



North Albany Post 1610 American Legion

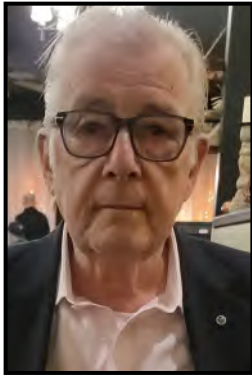
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December 2023 / January 2024



A Message from the Commander

Greetings from sometimes sunny Augusta, Georgia, home of the deep-fried (outdoors) turkey, this Sunday before Thanksgiving. Since this message will not reach you until after that holiday, it's not premature to wish you Happy Hanukkah (12/07), Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Our post continued and continues its community outreach by hosting a wildly successful second annual "Harvestfest," held on Halloween, an alternative to kids trick or treating on the sometimes mean streets of North Albany, complete with a magnificent haunted (and scary!) game room maze.

Our post later distributed this November approximately fifty Thanksgiving turkeys and all the trimmings to mostly North Albany families and is planning another such distribution close to Christmas.

On Monday, December 11, our post, in conjunction with the Stratton VA Medical Center and numerous volunteer organizations, will host a Veterans Stand Down from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

All this outreach planning and execution is done by House Chair Jackie Jones and her ad hoc committee (which meets most every Tuesday evening at 6:00 p.m.) and the generous support of many local businesses.

On Sunday morning, November 5, after the 9:00 a.m. veterans mass at Sacred Heart, our Sons Squadron again hosted their annual breakfast to benefit the post, organized as he does every year by Mike Conners. Thank you Jeff Hunt, Mark Scully, Glen Casey, and Brian Wilson (Tex and Emma's son) for giving up your Sunday morning to work the kitchen and Scully Hall. The Sons netted approximately \$400 from \$5 ticket sales. Expect a sharp increase in ticket prices next year.

The Albany Veterans Day parade was a grand parade this year. The day was sunny and crisp. Grand Marshals Terry Brown and Ken Secor stepped off the parade promptly at 1100 hours, exactly one hundred five years after the armistice was signed ending World War I. Terry was accompanied by his two leashed Shelties serving as his aides de campe apparently. (He trains service dogs for vets.) Ken needed no such entourage.

The Shaker High School Band made its first appearance in an Albany Veterans Day parade. Welcome. The Ukrainian/American community with their many flags of azure blue and sunflower yellow were there to honor our veterans. The CBA band included for the first time two cadets in kilts playing the bagpipes.

And this was the first Albany Veterans Day parade in recent memory that the American Legion's Fort Crailo Yankee Doodle Band was not led by longtime director Dan Hannon, who died unexpectedly not long after last

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

year's Veterans Day parade. On behalf of our members, I extend our belated yet sincere condolences to Dan's family and his bandmates.

Stand with Ukraine.



**Lawrence Wiest
Commander**



Auxiliary News

The Auxiliary's ongoing Afghan project for The Stratton Inn is almost complete and we hope to deliver the blankets to the hospital before Christmas! They will be placed on the beds of the Veterans as a welcome from our Unit to use while going through treatment or their stay and they will take them home when they leave! We want to thank all the members of the Auxiliary and nonmembers who have been busy making these blankets to warm our Veterans!

Empire Girls State Citizens Samira Sefadine Ismail and Adela Hoxha attended our November 7 meeting to tell us about their experiences at EGS. Samira was sponsored by North Albany and Adela by

Zaloga. Our members enjoyed listening to them.

We have voted to give our donation, in lieu of a grab bag, to Soldier On. This will be collected at our December 5 covered dish Christmas.

The Department Visitation Dinner will be hosted by JE Zaloga Post 1520 on January 17. It is a chicken parmesan dinner. The cost is \$35. I will need payment when you make your reservation. As I don't have the tickets yet, there is no rush.

Wishing everyone a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Happy, Healthy 2024.

**A very proud ALA President,
Judy Benner**

News from the House Chair

It's truly inspiring to see the Legion's ongoing community outreach initiatives making a meaningful impact in the North Albany Community.

In October, the Post hosted its 2nd Annual Harvest Party which fed over 100 kids with parents; distribution of coats for kids, provided by the Albany County Sheriff's Office, which also provided the rock-climbing wall. We added a haunted house to this year's party. The set up was by Mark Bobb Semple in partnership with Albany Boys and Girls Club. In November, the Post positive impact continues in North Albany with the distribution of Thanksgiving baskets which included complete fixings for a happy Thanksgiving meal. Forty families were recipients.

Partners which provided monetary / resources include Albany Community Land Trust; Eley En-

terprises YRR; Grassroots; Torrie Chapple and Family along with Master Barber Johnathan on site providing haircuts; Hon. Wanda Willingham and Sheriff Craig Apple. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the continued relentless support from "Friends of the Legion".

For December, we are planning A Stand Down with support from Stratton VA Hospital in Albany to be hosted at the Post on December 11, 2023, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. The VA Office of Recruitment will provide information on services provided through the hospital. Collaborative efforts involving various organizations will be onsite offering vital information on services for veterans. We are seeking organizations to provide clothing giveaways such as socks, T shirts, hoodies, hats and gloves all sizes for men and women. Addition-

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

ally, Christmas dinner baskets will be distributed in December. For further information, please contact me if you wish to volunteer.

The community outreach committee continues to meet every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the legion. These meetings provide a great platform for continued collaboration and progress. Open to all members/auxiliary.

Happy Holidays from House Chair/1st Vice Commander Jackie Jones

Congratulations to Auxiliary President Judy Benner

At Fall Conference, Auxiliary President Judy Benner received two certificates of appreciation from Department of New York 2022-2023. The certificates were presented to Judy by Lucille Mozzillo, Third District President and Kim Quick, Department First Vice President (see photo below).

One certificate of appreciation was in recognition of Judy's valuable contribution as Christmas Gift Shop Chairman for Albany VAMC 3rd and 4th Districts. The second certificate of appreciation was in recognition of Judy's valuable contribution as VA Medical Center Appointment: Deputy for Albany VAMC 3rd District.

You certainly deserved these recognitions for all the work you do on behalf of our Veterans! Nicely done! Congratulations!



Saturday, October 7, Fall Conference. From left: Lucille Mozzillo, 3rd District President; Judy Benner, Unit 1610 President; and Kim Quick, Department First Vice President. Lucille and Kim presented Judy with two certificates of appreciation.



Saturday, November 4: At the request of Gold Star Mother Carrie Farley, a post Auxiliary member, cadets of the SGT. Henry Johnson Battalion JROTC, shown here, after preparing the Our Lady of Peace Memorial for the annual 9 a.m. Veterans Day service. From left, Mohammad Almelhim, Bilal Jama kzai, Timor Merritt, Junior Say, and Lurdes Caguana-Loja. The Memorial was built after WWI in honor of our Gold Star Mothers. (Picture by Mark Rosenzweig.)



Grand Marshals Ken Secor, left, and Terry Brown lead Albany's 2023 Veterans Day parade with "aides-de-campe" Ferra and Rosie. (Picture by Gene Loparco.)

Chaplain's News

Sick call:

- Don Perry, Legion
- Mickey Ryan, Legion
- Dorothy Curran, Auxiliary
- Shannon Lenet, Auxiliary
- Nancy Lucarelli, Auxiliary
- Susan Rooney, Auxiliary
- Janis Sabatino, Auxiliary



On the reviewing stand as Albany's 2023 Veterans Day parade passes in review are Grand Marshal Terry Brown, his wife Regina, Congressman Paul Tonko, Patriot Guard Rider Justine Crowley-Duncan, and Grand Marshal Ken Secor. (Picture by Gene Loparco.)



November 7, from left: Judy Benner, Adela Hoxha, Samira Sefadine Ismail, and Gretchen Riley. Adela and Samira attended Empire Girls State in July.



Harvest Party at the Post, October 31. The party was held for kids and their families as an alternative to trick or treating.

