



North Albany Post 1610 American Legion

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June 2021

A Message from the Commander



On the third Sunday of May, before the monthly 9th Ward and membership meetings, an executive committee meeting was convened at noon to discuss the future of the post and address its chronic shortfall of income vs. expenses and the ongoing thinning of the ranks of active members. The two problems are related. This is not a predicament unique to our post. For a couple generations now veterans organizations have been turning in their charters or at least locking the doors of their brick and mortar posts because of declining membership. We announce to “outsiders” that 1610 is the only remaining Legion post (once one of many) in the city of Albany, a statement made not with pride but with sadness.

Anyhow, we reached consensus on a couple of things. Reduce expenses. Search for less expensive alternatives to large-ticket items – insurance, accountants, trash pick-up, for example. Increase income. The membership and Auxiliary will conduct at least one major fundraiser annually to benefit the post exclusively. We will approach the Limericks seeking the same commitment.

A suggestion was made to have a couple low ticket (200), higher cost (\$20) 50-50s a couple times a year. The winner and the post each getting \$2K.

Reopening of Scully Hall and the pavilion to the public for rentals now that the pandemic appears to be subsiding could once again be a major source of revenue for the post. However, we still need a house chair to run that operation professionally.

In addition, we are still looking for the right person to reactivate our game of chance, bell jar, pull tab or whatever it’s called. Once upon a time, that was a very lucrative activity.

We agreed we could afford to push forward with “new” ideas and a renewed vigor and attempt to change the trajectory, revisiting the situation in a year’s time.

The 9th Ward Association meeting started late. John Sacca presented a financial report. Well earned “atta-boys” were offered to the crew of volunteers who each gave up a week’s worth of hard labor restoring the post floors (bar area, front and rear kitchens, and Scully Hall) to a remarkable high luster by sweeping them, mopping them, stripping off the old wax with a buffer, mopping up the old wax – twice – allowing them to dry, and then applying two – count ’em – two coats of wax. Wow! Thank you Tom Tracy, Don Perry, Dan Akins, Patrick Ellis, and Jeff Miller. Splendid job.

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As I write this message (Wednesday afternoon, May 19), I'm advised that the pavilion and grill area behind the post have just been thoroughly washed and cleaned with a pressure washer and prepared for summer use commencing Memorial Day weekend. Thank you yet again Tom Tracy, Patrick Ellis, and Dan Akins. Old Salt Dave La Bonte will be professionally seasoning the grill with his steel and brass brushes, canola oil and butter.

The business at hand for the membership meeting was the nomination of officers for election to the 2021-2022 term at the June meeting as follows:

- Commander Lawrence Wiest
- 1st Vice Chair (Membership) Jim Slivko
- 2nd Vice Chair (Activities)
- Adjutant John Sacca
- Finance Officer
- Bar Chair Michael Ryan
- JAG Lawrence Wiest
- Chaplain Charles Lossi
- Historian
- Sergeant-at-Arms

IMPORTANT: A motion made and seconded, it was voted aye unanimously to return the membership meeting to the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. beginning with the June meeting. The Sunday afternoon meeting experiment did not yield increased attendance as was hoped.

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Post member Tom Tracy will be leaving us the middle of June for his newly completed home in South Carolina (in the vicinity of a golf course I'm sure). Tom is an in-country Vietnam vet ('68-'69, 20TH Eng Bde 588th Eng Bn) with a radio operator's MOS. You may have seen him

over there with that PRC (pronounced "prick") 10 on his back and the long whip antenna overhead – Charlie's favorite target.

Back in civilian life, Tom had a varied career: Postal Service, sales, the Arsenal, culminating in his being an auditor for the Defense Department.

In the Post, Tom was our commander two terms, adjutant, finance officer, membership chair, newsletter editor and other positions. At the county level, he served as commander, membership and Boys State chair, and many other positions. Tom was 3rd District Law and Order Chair. He was Dept of NY Vice Commander, also shouldering many other responsibilities.

Tom has that quality of seeing a job that needs doing and then of his own initiative quietly getting that job done with no fanfare. He's one of the larger than life guys you'll always remember. So Tom, when you return to visit daughter Kim and grandkids Haley, Brandon, and Adam, don't be a stranger.



**Lawrence Wiest
Commander**



SON's acting squadron commander Mike Conners generously lent us his custom-made casket (he has a creepy friend who makes them as a hobby) for our use at the post's annual Memorial Day service (1:00 p.m.). Our Patrick Ellis thought he'd try it on for size. Perfect fit.

Auxiliary News

A big thank you to all of you that supported our Take-out BBQ Chicken Dinner. It was a huge success! We sold all dinners, received donations for poppies and sold many goodies in our bake sale. I hope everyone enjoyed their dinner. I also want to thank all of the Auxiliary members that came to help out (and Leon Hovish) helping to assemble dinners. We could not have done it without all of you.

Getting ready to assist with putting flags on veterans graves on Sunday for Memorial Day. This is a wonderful family event for your kids and grandchildren. I hope many of you are planning to attend our Post Memorial Service on Monday (Memorial Day) at 1:00 p.m.

Our last Auxiliary meeting for this year will be held on June 1 where we will elect our officers for next year and wrap up everything for the year. Hope to see many of you there. See everyone again in September!

**For God and Country,
Judy Benner
President**



From the Chuck Kelly archives: the Post color guard at Albany's 1975 Memorial Day parade. Can anyone out there identify its members?

SONS Squadron

Memorial Day ceremonies were slightly contributed to by the SONS continued acquisition of 2 stone tops and 1 standing wreaths for Sunday's Memorial Day observance and graves decorations at St. Agnes Cemetery. The Squadron 1610 was recently commended by the Detachment for 2nd highest new membership growth (see certificate below).

Thank you all that have sent your \$45.00 dues in and remember Juniors, under the age of 21 only pay the \$11.00 for Department and National dues.

Planning for a full-blown Veterans Memorial Mass and Breakfast is underway. Please let me know if you are interested in helping.

We are trying to sponsor a fall bus trip if rules allow and Covid slows down. One of our brand-new members, Bill Atkinson, has tremendous experience with these kinds of events.

We are looking to fill out our slate of officers next month; more to follow with titles and job descriptions.

**God bless all Veterans,
For God and Country,
Mike Conners
Acting Squadron Commander
Treasurer**

***** June membership meeting is Tuesday, June 15, at 7 p.m. *****



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