



The Legion-Air

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**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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April 2024

Commander's Message:

On Sunday March 9 I joined Past Erie County Auxiliary President, Rosemary O'Connell & Jesse Clipper Post Commander/Legion Rider, Elder Howard Patton as together we presented a check to the Variety Club Telethon in the amount of \$6,000. This was truly a Legion Family effort and I would like to again thank all those Legion Family members who ensured the success of our Oktoberfest Fundraiser, and to all those Posts, Units, Squadrons and Riders who kept the donations coming. Thank you for all your efforts. My term as your Erie County Commander is rapidly coming to a close. I have conducted 18 of 35 Post visitations to date, leaving 17 Posts remaining with only April & May and the June 1st Convention right around the corner. I am asking that Post Commanders/Adjutants for the following Posts: **63 Lackawanna, 431 Concord, 567 Orchard Park, 607 Frank Brink, 655 Troop I, 721 South Buffalo, 900 LL Tillman, 1320 Frank Gierlach, 1346 Grand Island, 1377 Alden, 1449 Thomas Tehan, 1477 Matthew Glab, 1586 Erieco Womens, 1640 North Collins, 1659 Four Star & 1780 Bennett Wells;** provide a primary and secondary meeting date, time & location for me to join with you at an upcoming Post Membership Meeting. Please email me at tedb06@verizon.net.

Just a reminder, please continue your efforts to lobby your NY State Assemblyman & Senators to support legislation to pass Electronic Bell Jar Gaming reform for Non for Profits of NY Assembly Bill 4813 & Senate Bill 1959. We can all make this great opportunity a reality... Passage of this new law should lead to 3 to 5 times increase in Bell Jar revenues to be used for much needed capital improvements. Also, we are requesting your support of NY Senate Bill S2028A which established a real property Tax Exemption for Veterans with 100% Service-Connected Disability.

Membership – VC Jerry Kowalski

We are quickly coming to the end of the Legion year. It's 4th quarter----4th and one, and the clock is ticking.....

Membership Chairs it's time to get all of our members paid, as well as increasing our numbers by recruiting. Give thought to using the mail, phone calls or go door to door. How about an advertisement in the local Bees? Attend meetings at local community centers. Also try our local Police Officers, Firemen, Teachers, and Mail Carriers. Once we have them, assign an existing member as a fellow companion to show the new recruit, what the American Legion is all about. We must work on membership consistently. It's a year around effort, not just the 4th quarter. If help is needed give me a call, 716-681-7169.

Special Activities – VC Pat Murphy

Thanks to all who helped by purchasing calendars. You are helping the American Legion programs. Please return all unsold calendars returned so I can do a final report. I have already been mailing out winners for 2024. My contact information is 716 289 4143 or email at murphy8693@gmail.com.

Commander's Message: Continued

Please continue to "Be the One" ask Veterans how they are doing? Listen when a Veteran needs to talk and Reach Out when a Veteran is Struggling... For more details follow BETHEONE.ORG

May God Continue to Bless Our Troops around the World and God Bless America!
In Continued Service for God & Country...

Americanism – VC Paul Wackowski

The American Legion's **Be The One** suicide prevention program has remained the organization's top priority since its creation in April 2022. The program has received worldwide exposure through the Legion's relationship with Chip Ganassi Racing and the NTT INDYCAR.

"You all play a really important role in this because you understand that. Especially men. Men are historically bad at asking for help, especially mental health care.

Many won't talk about their mental health for fear of becoming perceived as broken and jeopardizing their career, as well as worrying about their confidentiality concerns. They feel more comfortable coming to someone that they know and trust, rather than going to a doctor.

When issues pile up, that's when thoughts of suicide begin to manifest.

Those signs can be recognized. "We feel something when something's off". We know when somebody that we have known for a while comes in and they're just different. We know when maybe someone we don't know looks they're having a hard time.

When somebody you know is going through a tough time, it's really important to have a conversation. Also, make sure those firearms are properly secured. Make it more difficult in that moment to access something that a veteran can use to harm themselves.

When attempting to help someone in a moment of crisis or someone talking about suicide:
Be there, in the moment, looking the person in the eye. Keep the person in front of you. If you're on the phone, keep them talking and make sure to listen. Make good eye contact. Don't be judgmental. Be open and accepting of what they have to say, even though that means that they don't want to live. Don't be afraid to ask questions directly. Ask if you can call the Veterans Crisis line to connect them with resources. If they don't want to call the crisis line, see if there is someone else they can call to make them feel safe. It's important to build some sort of camaraderie with that person contemplating suicide early in the conversation.

You can do that by showing that you care about them, that you are genuine, that you'll do something when they tell you something. They'll trust you that you'll do the right thing.

Remember to fill out your Post CPR!



Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

Legionnaire of the Year Resumes for Erie County Legionnaire of the Year are due April 8, 2024. The 2024 Guidelines and Information are available the Erie County American Legion Webpage: [Legionnaire of the Year page \(eriecountyal.org\)](http://eriecountyal.org). The 2024 Guidelines are very similar to past guidelines. Submitting a Member for Legionnaire of the Year is a great way to recognize our Legionnaires. Submit the resume of your candidate to Kathleen Garvey, 5792 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221. NO LATER THAN APRIL 8, 2024.

Memorial Day Grave Decoration/Services

We will be decorating graves at the Forest Lawn Field of Valor Section on Monday 5/29 at 8 AM and holding our Annual Memorial Day Services at 9 AM at Forest Lawn Cemetery to honor our fallen heroes.

Nelson Oldfield and Team will be at the Forest Lawn Garage to pass out requested flags to the Posts for their grave's decoration on Saturday 5/11 from 9 AM to Noon.



Past Detachment SAL Commander Timothy Van Patten II gives an update on Erie County SAL activities at the March Erie County American Legion Meeting.

Photo by Sue Quirk.

Boys State – Felton Davis

Greetings Erie County Posts,

Our time is close to the end for Posts to select their candidates for the 2024 NY State Boy's State online registration, which cut-off date is April 12, 2024. Then the Posts must submit the completed packets for each candidate selected.

As given in the information sent to all Posts in January and by email the week of March 25, 2024, the packet for each candidate must have:

- a. A copy of the online application form.
- b. The Commitment form.
- c. The Certification form.
- d. The Physical Exam form.

A check from the Post's check, make payable to the "Erie County American Legion" for the cost for the total number of selected candidates.

All of these items are due no later than **April 19, 2024** to the Erie County Boy's State Chair, Felton L. Davis, 115 Burbank Drive, Orchard Park, NY 14127-2382. If you have any questions or issues, contact me as soon as possible. Email - felton1@aol.com or Phone: 716.864.8430.

As of this meeting, 12 applications have been submitted to the NY State Department from the following:

Post 64, Post 205, Post 527, Post 622, Post 880 and Post 1640. **Several posts have reported not able to obtain any candidates replies, but they are willing to sponsor candidates if other Posts have extra potential candidates.** Please contact me or Bernie if you are willing and able to help these Posts.

All packets must be received by the Department no later than May 3, 2024 in order for the candidates to be allowed to attend the program.

Education Awards

Donations to the Erie County or PNC Michael Kogutek Scholarships are now being accepted. If you Post does not have a local program, please consider donating to these programs to help our youth education in our community.

Past Commanders Club – Gary Oakes

Any Past Commander that is interested in becoming a member or already a member and want info in the PCC club. Please send an email to me at Goakes_jr@hotmail.com. I will pass it on to have it put on our email list. The next PCC meeting April 10th at 7pm. Held at Donovan Post.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 4/25 at East Aurora Post #362 located at 1 Legion Dr., East Aurora, 14052. The Post will be serving a Meatloaf dinner starting at 6 PM. Includes cheesy potatoes, salad, etc. for \$10.

Thanks go out to the 21 Posts that attended the March County Meeting, 63, 64, 205, 362, 430, 527, 607, 622, 721, 799, 838, 880, 900, 1131, 1320, 1477, 1586, 1626, 1672, 1780, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County at the 4/25 meeting in East Aurora.

Future County Meetings;

May 16, LL Tillman Post #900

Erie County Convention – Saturday 6/1 at Matthew Glab Post #1477. Ads are Boosters are due to the Post by 5/10. glabpost@aol.com
Memorial Service 9 AM
Convention Start 10 AM
Registration from 8 AM to 11:30 PM

8th District Conference

4/7/2024 at Little Valley Post 531, located at 5899 Route 353, Little Valley, NY at 1 PM. Membership and Finance Meetings at Noon.

8th District Convention – Saturday 6/15 at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626. Ads and Boosters are due by 5/18.

Department Convention – Wednesday 7/17 thru Friday 7/19/2024 in Niagara Falls.

Erie County Website – eriecountyal.org
Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM



SUBMISSIONS
For the May/June
"The Legion-Air"
Due April 26
thelegionair@gmail.com



The Erie County American Legion Family presented a check for \$6,000 yesterday to the Variety Club Telethon. From (L to R) Past County Auxiliary President Rosemary O'Connell, Jesse Clipper Post 430 Commander Elder Howard Patton III, and Erie County Commander Ted Balbierz.

Saturday April 13, George F. Lamm Post #622, 962 Wehrle Dr., Williamsville, NY 14221, Veterans Open House to enjoy fellowship with free Pizza and Wings from 1 - 4 PM to learn about the benefits of joining The American Legion Family.

Sunday April 14, ALL YOU CAN EAT Pancake Breakfast at A. J. Jurek Post #1672, 655 New Rd. Swormville, 14051. From 8 AM to 12:30 PM. Fresh, hot, buttermilk pancakes, "Egglands Best" eggs, link & patty sausage, juice & coffee or tea. Adults \$10, children under 12 \$4, children > 5 free.

Saturday April 20, Gabriel A. Rodriguez Post #1928, annual fundraiser dinner at Acqua Restaurant. \$75 per person, call Saul at 716 481 6596, or Joseph at 716 482 0533. Ads by 3/29.

Saturday April 27, Hamburg Auxiliary 527 is running a Rummage Sale from 10 AM to 2 PM to Benefit Homeless Veterans.

Sunday April 28, Matthew Glab Post 1477 is having a Weidners Chicken BBQ from 1:00 to 6:00 PM at 1965 Abbott Road, Lackawanna. Tickets are \$15.00. EAT-IN/TAKE OUT. There is also a Basket Raffle

Thursday May 16, WNY Armed Forces Luncheon at Niagara Falls Air Base. Purchase tickets online through their website for the opening ceremony and luncheon.

Newell Faulkner Post #880, 2912 Legion Drive, Eden, NY 14057. Normal Hours: Tues., Wed., & Thurs. 3 to 9 PM, Fri. 11 am to 9 PM & Sat. 11:30 am to 9 PM. DINE - IN OR TAKE OUT, Tuesday Taco Night, Wednesday 10 for \$8.50 Wings special, dine in only, Thursday Steak Night, Friday Fish Fry & Specials, Saturday Pizza & Wings and Sandwiches. www.post880.com

Matthew Glab Post #1477, 1956 Abbott Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218, serving Wed, and Friday 2-8 PM, Fish Fry's, Seafood, Burgers & weekly specials, Wednesday 75 cent wings and \$3 Tacos.

Francis J. Donovan Post #1626, 3210 Genesee St., Cheektowaga, Fish Fry Friday's and other entries. Dinners 4 - 8pm with a live Band from 8-11pm. Dine in or take out available. Call 716-896-3346.

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 4/26 for the May/June 2024 edition. PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor

Department of New York website - <https://nylegion.net>

National American Legion website - <https://www.legion.org>

Erie County American Legion website - <http://www.eriecountyal.org>

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