So, hi, Marta!

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Today symbolizes an end as well as a beginning, a renewal as well as a closure. Today, we have witnessed an orderly transfer of the role of the presidency and all of our officers, and together we celebrate our unity.

Congratulations to all of you and our very best wishes for an incredible year of service. I sincerely hope it meets your every expectation.

Good luck in all of your endeavors and safe travels.

Would the National Vice President, Kathy Dungan from the Department of Mississippi, please come forward, along with National President Duscheck, so Diane can give you your pin and ribbon?

And, Kathy, when the process is complete, would you have a few words for us?

(Pause.)

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Madam President, Officers and Auxiliary members, I want to thank each of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your National Vice President. I am humbled and very proud to be a member of this great organization.

I thank my family, especially my husband, William, who has supported me every step of the way of this awesome journey.

I want to thank my Mississippi Legion family for their support. Would the Department of Mississippi please stand? Thank you, Team Mississippi.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUNGAN: I want to thank my dear friend June Laws, my campaign chairman, who has worked tirelessly for the past couple of years.

June, would you please stand? There you are.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUNGAN: Thank you and your awesome committee for your support. Now would the Southern Division please stand? Thank you.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUNGAN: All right. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Madam National President Diane, I'm not going to throw you under the bus.

(Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT DUNGAN: What an honor it is to serve with you this year. I have had the privilege of working with you for many years, getting to know you, sharing laughs, and building our friendship. As you lead this great organization, I wish you safe travels and a wonderful and successful year as we continue to work the mission, dedicating ourselves to serve our veterans, active military, their families, our youth, and our communities.

Again, thank you all for this wonderful opportunity to serve. May God bless each one of you.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: I think it's pretty incredible that the two escorts for our National Vice President and our National President are both dual members.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: President Mary -- I should say past President Mary, and President Diane, please come to the podium, so that Mary can present Diane with her pin and ribbon.

(Pause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: My good friend, it is indeed an honor to present to you your gavel, this symbol of authority for our organization. Use it wisely and in the best interests of our organization.

Now we will hear from our National President Diane with her vision for the coming year.

Madam President, you're on.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you so much for your show of support. It is certainly a humbling experience to be in this position.

There are many special thank you's and congratulatory wishes to pass around. I have been so fortunate to be in many of your states over the years, starting with regional meetings that were held jointly with the Legion and the Auxiliary back in the 1990s, some of you remember those, and moving to department trainings and mission trainings. And for that reason, I didn't want to just have Central Division stand, but I just wanted to say thank

you for all of you, because you have always welcomed me into your departments and you have always made me feel like you've put out the welcome mat for me, and for that I really appreciate it.

Would the Department of Wisconsin please stand? Legion, SAL, Auxiliary members?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You are outstanding. I appreciate your support so much and your continued friendship for all these many years. Thank you very much.

Congratulations to President Mary for her great year, and to Kathy Dungan as she begins her role as National Vice President.

I would also like just to recognize the National Chairman of the Committee appointees. They have agreed to dedicate this next year's service to the American Legion Auxiliary and to provide support for your department and unit chairman, so many thanks to them.

I have a special shout out to past National President Syble Deshotel, who was National President in 1995-'96 and appointed me to my first chairmanship. If I'm right, Syble is actually live-tuned and listening to the live streaming as we're going through the convention here.

So, hi, Syble, and thank you very much.

There is an old Greek proverb that says, "Society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in." As an adult, I look back only to realize how many trees and seeds my parents had planted. So let me introduce you to the family.

My eligibility is through my father's World War II service. Rollie and Vi were active members of the American Legion and the Auxiliary. And in 1954, when the Marcus Anne (phonetic) American Legion Auxiliary was chartered, Mom was the first unit president.

I grew up thinking that every family had monthly Auxiliary meetings in the dining room.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Dads always brought home unemployed veterans and their families, and then took the veteran job hunting while the moms would entertain the wife and the children.

And in the 1950s, when there were special projects for community and national security were presented like the Ground Observer Corps and the civil defense programs, dads always volunteered to get the jobs done and moms took up the slack at home.

As time went on, Daddy was one of the department vice commanders and my mom was the district president. So my parents sowed the seeds of servant leadership, demonstrating how important it was to be of service to their neighbors and their community.

This year, my brother Phil received his 50-year membership patch. Phil is a Vietnam-era veteran and he and his wife, Bev, have one son, Joseph, and his family is Chrissy, his wife, and their kids Alan, Amber, Halley, and Jason.

Areas of emphasis this year will be projects where we plant seeds to make a difference in the Auxiliary both today and in the future. The first is the Centennial Strategic Plan and the second is the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Endowment Fund.

Just this morning, we heard about the Centennial Strategic Plan and how well it's doing. Through the organizational assessment, we all came to realize that we needed to invest in ourselves in order to strengthen the American Legion Auxiliary. So many of your departments have made huge strides in your own strategic plan and I know some departments are chomping at the bit to get going on Phase II.

Through Goals 3 and 4, we have been planting seeds at a national level to strengthen departments and units and to develop leaders at all levels. And we do so assuming that we will see some short-term results and we are aware that there are many positive results of these goals that we won't realize in our lifetime. We need to keep the momentum on the strategic plan in the departments, but we also need to push the strategic plan down to the unit level and plant seeds of change and success at the grassroots level.

The success of the national strategic plan is the result of volunteers and staff working side-by-side on the goals, the strategies, and the initiatives. The accomplishment of the strategic plan at the unit level will be the result of departments and units working together. Again, planting seeds where we may need to be patient in order to see the fruits of our labor.

Goal 2, developing an internal culture of goodwill, and Goal 5, with the America Legion build brand loyalty, refer to how we treat one another and how the community and our members perceive both us personally and the organization. Gandhi would say, we must be the change we wish to see in the world. For these two goals, we need to plant the seeds of kindness, honesty and fairness.

They seem like little things, probably because our mothers told us over and over that they were the right things to do, but these are the things that make a huge difference to others. We can follow the Golden Rule and treat others as we would like to be treated or we can follow the Platinum Rule and treat others as they would like to be treated.

We need to serve first, build trust, add value to others, listen to understand, and live our values. We should strive to have people be happy to see us come, not glad to see us go.

If we plant our seeds for Goals 2, 3, 4, and 5, we will see the results in Goal 1, which is to enhance membership strength, with an increase in helping hands for our mission and increased member satisfaction. With our continued planing of these seeds, we and the future Auxiliary members should be able to sit in the shade of the trees that we plant.

The secondary emphasis this year in the National President's fundraiser will be the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Endowment Fund. Those of you who attended Tuesday morning's Auxiliary session, you know without a doubt the Foundation is ten years old this year. I hope you read the Foundation's story in the August Auxiliary magazine. Well, we're going to celebrate those ten amazing years.

The Foundation was formed to assist the Auxiliary in carrying out educational, charitable and exempt purposes of the Auxiliary through our 501(c)(3) corporation.

As the year progresses, the Foundation will continue to distribute the new investment earnings from the Mission Endowment Fund to the Auxiliary. To date, almost \$40,000 in Foundation interest has been distributed back to the Auxiliary to fund veterans' projects and emergent needs.

Monies in an endowment are permanently restricted and remain in the endowment into perpetuity, continuing to grow so future generations will benefit from the support of Auxiliary programs.

Every donation to the endowment, every memorial sent in, every mention of the ALA Foundation endowment in a will or a life insurance policy is another seed sown, another tree planted.

In support of the Foundation's ten years, there will be a pin to celebrate the Foundation. You will be able to get a Foundation pin today at the close of convention. It doesn't come without a caveat. I would ask you that in accepting the Foundation pin, you would please make a donation to the Foundation. And for ease of your use, it just happens that the web address of the National American Legion Auxiliary and the Foundation can be found on the back of the pins. You don't need to search for the web address when you're making your donation.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We have seeds to sow and trees to plant, so the endowment will be a healthy fund that will provide support for their mission outreach and future generations of the American Legion Auxiliary will be able to sit in the shade of trees and reflect on the insight of the women who started the Foundation in 2007.

There are also some items that are meant to enhance your member experience this year. First, there will again be six mission trainings, each held in conjunction with a junior meeting. This combination of junior meetings and mission trainings held in six areas of the country have increased the reach of the American Legion Auxiliary. The seeds of information that are sown during these trainings will have long-term and far-reaching impact on the Auxiliary.

Second, we listened to your concerns about the size and complexity of the action plan that changed annually. So this leader, along with the next leaders, partnered with staff to split the action plan into two sections. One part of the plan will be used from 2017 to 2022 and can actually occupy a chapter in the Department Operations Guide. This part of the plan contains suggestions of activities for each program.

The second part of the action plan is called the supplement and it contains information that will change on a yearly basis, like names of the chairman and committee members, essay contest titles and due dates.

This year you may be looking at the plan somewhat strangely as you try to fit the two pieces together, but next year you'll receive

only a new supplement because the portion that is for 2017 to 2022 will remain the same, providing continuity in the programs.

A third thing, as Auxiliary members in the audience learned this morning, ALA Academy 101 and 201 are online and available for Auxiliary members to use. Take advantage of these trainings on Auxiliary basics and communication individually or as a group. Junior members will also enjoy the information. And as a real treat, there are more academy classes being prepared, which we heard about.

And, fourth, I challenge each of you to read the Organizational Assessment that's found on the Auxiliary website. It offers such good insight into what our members actually think of the organization.

Our mission is outstanding, but we do need to follow the Golden Rule or the Platinum Rule. Become involved in the strategic plan in your department and your unit, and continue to strengthen the American Legion Auxiliary.

I am looking forward to visiting each of you in your own departments to hear of your successes as you work the mission and to hear of your innovative methods for moving the strategic plan forward in your department. We all need to plant seeds and trees and step out of our comfort zone to nurture ideas, so there will be trees in the future.

I'll leave us in Eleanor Roosevelt's hands. As she said, "It's today we must create the world of the future."

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you, President Diane, for those wonderful words and a peek into the future you foresee for the American Legion Auxiliary this coming year. Those members who are present with us today and those at home in their own departments will accept the challenge you've presented and carry us forward through an amazing year.

History is a ribbon, always unfurling, and you certainly will make history this coming year as your ribbon continues to unfurl, starting today until the end of your year of service to our veterans, the military, their families, and our communities.

It's with great pride and a total singular privilege to introduce our next National Commander, if elected later tomorrow, our very first female ever to serve in that capacity, also --

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: -- also from the great Department of Wisconsin, one who states that she will be the first ever National Commander installed in two-inch heels. Please welcome Denise Rohan.

(Applause.)

MS. ROHAN: Thank you so much. Thank you. Please be seated.

President Diane, Officers past and present, guests, my fellow Legion family members. When I made that statement about being the first National Commander to be installed in two-inch heels, I was told later

that there may have been another National Commander that was installed in two-inch heels. I don't know who that was, though.

(Laughter.)

MS. ROHAN: And there's a good chance I'm not going to get to do that because of the fall I took recently.

But what an honor, and I kind of feel like this might be a little bit of a dress rehearsal for tomorrow, but over the last 30-some years that I've been a member of the American Legion family of Wisconsin, I've seen Diane, President Diane, up and down the hallways at our conventions and our meetings, and I've always looked up to her as a prime example of a perfect Auxiliary member. And as the years have progressed into my being a candidate for National Commander and I started figuring out that my National President was going to be a woman that I have admired for so many years, I just feel so honored and thrilled to have that opportunity to serve alongside of Diane, and also our Sons of the American Legion Commander, Danny.

Because with the theme of family first, I do want to make sure that the entire American Legion family works together. It's the American Legion, our American Legion Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion, and our American Legion Riders, because together we make fantastic things happen across this entire nation.

Now, as you've said in your meetings this past week and your convention sessions, I hope that each and every one of you were filled with a sense of pride, a sense of pride knowing that you are making a difference in the lives of our veterans, their families, and our communities. Because, you see, every moment that you spend on American Legion family activities is a statement of faith. It's a statement that you believe in our organization, you believe in our four pillars, and you believe in what we stand for, and that is making sure that we have a strong national defense, we're taking care of our veterans and making sure that their rehabilitation goes smoothly. You're taking care of teaching our children about Americanism, and making sure that our children and youth, as they grow up, that they know that they live in a safe nation and that they are part of what America is all about.

So as you travel home, I hope you have safe travels home from this convention. But we are not in Las Vegas, we are in Reno, and what happens in Reno does not have to stay here in Reno.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MS. ROHAN: Please, go home and share everything that you learned, share all of the fantastic things that the American Legion family is doing, share it all and know that you have the gratitude of a very grateful nation for everything that you do.

God bless each and every one of you, and thank you for always putting our families first.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: It's rather unusual to have the aide to the National Commander be your husband, and I'd like to introduce her husband, Mike Rohan.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: We certainly want to thank Denise and wish her well. It's going to be an outstanding year for her I'm sure as well and we wish her good luck, as always.

Now it's my pleasure to introduce an outstanding member of the Department of Wisconsin, Joyce Endres, a past department president and Diane's campaign manager, to introduce those special guests that are here today.

Joyce?

MS. ENDRES: Thank you, Jan. It's my pleasure to introduce other members of Wisconsin and the National SAL Detachment Commander. They're here to bring greetings and wishes, best wishes to President Diane.

So first we'll have National Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander Danny Smith.

(Cheering.)

(Applause.)

COMMANDER SMITH: Good afternoon. That's what I like, enthusiasm.

(Laughter.)

COMMANDER SMITH: We need to get enthusiastic about this organization.

I want to thank you for those kind words and that warm introduction, and especially that warm welcome. And to be honest with all of you, I should stand and applaud you folks for what you do for our veterans, our children and youth, and our communities, what you do is truly amazing.

National President Duscheck, Past National President Davis, National Officers and staff, department officers, delegates, alternates, distinguished individuals and guests of this convention, congratulations on a great year. The record shows that you did some fantastic work and I hope everyone understands that what you do does make a difference in someone's life. No matter how small that donation or how many hours you serve, every one of those dollars and every one of those hours is important and it makes a difference in someone's life.

And I have had the opportunity to read President Diane's resume and I know that she will serve the organization and you well as your National President.

You know, we always hear about mutual helpfulness and we always hear about the American Legion family, and that's really what it should be all about and that's what this year is going to be about. We are going to work together as family to promote those ideals and principles on which the American Legion was founded and as stated in our respective preambles.

And I would like to thank all of you and show my sincere appreciation for your service to those words that are in your preamble to your American Legion Auxiliary constitution: To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purpose of the American Legion.

You know, the American Legion Auxiliary has been doing that for nearly 100 years, lending a hand and supporting the American Legion, and creating programs of your own. And I'm going to tell you this, no one does it better. You know, you've stepped up and taken on those projects that the American Legion does not take on or maybe they can't take on, and it's made a difference. You exemplify mutual helpfulness and it is appreciated.

You serve the veterans, you serve your children and you serve your communities, and it makes a difference. And I've seen that difference, I've seen the smiles on the faces of those that you serve. And over the years I'm sure you've created billions and billions of smiles and to me that is the truest measure of success. And I've seen them and I know that you've seen them, and there's nothing more gratifying than a thank you and a smile from someone that we've been able to serve.

It's been a busy day, it's been a long week and I know that you have plenty to do. So I'm going to leave you with this thought: Alone, we are but one voice; together, however, we create the thunder of the world's largest veterans service organization, the American Legion Family.

God bless all of you, God bless the United States of America, and God bless the American Legion Auxiliary. Remember, together we can and together we will make a difference.

Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: The Wisconsin American Legion family is very proud to work together very well and we're happy to present the rest from our Wisconsin contingent.

Wisconsin's American Legion Auxiliary Department President who serves the American Legion Auxiliary mission with smiles and goodwill, I present you President Bonnie Jakubczyk.

(Applause.)

MS. JAKUBCZYK: Madam National President, it's a great honor to bring remarks from your department. There is nothing cheesy in you being the sixth National President from Wisconsin.

(Laughter.)

MS. JAKUBCZYK: I believe that Wisconsin is giving up the cream at the top this year.

President Diane, we know from experience that your year will be very positive and fun. Our wish for you is to have a great year with safe travels as you promote our mission of service, not self.

Just remember, we expect you and, hopefully, Commander Denise back in a year to continue your great work in Wisconsin. In fact, I bet your unit is counting on you to come back for your annual tradition of mopping the floor after your fundraiser.

(Laughter.)

MS. JAKUBCZYK: Yes, Wisconsin is truly proud of our double-Ds and wish them all the best.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Next we'll have Wisconsin's American Legion Department Commander, who served in the Army and is a dual member of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, Commander Laurel M. Clewell.

(Applause.)

MS. CLEWELL: Thank you, Joyce. Thank you, everyone. Good afternoon.

ATTENDEES: Good afternoon.

MS. CLEWELL: This is a great group. Did you ever stand -- whenever you can get up here and listen to the National Anthem done by a group like you guys or the Pledge of Allegiance, it's just -- it brings tears to my eyes. It was amazing. Thank you for that.

President Diane, congratulations. Wisconsin is very, very proud of our Legion family and our national leadership, and I see that Denise had to run, but our national leaders, our NEC men, our National Presidents, our National -- now National Commander, we're so very proud of our family.

This next year will be a testament of how well the Wisconsin American Family actually works together.

Our national organization is very blessed and very fortunate to have these two ladies in charge of the Auxiliary and the American Legion. Our American Legion family is truly, truly blessed and I can't say enough how important it is, all the work that we do.

I look forward to working with Bonnie this year, my President Bonnie, and she's a hoot.

(Laughter.)

MS. CLEWELL: But I just want to say God bless you in 2018. Thank you, and we are very, very proud of you.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Next we'll have Wisconsin's first elected National Executive Committeewoman who had spark to always serve, NEC Laura Calteux.

(Applause.)

MS. CALTEUX: Hello there.

President Diane, it is so awesome to say, it is my honor and distinct pleasure as the first elected National Executive Committeewoman for the Department of Wisconsin to bring greetings on behalf of our entire American Legion family in Wisconsin.

This is a momentous year for our department as both our National President Diane and National Commander Denise are from our great state and will lead our organizations with honor, integrity, and certainly a lot of fun thrown in too.

As we make membership meaningful and put family first, we will remain the largest patriotic service organization in the world.

Congratulations, Diane. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Next we'll have our Wisconsin National Executive Committeeman who served our country as a Marine, as a past Department Commander, an active American Legion Rider, National Executive Committeeman Ken "Rino" Rynes.

(Applause.)

MR. RYNES: And I was her commander, too. Joyce and I were -- we've been running mates for a long time. She kept me out of some trouble, but not all of it.

Good afternoon, President Diane, past National Presidents, National Officers, and delegates to this convention. Along with others, I bring you greetings from the great Department of Wisconsin.

Sometimes, the good Lord puts you in a special place at a special time. This is definitely one of those times for our department and, more specifically, Diane. Most lay people outside these halls don't understand the commitment that it takes, the commitment that Diane has undertaken these many, many years. A higher calling, reaching out to care for people you may not know, may never meet, but have to know they are out there.

Our great state has two fine ladies, as has already been mentioned, playing major roles in the Legion family this coming year. Only twice in history before has the National Commander and the National President been from the same department and, as we all know, at no time were they both women.

Diane is carrying on the legacy of Wisconsin women, serving as she will be the sixth from Wisconsin to serve as your President, with the first being back in 1926-'27. Your sixth president was from the Department of Wisconsin. I think that's very ironic.

The other thing I found out was that you ladies did not have a first name until 1980. Then it was always Mrs. J. W. McCauley, Mrs. -- so I don't know what happened in 1980, something in the water, I don't know, but

--

(Laughter.)

MR. RYNES: I will close with a personal, sincere thanks for all that you do and a reassurance that your choice, Diane, will leave your great organization better than she found it.

Thank you and God bless.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Next we'll have Wisconsin American Legion Rider President, a past department commander, and served as an Army Vietnam-era veteran, Al Richards.

(Applause.)

MR. RICHARDS: Good afternoon. It is really an honor to be here.

Like Denise said, Diane and I are from the same district back home, and I have seen this lady always showing great grace and honor

and dedication. So I'm really humbled to be here and congratulations, President Diane.

I am the President of the American Legion Riders, which I consider really an example of the American Legion Family. I mentioned at our state convention that the Riders in Wisconsin, we have about 800 members and three of them are actually on active duty right now, and we have about a half a dozen who have children, a son or a daughter on active duty, about 65 are SAL members, but over 100 of our members are Auxiliary.

(Applause.)

MR. RICHARDS: Do we have any Riders out there right now?

(Cheers.)

(Applause.)

MR. RICHARDS: All right, great. That's why I think it's really great to have the family together to congratulate Diane on her presidency.

Of course we have President Bonnie and Commander Laurel, and with any luck tomorrow -- I hear it's going to be close, but with any luck Denise will be National Commander.

(Laughter.)

MR. RICHARDS: Wait a minute, I think the ladies are taking over.

(Cheers.)

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: We began with the Sons of the American Legion and now we will end our greetings with the Wisconsin immediate past, two-year term Sons of the American Legion Detachment Commander Mike Kollmansberger.

(Applause.)

MR. KOLLMANSBERGER: Greetings, everyone.

I want to thank each and every one of you for attending this National Convention. I really want to thank you on behalf of the Detachment of Wisconsin for every veteran for their service.

And, Mary, I really want to thank you for the impression you made upon the detachment when we all got together and made blankets, but -- what I really want to give you is the message of a ripple.

What kind of ripple are you guys putting out? Is it a positive ripple or a negative ripple? Where that ripple lands, how it effects people, we never know.

Diane, you've been doing this for 50 years plus and you've been putting out a positive ripple, and how that ripple affected somebody else and bounced back and turned into another positive ripple. And it goes on and on. Right now, we have 2,000-plus people here and we're going to put out 2,000 more positive ripples.

Our goals and achievements is only the end of our imagination. Where do we want to go, where do we want to strive? You guys are right there around the corner also for your 100th anniversary. It's up to

you if you want to make a difference. I always told everybody one person can make a difference. Are you that one person to make a difference in American Legion, to make a difference in a veteran's life, giving him a wheelchair, an electric motorized wheelchair? Are you the one that made a difference when you handed a Josh Dog to a young child as their father was getting deployed? Are you the one that made a difference? That's up to you.

So with that, I have full confidence you will make a difference and you are that one person.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. ENDRES: Thank you, Mike.

And I'd like to again thank Diane and tell her congratulations and we know we're going to -- you're going to have a wonderful year. And as you can tell by these wonderful greetings, the Department of Wisconsin is strongly behind your leadership.

Thank you so very much.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you so much, Joyce, and all of our wonderful guests from Wisconsin. I'm sure we all bursting with pride as this special lady begins this memorable year as National President.

It's my privilege and honor to welcome Past President Mary into the ranks of past National Presidents and to thank her from the bottom of our hearts for this very special year of service and for everything she's accomplished. It was indeed an incredible year of service and one that leaves us with rich memories of that service.

Past President Mary, would you please come forward for some special presentations?

Presenting Past National President Mary with her Past President's pin will be Past National President Sharon Conatser from the Department of Illinois.

MS. CONATSER: Mary, my friend --

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

MS. CONATSER: -- we've come a long way, baby.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: You bet.

MS. CONATSER: I hope for you a future full of memories, a future full of friends, but most of all our friendship to continue to grow as you join the ranks of Past National President.

And Emma asked me also to say as she does the ribbon that she has lots of memories to share, but was afraid that she would not make it through because of the memories in her department that she has of Mary from the very beginning of when she met you and when you were department secretary.

So, Mary, I pin this over your heart, wear it proudly and always remember that we loved you and you had a great year, honey.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Also with us today to present President Mary with her ribbon is Emma Peoples, Past National Chaplain from the Department of Washington.

(Applause.)

(Pause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Past National President Carlene Ashworth from the Department of Texas will present her stand of colors. Flag bearers for the presentation are Lorna Ledoschuk and Elaine Roach, also from the Department of Washington.

Carlene?

(Pause.)

MS. ASHWORTH: Madam Retiring National President and dear friend, Mary, will you please take your rightful place between these grand and glorious colors under which you have served?

I am very honored to have been asked to present them to you, Mary. As you stand between these two standards, which you have served so loyally, may they always hold a place of honor in your heart. These beautiful colors stood in your national office to welcome and motivate you during your year as National President. Your beautiful ALA pin, worn by members all over the world, exemplifies your belief in the vision of our great organization.

I know through your travels that you have made a difference to our veterans, for our troops, for our youth and for our communities, you have touched the hearts of many. Your love of the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion Family, and your willingness and enthusiastic determination to serve and challenge new programs continues to propel us forward to meet the needs of the times and of our membership.

You have had a remarkable year, one that will live in your memory forever, just as it will live in the memories of those who have served with you this year. These colors under which you have served will always be a special part of those memories.

To your right stand the Stars and Stripes today. There is no other banner in the world as great as this Star Spangled Banner. It controls the strong and protects the weak. The white is for purity, the red for valor, and the blue is for justice. When you put them all together, they become the flag of the greatest country in the world.

To your left stands the banner of your office as National President of the American Legion Auxiliary, where the emblem of our organization shines. It stands for justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty. I know your heart swells with pride each time you have greeted this emblem throughout your travels.

It is with great pride that I present these colors to you. Take them home to Washington, where I know they will have a special place of honor in your home and in your heart. With these colors, you will be taking home precious memories and lasting friendships. Honor and cherish them always with God's richest blessing. We give them to you with deep affection

and prayers as you hold fast to the memory of your year. I know your wonderful family will be glad to have you back home again.

Mary, as retiring National President, you may now please take your seat and your place as a Past National President of the greatest patriotic organization ever.

Again, I want to extend my sincerest thanks to you for a job well done.

(Applause.)

MS. PULVERMACHER-RYAN: Thank you all for your inspiring presentations. As the color bearers return the flags to the standards, you can be seated, okay?

I just want to say, as you leave the hall today, please wait until all the dignitaries on stage are in the back of the hall. When you exit today, you will have an opportunity to get an ALA Foundation pin, as our President has requested, and ask you to consider giving a donation to the Foundation.

Also, there will be information available regarding the National President's homecoming. You will find some of our ladies from Wisconsin with the red scarves on and they will be distributing them.

President Mary, I return your gavel so that you can close your convention. I wish for you the most successful year filled with opportunities serving our veterans, their families, and our communities. Congratulations and my sincere best wishes.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you, Jan.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Thank you for all your love and support. I look forward to joining the Past National Presidents as the junior member.

This has been a journey to remember. This year will be recorded as a chapter of my life of service to the greatest organization one can be privileged to belong.

While milestones like serving as National President are important to remember, we must celebrate every day for the difference we are making in the lives of veterans, their families and individuals in our communities, as well as our active duty military.

I believe National President Diane and her officers are off to a great beginning and planning a year of fulfilling our mission and strongly supporting our motto: Service, not self.

With the retiring officers, the newly elected officers, the family and platform guests of the National President be retired, along with the colors of the Wisconsin delegation, please rise.

(Music.)

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DAVIS: The National Chaplain, Valerie Brown-Debro, will give the benediction.

Upon completion, the National President's pages will retire the colors.

CHAPLAIN BROWN-DEBRO: Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you today for this entire year of blessings for our leadership.

Father, we thank you for a beautiful convention. As our preamble says, for God and Country, we serve them well.

We thank you for the blessings of each and every officer that served.

As we depart from this place, but not your presence, we thank you for the accomplishments that we were able to achieve in you, as our steps are already ordered.

As I came in with the opening Scripture, Proverbs 3, 5 and 6: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, lean not into our own understanding, but to acknowledge you in all our ways and you shall direct our path. So as you are continuously directing, as we are seeking and asking, we just thank you for opening the doors.

As we go forth today, Father, we just thank you for our organization, the American Legion Family, serving our veterans, their families, and our community.

In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

ATTENDEES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DAVIS: Will the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms please come forward to retire the colors.

This 97th Convention of the American Legion Auxiliary is now adjourned. Thank you all for attending, and safe travels until we meet again.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 4:05 p.m.)

**POST-CONVENTION  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2017**

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning, ladies.

VOICES: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The National Executive Committee Meeting will now come to order. Please disable all electronic devices or place them in silent mode, and then please rise and remain standing for the opening ceremonies.

Diane Spencer, Southern Division National Vice-President will lead us in our invocation and moment of silence for our fallen heroes and those serving our nation today for the protection of our freedom. Following the prayer, Americanism Chairman Martha Corriher will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, followed by Constitution and Bylaws Chairman Denise Delaney-Wrolen leading us in the Preamble to the Constitution. Diane?

MS. SPENCER: First and foremost, please keep Chaplain Espinola, and we're happy to see Linda Newsome back in our presence this morning, and our prayers for strength. Please bow our heads.

We thank you for the opportunity to gather here. Bless each person present. We pray that this meeting is successful, productive, and blessed. Holy Spirit, guide us during our discussion. Give us wisdom concerning the issues that we face. Lord, we give you the glory for what we will accomplish. In your name we pray. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

MS. CORRIHER: Hand salute. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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

MS. DELANEY-WROLEN: Please join me in the preamble to our Constitution.

VOICES: For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in

and contribute to the accomplishments of the aims and purposes of the American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

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

For all of you who have this great green notebook, this is a little bit like getting an apple for the teacher on the first day of class. So these are Appealing - Appeal, I think is the company name, and if you open up, it smells like apples because it's made from recycled apple. Mine smells like Granny Smith. So if you're not the habit of smelling your books, you need to do that. I hope you find many uses for those. You're welcome.

It's good to see everyone here this morning. I don't know. Was getting out of bed easier this morning, or easier yesterday? Easier yesterday, I'm sure.

Diane, when she was praying this morning, asked us to keep Evelyn Espinola, our Chaplain in our prayers. Her nephew was one of the sailors that was found -- that was recovered when the Naval vessel hit the oil freighter the other day. So she needs to go home and be with family so she's been excused. Just so you know that. So yes, do -- please do keep her in your prayers.

So we're excited now to start the new '17/'18 Auxiliary year. Before we begin our business, I want to take a few minutes to welcome you to your new role, especially the NECs for 2017-2018. Those who are eligible to vote today, and at subsequent NEC meetings, are the NEC members.

NEC members include and are limited to the NEC committee woman from each department, the five National Division Vice-Presidents, the National Chaplain, and National Historian, the Nation Vice-President, and the National President. Those that are allowed to be present at the NEC meeting with voice but no vote are the past National Presidents, the National Treasurer, and the National Secretary. We always welcome our visitors and remind you that you can listen to discussions but are not permitted to participate in debate, nor are you allowed to vote.

And at this time, I'd also like to impress upon the members of the National Executive Committee that you're now serving in a national role as a Board of Directors with fiduciary responsibility to the national organization, and how that translates is as a member of the NEC, you no longer have the interest in just your departments. You're not thinking, "What would my department want?" Instead what you need to do now is think about all the decisions and cast your votes by thinking about what's best for the national organization. So that's where your responsibility is lying.

For future meetings, you'll once again receive information in advance, and you'll be expected to have read those materials in preparation for the next meeting so we can take care of any questions you might have. The NEC is a very important role, and we appreciate your diligence in attending to your duties thoughtfully and responsibly on behalf of the national organization.

Now, I'd like to ask for the NECs, do you know the person sitting next to you? If you don't, would you just introduce yourself?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I see secret handshakes. That's good. I know that on this side of the room you guys know one another. At least, I assume that you do, so we don't have to go through it. Ginny, is it something you said?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

MS. DUSCHECK: Okay. We can always check on that if you need to. Okay. So now, let's get to the business at hand.

The Chair asks that those of you wishing to address the meeting make your way to the microphones in the middle aisle here because this is the only way that our remarks can be recorded and heard by our professional court reporter so that we have transcripts of the meeting. Also, please be sure in making any remarks that you address the Chair. It would also be nice if you give your name and your department, and that will help us identify you.

Attendance at previous NEC meetings was the member's responsibility. However, now, thanks to our amazing convention team in the National Headquarters Office, we're now tracking your participation electronically. So we know if you're here.

Serving as parliamentarian for this meeting is Chris Dickey, Professional Registered Parliamentarian. Thank you, Chris.

For this meeting and future NEC meetings, the minutes will be approved by a Minute Approval Committee. The Chair appoints NECs from Washington, Mississippi, and South Dakota as the Minutes Approval Committee responsible for approving the minutes for this year's NEC meetings.

Our next business in order is the confirmation of the National Secretary and the National Treasurer. One of the first responsibilities of the National President is to present the National Secretary and National Treasurer to the NEC for confirmation. So the question is on the confirmation of Mary "Dubbie" Buckler for the office of National Secretary for the 2017-2018 administrative year. All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

You have confirmed Mary "Dubbie" Buckler as your National Secretary for the 2017-2018 administrative year. Congratulations, Dubbie.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: And I could never see anybody over there.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: That's okay. They voted for you, even if you can't see them.

MS. BUCKLER: I can't make eye contact.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I'm also very pleased to present for confirmation Marta Hedding for the office of National Treasurer for the 2017-2018 administrative year. So the question is on the confirmation of Marta Hedding for the office of National Treasurer. All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

You have confirmed Marta Hedding as your National Treasurer for the 2017-2018 administrative year, and this is Marta. Marta says, "Thank you very much." She appreciates it.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Marta. We want to congratulate both of them and thank them for their service. They are outstanding in their jobs.

Can I please have the national officers stand and be recognized?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you very much. And will all the past National Presidents please stand and be recognized at this time?

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We have a line-up. I don't think I've seen all of you together, all convention, and this is huge.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, we have new people on the end. Yeah, okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's antsy. She's wiggling (indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, ladies, for your service also. We appreciate it.

The next item of business is the confirmation of special and standing committee appointments for the 2017-2018 administrative year and Foundation Board appointments. So you have a copy of the appointments list. Let's say -- I've lost mine. I found it.

On the appointments list, if you would flip to page 2, "Leadership," we're going to remove Susan Campbell as a member because she's now an officer, and so we'll take her off and we'll fill that position, and then you'll receive notification of that. So remove member from "Leadership," Sue Campbell. And she doesn't mind that we're doing that. We're talking about it right in front of her.

If you would take a minute or two to review that list before we vote on it, please.

(Pause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: She's not here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's already been (indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are there any questions we can answer for you? Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Future Focus Long-Range Strategic Plan. So we have the Strategic Planning Committee, and we're familiar with them. Future Focus is a committee that needs to look beyond what the strategic plan is doing. So they take things that are out of the realm of strategic planning and look into the future and say, "What are some other things we should be doing that aren't being addressed by the strategic plan," and that's what their role is. Okay? Good question. Thank you.

The question then is on the motion to confirm the complete list of appointments to standing and special committees for the Administrative Year 2017-2018 and the Foundation Board appointments as presented. Is there any discussion?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The motion to confirm the complete list of appointments has passed. Congratulations for everyone on this list, and thank you for your service.

The Chair now calls on Janet Jefford, National Chairman of the Strategic Planning Implementation Team. Janet?

MS. JEFFORD: Good morning.

VOICE: Good morning.

MS. JEFFORD: As you know, the convention body adopted the resolution to resource the Centennial Strategic Plan. Therefore, on behalf of the Centennial Strategic Plan Implementation Team and the Executive Committee to the NEC, I move the adoption of the Resourcing Year 4 of the ALA 5-year Centennial Strategic Plan Resolution.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: It's been moved to adopt the Resourcing Year 4 of the ALA 5-year Centennial Strategic Plan Resolution. This is in your packet of stapled materials, the second page. Is there any discussion?

(Pause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: All those in favor of the resolution say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The motion carries.

MS. JEFFORD: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Please now welcome Finance Committee Chairman, Peggy Thomas, to present the proposed Fiscal Year '18 budget of the American Legion Auxiliary.

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

VOICES: Morning.

MS. THOMAS: Everybody happy?

VOICES: Yes.

MS. THOMAS: Mighty weak. First off, I want to say congratulations to Diane and to Kathy, and we're looking forward to an exciting year under your leadership.

As the incoming Finance Committee Chairman, and on behalf of the entire Finance Committee, which is composed of Vice-Chairman Jan Pulvermacher-Ryan, Helen Riedlinger, Sharon Conatser, and our newest member, Paula Raney. Would you all stand up and let them see who you are?  
(Applause.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you. The National Finance Committee sincerely thanks our membership and the NEC for passing the national dues increase, which will take effect in 2019 membership year. Deciding to increase the national dues will help us fulfill our duty of fiduciary stewardship, and allow us to continue to serve our mission, and to help our veterans. So I want to say thank you and I congratulate you.

I'm honored to present the 2017-2018 fiscal year budget of the American Legion Auxiliary for your consideration. I need to thank the National Headquarter staff, the National Chairman, for their input, guidance, and ideas to make sure that we are able to develop a comprehensive yet realistic budget. We need to continue meeting our goals, our obligations, and expectation of providing services for you, our members, our veterans, and their families while balancing the governmental requirements of comparing ourselves to national benchmarks which we shall share with you.

Tim Bresnahan, our controller, has spent many, many hours preparing the documents which we will go over with you this morning. We will have the documents projected on the screen for everyone to review, and I believe that Tim will be moving around so that everyone can hear him --

MR. BRESNAHAN: I'm right here.

MS. THOMAS: -- and if you have -- oh, there you are. Okay. And so now, I present to you, Tim Bresnahan, our renowned controller.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you, Peggy.  
(Applause.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: Can everybody hear me okay? This is something new this year. I'm going mobile. I do want to ask a couple quick -- real quick question of the NECs. How many of the NECs were here last year? Oh, great. That's great. Thank you. And Chrystal, if you -- everybody has met Chrystal or knows Chrystal, she's going to be my AV person. She's helping today, so.

So we'll go ahead and get started going through what is considered the narrative of the budget. The narrative is really a comprehensive summary of the budget that gives you an overall understanding of the budget in just two pages. I call it a summary, but that's my version of a summary.

I do want to reiterate what Peggy said and thank the NEC and our membership for their stewardship mind set in passing a dues increase. It was greatly needed, and greatly appreciated. So thank you.

This Fiscal Year '18 budget reflects our continuing commitment to budget wisely so that we can meet our mission service needs over the next 12 months. So what are you getting with this budget? Where the highlights -- first, as a way of a reminder, I want to point out that in 2013 we stopped collecting the national 15 cents per capita rehab assessment. We will continue that trend in Fiscal Year '18, and that will make it the sixth year in a row of not collecting the rehab assessment. So that's going to equate to a savings to the departments and members about \$600,000.

The proposed budget also includes scholarships for Spirit of Youth and Children of Warriors scholarships. The Spirit of Youth scholarships are \$55,000 in the budget, and the Children of Warriors scholarships is \$75,000.

Because of the resolution of support for the resourcing of Year 4 of the Centennial Plan, this budget includes a continued roll-out of the ALA Academy. It's an organization -- the organizational effective training aimed at improving our capacity to deliver our mission at all levels of our organization. It also includes continuation of the awards to the departments for their strategic plans, developing and implementing them at the departmental level.

This budget also includes continuation of department trainings. So you've got -- we got -- and the department secretary training at ALA and HQ, which is at no cost to the department, that's continuing. We have six ALA mission trainings. Six National Junior meetings, and we continue to fund department presidents, department secretaries, membership chairs, and national division vice-presidents to attend a department leadership national conference in Indy.

Also, as Peggy mentioned during her platform remarks, the ALA National Finance Committee at its last meeting voted to increase the share of the USAA royalties distribution with departments. So it's going from 50 percent to 90 percent.

And we're also -- are continuing -- Chrystal, can you scroll down a little bit for me?

CHRYSTAL: Sure.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Please, and thank you.

CHRYSTAL: Yes, sir.

MR. BRESNAHAN: We're also -- that's good, thanks. We're also continuing our national co-presentation of the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival. It's \$120,000 is the co-presentation obligation for National Headquarters. And then also, your donations that you send into the foundation augment that, and our over-the-top -- if expenses come in. But that's our standard budgeted obligation that ALA and HQ has with the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival.

As I mentioned earlier, due to the resourcing of the Year 4 of the Centennial Strategic Plan, this budget includes Year 4 expenses, and we're leaving a reserves related to those expenses, and we'll see later on there's an Exhibit A that shows the detail of those expenses.

So those are the main highlights of the ALA budget that we developed and are presenting. Chrystal is scrolling down now to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation budget, and Linda Boone's going to be presenting on this later, and I don't want to steal her thunder right now.

But I did want to say, how many people -- I think I recognize a lot of you. How many people came by the Giving Tuesday booth? That was great. I just want to share with you that every year that we started that, since I get to work on that, that's one of the highlights of my year because I get to hear all your whys and it just reminds me of what we're doing. So thank you.

You'll see that the Foundation is going to continue to work and increase its mission in supporting the ALA at all levels. They're really accomplishing a lot, and I'm really excited what they're doing. The veteran project grants that they give away, they've increased the amount that they're giving. I'm starting to steal our thunder. I'm going to stop. Never mind.

The last piece of the budget narrative is the summary of the reserves that's on page 2. So if you could flip to the next page, and we'll show -- we'll go over the detail of the reserves.

This is -- and you've heard us say this in year's past, this is -- the reserves are really our savings account or our rainy day fund. The National Finance Committee carefully reviews and identifies our long-term and ongoing obligations that we must meet, regardless of how many members we have, or the financial markets, how our investments are doing. Each budget year, we describe and earmark reserve funds that we must restrict to meet long-term contractual obligations and recurring big project needs.

To -- I want to be clear. We cannot change the total amount of reserve funds. They are what they are. We can only update how we identify those funds, and we must restrict based on our multi-year obligations. We do this to make sure these funds are earmarked for long-term, and we can't use them for any short-term. We can't reach in and use them for something else. Especially since -- once you approve the budget, it is what it is and we can't move things around.

The exact amount of reserve funds only fluctuate based on investment performance, or if we -- when we have to relieve the reserve fund, which you approved us to do, to pay for expenses.

Also, I wanted to make sure that we all understand that earmarking or restricting reserve funds is not the same as spending. It just means that we have properly set aside, or restricted, reserve funds. They can only be used for the purposes that we put up here for you and you approve.

Again, this year, in the spirit of transparency, we are showing the future retirement liability of the unfunded pension liability, and that ensures we're going to meet that obligation. And that's -- that comes off our auditor report. We have a pension plan, and that's -- it's underfunded currently and that's the obligation right now. And it varies depending on market fluctuations.

Okay, Chrystal. If we can go to the next slide?

Okay. This is a good slide. This shows us that our proposed budget -- we'll go -- this is going to go a little more detail for you. This provides a succinct picture of how our money is budgeted and how we spend it on our programs, our management in general, and our fund raising. If you scroll down to the pie charts, please, and thank you.

You'll see that the pie chart on the left here shows that our mission delivery, our program services, are projected for Fiscal Year '18 to be 82 percent of our budget. Management general is predicted to be, or projected to be, 13 percent, and fund raising is projected to be 5 percent. Increasing of the fund-raising expense percentage is still an emphasis for both the ALA and the ALA Foundation.

But you also will note on this that we had 82 percent projected here in Fiscal Year '18, and over here we had 85 percent that we're projecting that we're going to end out Fiscal Year '17 at. The biggest difference of that change is that -- everybody remember the grant program that we had? The ALA Call to Service, VISTA, program? Well, that unfortunately went away last July, and that was, like, \$700,000 and variance. So that is -- that makes up that decrease.

Okay, Chrystal. Next slide, please. Okay. Now, we're going to get into the detail which I really love. So at the top of the next sheet, you'll see is a revenue section. It shows our cash flow coming in. The numbers on the far left, those are our activities and those are really our incoming cost centers. For example, ALA Girls Nation, right down here. That's all -- everything that happens and comes into Girls Nation. So that's registration, store, contribution, sponsorship. All in one place.

We try to group them so we can get a better picture of where our revenue's coming from, and so that you're comfortable in understanding what goes into each category with the budget. And then as you're going -- as we're going through the year and we send out those quarterly financial reports, you know what makes them up, and you can track it, and look it up.

And we also break down revenue. So we have the prior year budget. We got our projected actual for Fiscal Year '17, and then we got our proposed for '18, and there's a percentage difference. So we do that -- I use that personally, because when I go through there, I'm looking for, you know, where were we way off, or where were some fluctuations, and those are going to drive some of the footnotes. And I try to explain to you, to make it clear when you get the packet, that it's transparent and you -- try to anticipate questions and answer them through the footnotes that you see on the bottom.

Okay. If we could scroll down. Yeah. So you see that our total -- well, could we go back up? I'm sorry. This is good. Right there. Sorry. The total revenue was budgeted at 7.9 million, and it's 9.52 percent less than Fiscal Year '17. And again, remember I talked about the ALA Call to Service coming to an end in July. That is the -- mostly the variance in those two years is because of that, the reduction.

Okay. If then we go to our expenses, our cost of doing business, you have -- can you scroll down a little bit for me? Oh, we have our

print publications is in there. You'll see that's -- so that -- everything to do with the magazine is right there. Scroll down a little bit more, please. The Spirit of Youth scholarships are right here. And then can you go on to the next page? Chrystal? Sorry. Thank you.

CHRYSTAL: You're welcome.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Just a little bit more.

There's the National President Scholarship is where the Children of Warriors Scholarships is at. So I want to point that out to you.

Our total budgeted expenses are 8.2, and that's 8.38 less than Fiscal Year '17 budgeted, but again it's going to be a common theme through here, the ALA Call to Service that went away in July. That's the biggest reason for that fluctuation.

And then you'll see down -- if you'd scroll down just a little bit more. You'll see then we also have a net difference between revenue expense which is the 328. Negative 328 is the deficit budget. We are, again, funding our budget from reserves. We're still trending downwards in dues-paying members and therefore dues income, so.

Also on the second page, you'll see the footnotes. The footnotes try to add more information on the categories where we either had a new budget item or a substantive change from the previous year. Again, we're striving for transparency when I issue these budgets, and when we do our financials on a quarterly basis, and we want to be clear, and we want to make sure that you're comfortable with the budget you are proposing -- or we are proposing. You'll approve.

If you'll look, I want to point out a couple footnotes. If you look at Footnote 1, the Washington, D.C. Conference, due to the increasing, ever increasing cost and ever increasing -- decreasing attendance, ALA and HQ will no longer be underwriting a Washington, D.C. Conference, beginning in Fiscal Year '18. The mid-year NEC meeting is planned to be held in Indianapolis. There will still be a Legion Family on the Hill and a Commander's Call, but they will not be underwritten by the national organization.

I also wanted to put out -- point out Footnote 3, is the memberships. Membership dues of 5.5 million. It was based on analysis of membership trends and targets, and represents a 1 percent increase from Fiscal Year '17, projected actual.

Now, we know that our membership is going down, but we're also -- have seen it -- the slide decrease just a little bit, so we're coming down. It's not as steep. We're starting to move this way a little bit, and we're hoping that -- and the Finance Committee's projecting that what that trend will continue and will bottom out. And then hopefully, with the Centennial Plan working, we'll start to work our way back up. So it's setting a goal for us. That it is why a 1 percent increase.

Are there any questions on the detail right now? Yes, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How much is being saved by going to Indianapolis?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the mic, please, so we can all hear.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Well, she -- that's a -- she said, "How much is being saved by going to Indianapolis?" We're -- the -- we, in stopping underwriting the D.C. Conference, 180,000 came out of that activity. Okay? And on the NEC meeting alone, we'll be saving 28-30,000. Does anybody else have any questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President, in the spirit of transparency, could we have some more numeric details on the Washington Conference and its demise? Also, the issue of where we had typically been contracting with the Legion for rooms and meeting facilities at a five-year period. And third, the potential impact that this will have on the relationship between the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary by us not being there as we have been for probably about the last 30 years?

MR. BRESNAHAN: I can't --- I will just jump in real quick and say that as far as attendance goes, from 2006 to 2017 we've dropped 35 percent in attendance. I can't -- I'm going to defer to speaking about the other items.

MS. THOMAS: Seventy-five percent of the people who went, we funded. (Indiscernible.)

MR. BRESNAHAN: And Peggy just said that 75 percent of that decreasing attendance, those that are going, we fund, to go. We pay for them to go. Seventy-five percent.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you repeat that, please?

MR. BRESNAHAN: Seventy-five --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: They're just --

MR. BRESNAHAN: Go ahead.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: He was just saying that 75 percent of the people who attended the D.C. Conference, the national organization was actually paying them to be there.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Well, they showed up, but we were paying -- National was paying the bill. And so the amount of people that actually come to D.C. Conference and are not being paid for by the national organization was 25 percent or less.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, yes. Why don't you do that? Dobbie will tell us about the contract.

MS. BUCKLER: I don't know if I'm touching on all three parts, but -- so I will just explain what I can explain about it.

Since I've been here, so this would be eight years, there's been a discussion in the National Finance Committee meetings about the declining attendance of the Washington, D.C. Conference and the increasing cost of the Washington DC Conference, and the fact that the American Legion Auxiliary, our members, were paying for 75 percent of those people who attend the conference.

We have been working with the Legion for the last several years. I'd have to go back and tell you just exactly when we started, but this isn't something that was just, like, in the last few weeks or months. For the last several years we've been talking because the Legion also has wanted to cut back on that contract.

Members of the Finance Committee know, but those are not one-year contracts. Those are ten-year contracts. And so the opportunity came for the Legion to renegotiate the contract, and they contacted us. And first off -- so let me make a digression, comment about that. I thought it was very nice that they contacted us about that. They didn't really need to do that, but they did, and they said, "This is what we want to do. We need to cut back." And we -- that was an opportunity.

So we came up to almost two years ago with scenario A, B, C, that if we ever had that opportunity, how could we save money for the organization with A being doing nothing, and C being the opportunity to move the NEC meeting to Indianapolis, end the one-day D.C. Conference, and underwrite just a few of the -- for example, when the Legion has their D.C. meeting, it's for those commissions that are in the D.C. office of the Legion office there.

So their Legislative Commission meets, their National Security Commission meets, their VA&R Commission meets, and I know I'm going to forget some but -- so the discussion has been informally for, gosh, several years, well, we -- what about bringing our counterparts in for those meetings? Still bringing people in that we would normally bring in for the D.C. briefings -- I'm sorry, for the upcoming leadership. And then, as -- I don't know if all of you know, but as many of you know, last year the Legion went from the Commander's Testimony being an open event to it being a ticketed event, and we are limited to only 20 people who can attend.

So I want to make sure you understand. I'm reporting what discussion was. This is not me giving my opinion. I want to be very clear on that. So the discussion was, "Well, if we can only -- if only 20 people can attend the Commander's Testimony, we're paying for an awful lot of people to come into Washington, D.C. for a meeting that could be held somewhere else much more affordably," and for a one-day conference, and then circle back.

And the Finance Committee discussion, and I'm looking to Peggy to confirm that I'm representing the discussion correctly. I just know Peggy well enough to know that she'll jump in if she thinks I'm not. Make sure that I'm clearly, you know, clearly stating the -- what the discussion has been.

So I've heard some of the hall talk over the past few days as well. So I'm going to be, as I like to say sometimes, plain speak. No, the Legion did not kick us out of the contract. No, we didn't pull a fast one on the Legion and get out of the contract. It's their contract. So yes, we worked with them, and at the Finance Committee we discussed it, literally in Washington, D.C.

The person who was negotiating the contract for the Legion contacted me, and it was during that -- the Finance Committee meeting I said,

"This is decision time because they're in the process of renegotiating down, reducing the overall contract." And so the consensus in the room was we would go with plan C which was eliminating the D.C. Conference as we have come to know it, which was a one-day event, the NEC meeting being held in Indianapolis, and only authorizing people in who would be allowed to attend things anyway with the Legion which would be part of their responsibilities in those national roles.

So it, kind of, hurts my heart to hear that people think that we were pulling a fast one, or that the Legion was pulling a fast one. They totally understand because we've been talking about it together. The schedule, and I will take responsibility for this. Yes, I think I told somebody earlier I do know that the convention next year is in Minneapolis, not Milwaukee. I apologize for that.

So the schedule that was on the bottom of your message -- or the notice that went out about the meeting would be that the NEC meeting would be in -- on Saturday, and the Legion's meetings start that Sunday afternoon. So people could -- who do attend could come to the NEC meeting in Indianapolis. We have several flight options to get to D.C. Either leave Saturday evening, because there are Saturday evening flights that could still be caught, or there are Monday -- excuse me, Sunday flights.

So that level of detail was looked at. People would be able to come and attend the NEC meeting and still have time to travel to Washington, D.C., those who would be authorized to do that, or those who would choose to do that on their own. So that, Madam Finance Chair, do you -- does that -- did I encompass the discussion?

MS. THOMAS: Yes. In a short word, yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And did that answer the question? Okay. And for those of you may need a little refresher on the terminology. The authorized people are the ones that National pays for, but it -- that doesn't mean that other people can't go. So people that are on their own can still go to the Washington, D.C. Conference. Just pay their own way if they're not authorized.

Chair recognizes Rita.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Yes. Rita Navarreté, past National President. In the spirit of communication --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you.

MS. NAVARRETÉ: Rita Navarreté, past National President from New Mexico. In the spirit of communication and goodwill, I want to just share that I heard about this move when I went to a national meeting in Indy last month, and we were around the table, yes, talking "what happened here, what happened here." It is obvious to me that this has been in the plan.

So again, following who needs to know was probably taken care of, who should know, that's another question, and just in the spirit of communication, I think it would have solved for me, perhaps, and many that were with me at the table, to know this wasn't a last minute decision.

And so it's going to work, and those that are authorized to go, you know, I wish them well, and that they come back and share it via the - social media's just so fast. And so now our NEC that sits in this chair, all of you, they can go back to their departments and say, "This wasn't just an overnight proposal." Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks, Rita.

MS ALBERS: I have a question.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Can we have your name and department, please?

MS. ALBERS: I'm sorry. My name is Debra Albers. I'm from Nebraska, and my question is, will there be meetings for us to attend in D.C.; at the D.C. Conference?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: When there's the D.C. Conference, moving forward now, it will be the commission meetings that the Legion is having that the Auxiliary would be welcome to go to and attend those meetings.

As far as the Auxiliary actually sponsoring some meetings and having the second breakout, likely not, but, you know, we follow what -- the Legion's lead. So we would still have their meetings.

MS. ALBERS: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You're welcome.

MS. WALLACE: Eva Wallace, Washington. My question is what about the people that are appointed to the Legislative Council? Part of our job is to meet with our senators and congresswomen, congressmen, in conjunction with our legislative team from the Legion. So how -- is that still on our own on that then?

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, her question was, "What about the Legislative Council that meets with their legislators?"

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We would look -- need to look at what the prior practice is for that to see where Legislative Council is going to fit into this, and we'll contact the Legion for that, too, and see what their plan is. Okay?

MS. WALLACE: Oh, yes. That's --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks for the question.

MS. WALLACE: -- been an important part of what we do when we're in D.C.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay.

MS. WALLACE: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Eva. Madam Chairman?

MS. THOMAS: Are there any further questions?

MS. FOURNIER: Yes. Cheryl Fournier from the department in Hampshire. I'm kind of confused because I had to fill in last year as the alternate because our NEC didn't go, and I know my department secretary came with me and the alternate could have come with me. So are

the department secretaries going to be affected by this, or is -- am I going to be the NEC going to Indy and they're going to be going to Washington to do their thing, or how does that work? I'm kind of confused.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I would believe that your department secretary was probably going on the department's dime, not being called in by the national organization, --

MS. FOURNIER: Yes.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- but the NEC was called in by the national organization. So now, the NEC will be called into Indianapolis for the NEC meeting there.

MS. FOURNIER: And they're going to have to go to Washington at the same time?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You know -- well it would be the Washington Conference for the Legion would be come first, and then as Dobbie had mentioned, either the Saturday night or Sunday morning you could fly to D.C. if you wanted to be -- I said it backwards didn't I?

The D.C. meeting -- the NEC meeting in Indianapolis would come first, and then if you wanted to go to Washington you could leave from Indianapolis and go to Washington for that meeting. So if your secretary is going to go to the Commander's Call in the Washington Conference, she would want to go, at least from, like, the Sunday through the end of the Legion meeting in Washington, D.C. Whereas, as NEC, you're going to come to Indianapolis first, and that may be your only part of the trip, as opposed to going to both places.

MS. FOURNIER: Okay.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So some of that's going to rest with what your department wants you to do.

MS. FOURNIER: Okay, thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thanks for the question.

MS. WEST: Kris West, New Hampshire.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Kris?

MS. WEST: Just to follow-up on the previous question of the Legislative Council members. In my experience with the Auxiliary, the council members were designed to meet with your congressmen back on your home front more than in Washington. And that's strictly my thought on that process.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Kris. That's our take on it, too, and I appreciate you bringing that up.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.) We have never paid for Legislative Council members to attend Washington.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay. To date, the national organization has never paid for the Legislative Council to go to Washington, D.C. Okay? So there's a clarification for you. Yes?

MS. MAHONEY: Madam President, Jan Mahoney, NEC for New York.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Jan?

MS. MAHONEY: On the change of New York now having an alternate, are they allowed to come with us when we go to the Indianapolis?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Your alternate can come along at the expense of your department.

MS. MAHONEY: Okay. I just wanted to make sure there was no closed meetings or anything. Okay.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: No, it won't be a closed meeting.

MS. MAHONEY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you.

MS. DAUGHLTRY: Judy Daughtry, alternate, Department of Alabama.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Judy?

MS. DAUGHTRY: What about prorated checks and those kind of things that we've done at the D.C. Conference before?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: What about what checks?

MS. DAUGHTRY: Prorated checks

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Oh, prorated checks? We would still have an opportunity to do that at the NEC meeting in Indianapolis. So we can figure that out, but thank you for bringing that up. Okay. Others? Madam Chairman?

MS. THOMAS: Okay. If you have any questions, Tim and I will be around after the meeting for a few minutes. If there are no further questions, Madam President, I move the adoption of the 2017-18 fiscal budget for approval.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Since the motion comes from a committee, a second is not required. The question is on the approval of the proposed Fiscal '18 budget as presented. Is there any discussion?

MS. JACKSON: I just have a question on (indiscernible.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: We'll wait for you. It's okay. It's a disadvantage of being in the middle of the row, right?

MS. JACKSON: Yes. Ellen Jackson, Department of Michigan. I just have a question. What if you have just one line item, like the Washington, D.C. Conference in the budget. You don't approve of that but you approve of everything else? Is it all or nothing?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You can make a motion either to amend the budget, or you can vote against the whole thing.

MS. JACKSON: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You're welcome.

MS. LLOYD: Good morning.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Good morning. Can we have your name and department, please?

MS. LLOYD: Yes. My name is Lauren Lloyd. I am the NEC for the District of Columbia.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Okay.

MS. LLOYD: In question to the budget narrative and the proposed Fiscal Year 2018, I do have a question. Since the grant ended for the Call to Service Corps, is there any future opportunities or future plans to apply for other grants similar to that, that could provide additional revenue to the ALA?

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Great question, and apparently, the grant that we had came to its --

MR. BRESNAHAN: In July.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- limit --

MR. BRESNAHAN: In July.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- and we actually were blessed to have it a little bit longer.

MS. LLOYD: Right. It was actually extended several times, --

MR. BRESNAHAN: Right.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Right.

MS. LLOYD: -- which is amazing, --

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: So what can --

MS. LLOYD: -- by the way. Great job to you guys on that.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: -- we say about the future here?

MR. BRESNAHAN: I'm going to defer to Dubbie.

MS. THOMAS: To Dubbie.

MS. BUCKLER: The general answer is, yes, we are always looking for opportunities for grant funds. I think some of you are aware a lot of information is shared during the course of the time that you're all here. So one piece of information I'll just remind you of, because we heard it earlier. We did receive a special grant from the Corporation for National Community of Service for the 911 Day of Service Projects. So that was a \$50,000 grant that we had never received before.

So, yes. We are attentive, and I don't want to steal any more thunder from Linda either, but that's one of the things that that's why we have a -- one of the reasons we have a foundation, and one of the things that we're always trying to do.

If I may just digress for a second, but only to emphasize the point, someone stopped me and asked me a question about the Women of the Holocaust film project because it shows up in the budget. Well, it shows up in the budget because -- not because we're taking members' dues. It's not real money. I mean, it's not cash money that we're taking to work on that project, but we received a \$25,000 grant. And this is the year that we hope to receive a lot more money coming in for that project.

So what you would see in the budget would be the amount of administrative time to process that because checks don't come in and hop in all the right places by themselves. People have to do those things. So that's just an allocation of staff time to process that. So it's no real money coming into that project, but that's why you see a line item there.

So we're hoping to have a lot more grant money coming in or donations coming in for that project, and yes, we're always looking for other grant opportunities for -- to augment our resources so that we can do more to serve our mission. Thank you.

MS. LACH: Patti Lach, NEC from Maryland. I just had a quick question. On page 2, the Undesignated Reserve Funding, is that where the purchase of our new building would come from?

MR. BRESNAHAN: Yes.

MS. LACH: Good. Thank you.

MR. BRESNAHAN: And thank you for the question.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Are you ready for the question? Okay. Now, the question is on the adoption of the Fiscal Year '18 budget as presented. All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The motion to approve the Fiscal '18 budget has passed.

Thank you, Peggy and Tim.

MR. BRESNAHAN: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Appreciate all your information. And Dobbie, thank you for the information also. Foundation Board President, Linda Boone, will now present the Foundation budget.

MS. BOONE: Good morning. So you have this in your packet. It says "The Foundation." If I can see. Small print. Got it? Okay.

So what happens -- since we are a subsidiary of the American Legion Auxiliary, the Foundation is, the staff helps prepare a budget. It's brought to the Board of Directors of the Foundation, and we look at it, approve it, and then it goes to the National Finance Committee of the American Legion Auxiliary for any input or whatever, and because all of our administrative expenses are covered by the American Legion Auxiliary, it's not covered by the donations that come in. So it's very clear that the National Finance Committee of the American Legion Auxiliary needs to take a look at that before we present it here to the NEC.

With some increased emphasis this year on fund raising, which we have tried to do every year is do a little bit more fund raising. There has been an increase in some of the expenses for that. The other thing that you note in the total budget, the revenue and expense does not include donations to the Endowment Fund because the Endowment Fund cannot be spent. So that -- when somebody makes a donation, it goes directly into the Endowment and we only get the proceeds from the interest of the investments from that Endowment Fund so that we can give money back the American Legion Auxiliary for programming. Okay.

So the intended budget is \$359,157, and that's the intended expenses also. So we will be giving out grants. So I move to adopt the FY 2018 budget for the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: The question then is on the approval of the proposed Fiscal '18 Foundation budget as presented. Is there

any discussion? So the question is on the adoption of the Fiscal Year '18 Foundation as presented. All in favor say aye.

VOICES: Aye.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Opposed, no.

The motion to approve the budget for Fiscal Year '18 for the Foundation has passed.

MS. BOONE: Thank you.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Linda. We appreciate that. Do you have any other business to come before this NEC meeting? Okay.

I'm just going to give you a little bit of a heads up before I give you a quiz the next time we get together. I want you to look at the ladies who are up here, and I know that they were introduced yesterday, but I'm going to introduce them again so that they can smile and wave, and then you'll put the name and the face together just a little bit more.

So our National Vice-President, Kathy Dungan. Smile and wave.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Central Division National Vice-President, Trish Ward.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Eastern Division National Vice-President, Karen Porempski.

(Applause.)

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

(Applause.)

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

(Applause.)

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

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Historian, Susan Campbell.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: And then the next time we meet, you'll see our chaplain, Evelyn Espinola.

Since we have no more business, the Chair now calls on the National Secretary, Dubbie Buckler, for announcements.

MS. BUCKLER: Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: You're welcome.

MS. BUCKLER: If you did not attend the NEC 101 orientation training, please see Chrystal -- Chrystal, wave in the back of the room -- for your packet. The packet contains documents that you must sign before leaving today.

And I want to take the prerogative of the mic for a moment. I want to thank Marta, who's not here. This is the first convention -- gosh.

All week long. It's now getting to me. She's always right by my side. She's the quiet one. I'm the talkative one. You've figured that out by now. So I really missed her, and she wanted to say thank you for the three times that we said hi to her because she was watching all three times, and some of you know that she -- they have custody of her grandson, Lucas. And so he was watching and pointing out the people that he knew.

I want to thank National Headquarters staff. Every convention is a lot of work. This one -- I won't go into it again, but losing a week, this one was just an awful lot of work, and then being down two staff members while we were here made it an even awful lot more work. So thank all of you for -- if we looked like we were frustrated or -- not frustrated, but frazzled. I mean, frazzled was the word I'm looking for, thank you. Sleep deprivation. That kind of messes with your picking of your words. We just got an incredible amount of stuff done, and I just want to say thank you to everybody who was here and helped --

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: -- because this was truly one of the most difficult ones to get pulled together and -- so you've met the three who were in the back of the room, here, still with us, and others have gone on home.

I want to thank our outgoing president, Mary Davis.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: I would never tell stories -- well, maybe I would. First off, I also want to thank the members of the Department of Washington. I think you've heard me say every year I, sort of, get adopted by not just the National -- but the National President's Department. So the Department of Washington has just been wonderful. It was the same with Sharon, and the same with Janet, and -- I mean, it's just wonderful to get to know so many people within the Department of the National President.

It's been a great year. We reached the point where we were completing each other's sentences, and when we were speaking garbled wording, we understood each other which was really -- started to get scary. We'd say, "You know, I actually understood that. Well, it didn't make any sense, I know, but I still understood it." That's the kind of teamwork relationship that you have, and you've heard the word team and teamwork a lot, and that really is how it is.

I -- the good news is, Mary loves Dairy Queen. So does Diane. And Mary loves Cracker Barrel, so for those who may think that the National President lives high on the hog, I tell you, well, if you think -- if high on the hog means going to Cracker Barrel and getting a barbecue sandwich, I suppose that's high on the hog, but.

These women who serve as National President are very down to earth people, and I don't think everybody realizes that. I mean, they're all one of us, and they get the wonderful opportunity to serve for a year as ambassador -- chief ambassador for the organization, and it's just so much fun every year. And Mary, it's just been great.

So I will tell you one story, and that is -- well, it's not a story. It's just going to -- I'm going to share an incident. So yesterday you might recall that the President of the United States was here, and then everybody is released at the same time which means everybody who's is hungry is trying to hit the same spot.

So we're looking at all the lines. We're looking at where we've got to be next, and yes, we do have a staff car here. So I'm -- there's a reason I wear this as -- it's like a noose around my neck because I'm constantly -- this is how we do business these days. So is there anybody available to take us to a drive through. Mary also loves Chik-fil-A. So these devices are wonderful for finding out where is the nearest Chik-fil-A, and it was about, like, a four minute drive from here. Maybe three-quarters of a mile. Something like that.

Well, you know, how they block the roads when the President of the United States is here? So what makes the story even funnier, Collette Fike, many of you know, who is our Director of Programs. Colette drives a small car. The vehicle that we have here is one of those ginormous SUVs. Kind of a small semi. So Colette was available to drive. That made it funny in and of itself because she's now try -- first time ever in this car and "could you take us to a drive through?"

So we've got Mary's family in the car. I'm in the car. Colette is blessed to have seven backseat drivers. We get to where we can exit the convention center and of course we can't go anywhere. So the officer comes up and Colette's, like, all flustered because police officers are walking up to the car to get the window down. She said, "You need to stand -- you need to stay here until a police escort comes and gets you."

So a police escort came and got us. Literally, we had to -- it's, like, go. Follow. Follow that police escort. So we pull out. We go down to the end of where he is. He rolls down his window, and he's, like, "You're on your own, now." So, you know, so he gets us beyond the security point. We get to Chic-fil-A which is packed, and those of you who know Colette, she's an introvert. So going into a very packed restaurant was something she just thought she would chill in the car.

So we all go in. And you know what we look like. You know, we've got ribbons and stuff dripping off of us, and the people in Chic-fil-A are -- so we went to Chic-fil-A. We bought -- and we ate at the restaurant. We did dine-in instead of drive through because the drive through line was way out to the street.

We were treated like royalty at Chic-fil-A. I don't know that we have ever been treated more special any place. Though the servers where -- the -- what do you call them? The workers. The people who work there at a fast food restaurant are coming over and getting selfies, and having their pictures taken with us.

MS. DAVIS: So one did a selfie with my son-in-law's phone, and Dubbie said, "But that's my son-in-law's phone." He had to get his phone to do the selfie.

MS. BUCKLER: That's right. He was so enamored with it that he said, "Oh, I need to get a selfie." And he was holding her son's phone.

So real people, real fun, and Mary, with all honesty, it's just been quite a year. "Let's do a lot of things, and oh, by the way, let's buy a building right before we go to National Convention which is a week early," so. So anyway, we just wish you well as you rediscover your sewing machine and all the wonderful things that you do. I mean, if you know, she makes most of her clothes. She's very, very talented. So we will stay in touch.

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: Oh, we're trying to curtail this gift giving culture that we have. We really shouldn't be -- feel so compelled to give each other gifts. So I'm giving you a virtual gift. I almost went out and bought something, but it was a little -- time was a crunch.

We go to look at the building for the first time. So Mary's looking at the outside. She said, "I'm sold." I said, "Well, you really need to come in and see the inside of it." So we're walking up to the building. She said, "Well, now, you know, I would trim the hedges a little bit differently." I was -- if I'd had time, pretend I'm standing up here, because if I'd had time, I would be presenting her a pair of hedge clippers and say, "Here's your service project for National Headquarters."

And Diane, we are looking forward to a wonderful administrative year with you serving as our ambassador. It's just going to be a wonderful transition. We wish you well as you travel about. You have the support, I believe, of everybody in this room. You certainly have support --

(Applause.)

MS. BUCKLER: -- of National Headquarters.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you. That's very kind of you. I appreciate it.

MS. BUCKLER: We're blessed in this country that we talk about a peaceful transfer of power. You would hope we would never have to talk about that in the American Legion Auxiliary, but in other organizations going from going from one group of leaders to a new group of leaders sometimes it's a little more tense, and this is just going to be wonderful. So thank you all.

My final announcement is for those of you who are traveling to the Gulf, I hope that you get home safely and are not encumbered by torrential storms. For everyone else, I hope you drive, fly safely, and we'll all be in touch soon. Thank you so much for helping us have this be a wonderful meeting and wonderful conference.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: I just want to piggy back on something that Dubbie said about we're trying to get away from the gift giving thing. The -- well, Tamara in the back of the room, compiles information on me and sends it out to your departments. One of the things that I said in there is that I prefer not getting gifts. And I, you know, the problem with that is we're so used to doing it.

I said, "So if I tell them not to give me a gift, are they going to do it anyway?" And I just want you to know that sincerely, I would prefer

not getting gifts. If there's something that your department wants to do, by all means you can give to the endowment, and the address of the place to give is right on the back of the pin in case you need to find that. But that would be absolutely wonderful with me. So I sincerely mean that.

If you didn't attend NEC -- oh, that was Dubbie's. Don't need to read hers.

MS. BUCKLER: Yeah, you can announce it again if you want.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Yes. There are people in the back of the room who will help you with the NEC. As we close the meeting of the 2017-18 National Executive Committee meeting, I leave you with these words:

"Let service in the community, state, and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion Auxiliary and its members. Let us be watchful of our organization and ourselves that nothing shall swerve us from the path of justice, freedom, loyalty, and democracy."

Please stand with me as our National Chaplain, now Diane Spencer standing in, offers benediction.

MS. SPENCER: Let us pray. Thank you as we present with each of us as we begin our journey to our homes. We may have -- that we may have safe return. Be with us until we meet again. Amen.

VOICES: Amen.

PRESIDENT DUSCHECK: Thank you, Diane. This concludes the first meeting of the 2017-2018 National Executive Committee. The meeting is now adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 9:44 a.m.)

**Appendix A**



**SUMMARY OF MOTIONS / RESOLUTIONS  
ADOPTED**

**BY**

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NATIONAL  
GOVERNING BOARDS (NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE)**

**FOR 2016-2017 AND 2017-2018**

**and**

**2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES  
CONVENED AUGUST 19 – AUGUST 24, 2017  
IN RENO, NEVADA**

**2016-2017 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
AUGUST 19, 2017**

**2017 AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY  
NATIONAL CONVENTION AUGUST 21 – AUGUST 24, 2017**

**2017-2018 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
AUGUST 24, 2017**

**###**

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2016-2017  
Final 2016-2017 NEC Meeting Held Pre-National Convention  
in Reno, Nevada  
August 19, 2017**

**Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted**

*M/S/C = Moved/Seconded/Carried*

M/S/C to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as circulated in advance in NEC board packet emailed 8/10/17:

- Charter cancellations – 157 charters canceled, as listed in NEC board packet enclosure
- Resolution of non-financial support for the construction of a national monument dedicated to Gold Star mothers and families in Washington D.C. without financial obligation by the American Legion Auxiliary.

M/S/C to adopt the national American Legion Auxiliary Code of Conduct as circulated in advance for inclusion with the ALA Code of Ethics in the American Legion Auxiliary National Standing Rules and to urge American Legion Auxiliary entities and subsidiaries at the department, intermediate, and unit levels to incorporate the Code of Conduct into their written expectations for members serving in positions representing the American Legion Auxiliary. (See 2017 ALA National Standing Rules, posted in the Members Section of the ALA national website [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org))\_

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**American Legion Auxiliary National Convention 2017  
in Reno, Nevada  
August 22, 2017**

**Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted**

*M/S/C = Moved/Seconded/Carried*

M/S/C to amend ALA National Standing Rules Section XII. – Dues and Assessments, sub-section 1 to raise Senior and Junior member dues as follows: The National per capita dues shall be ~~nine dollars (\$9.00)~~ **twelve dollars (\$12.00)** per annum for Senior members, and ~~one dollar and twenty five cents (\$1.25)~~ **two dollars and fifty cents (\$2.50)** per annum for Junior members. The per capita dues for Senior members shall include a complimentary subscription to the American Legion Auxiliary national magazine. Each Department shall remit the national per capita dues promptly to the National Treasurer at least monthly.

###

**American Legion Auxiliary National Executive Committee 2017-2018  
First 2017-2018 NEC Meeting Held Post-National Convention  
in Reno, Nevada  
August 24, 2017**

**Summary of Motions/Resolutions Adopted**

*M/S/C = Moved/Seconded/Carried*

- M/S/C to confirm the continuing service of Mary “Dubbie” Buckler for the officer position National Secretary for the 2017-2018 administrative year
- M/S/C to confirm the continuing service of Marta Hedding for the officer position National Treasurer for the 2017-2018 administrative year
- M/S/C to approve the complete list of appointments to American Legion Auxiliary national Standing Committees, Special Committees, and Foundation Board for the 2017-2018 administrative year (as circulated onsite on a list distributed to every member of the NEC and every meeting attendee; see the ALA National Red Book Directory online in the Members Section of the ALA national website [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org))
- M/S/C to resource Year 4 of the American Legion Auxiliary 5-year Centennial Strategic Plan by allocating \$347,000 from Reserve Funds to resource the needs identified to be accomplished in the FY18 budget for Year 4 of the American Legion Auxiliary Centennial Strategic Plan as circulated in advance
- M/S/C to adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 American Legion Auxiliary National budget, as circulated in advance via email on 8/10/17 to the 2017-2018 administrative-year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY18 Budget Proposal Packet.
- M/S/C to adopt the proposed Fiscal Year 2018 American Legion Auxiliary Foundation budget, as circulated in advance via email on 8/10/17 to the 2017-2018 administrative-year NEC members in the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters and ALA Foundation Inc. FY16 Budget Proposal Packet.

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## Appendix B



**AWARDS PRESENTED  
DURING NATIONAL CONVENTION  
AUGUST 18 – 24, 2017**

*(Visit [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org)  
to see a full listing of 2016-2017 awards.)*

## **LIAISON TO CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION COMMITTEE**

### **AWARDS:**

Excellence Award - Department of Wyoming  
Meritorious Achievement Award - Department of Wisconsin  
U.S. Udie Grant Award - Department of Arizona  
Garland M. Murphy Jr. Award – Department of Florida

### **NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE:**

Rolla Dicks Unit 315, Burlington Junction, Missouri  
Rose-Harms Unit 355, Grafton, Wisconsin  
Tony F. Soza and Ray Martinez Unit 41, Phoenix, Arizona  
Palmer-Roberts Unit 214, Willoughby, Ohio  
Department of South Dakota

### **PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY COMMITTEE AWARDS:**

#### **Salute to Active-Duty Servicewomen Award**

Army: Maj. Malikah Morgan  
Marine Corps Capt. Amanda Mathew  
Navy: Aviation Ordinance Technician 2 (1st Class) Susana Saenz  
Air Force: Brig. Gen. Christine Burckle  
Coast Guard: Lt. Cmdr. Sarah M. Janaro

#### **Unit Member of the Year**

Alabama: Jessica Hinchee  
California: Stephanie Janji  
Florida: Jan Farrington  
Idaho: Nellie Polegay  
Illinois: Gerri "Lynn" Howard  
Kansas: Sherry Walker  
Kentucky: Narita Cole  
Maryland: Connie House  
Michigan: Dawn Tuhowski  
Mississippi: Julia Piazza  
Nebraska: Audrey Wilson  
New Hampshire: Karen Cotton  
New York: Patricia Tropea  
North Carolina: Mary Morgan  
Ohio: Mary Knapke  
Oregon: Beverly Neubecker  
South Carolina: Betty F. Mathias  
South Dakota: Marsha Timm  
Tennessee: Lorrie Garner  
Texas: Janie King  
Virginia: Shirley Hardisty  
Washington: Linnea Russell  
(Note: Not all American Legion Auxiliary departments submitted names to be considered for this national award.)

**Woman of the Year:**

Presented to Cameron Cruse and Lisa Bradley, Founders of R. Riveter

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AWARDS:**

**Best Unit Member Experience**

Central Division: Department of Wisconsin

Eastern Division: Department of New York

Northwestern Division: Department of Nebraska

Southern Division: Department of Mississippi

Western Division: No entries submitted