



Department Bulletin

April 2026



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CHAPLAIN

Michele Sandridge

The Ten Commandments of Joy

1-Thou Shalt Not Worry

News flash: Life is not a holy contract in which God promises a calm passage; the only promise is a safe landing. Therefore, instead of asking God why this is happening TO you, thank God for being WITH you. Worry or believe—you can't do both.

2-Thou Shalt Not Let Anger Steal Your Joy

The biggest thief of joy is anger. The classic example: Someone did you wrong, and you just won't let it go. Fine. But be clear, to accommodate all that anger, your heart has to make room, which means things like joy get squeezed out. As the old saying goes, the one who has the most influence in your life is the one you refuse to forgive.

3-Thou Shalt Believe You Deserve Joy

Joy and laughter are the most important healing tools we have. Sadly, thanks to low self-esteem, high self-doubt, and negative people in our environment, some of us don't believe we deserve to be happy. Do you? If not, why not? Is the reason true? If not, why do you carry it around? Who could you be without that excuse?

4-Thou Shalt Laugh with God

We were created in God's image, and we laugh and feel joy. Therefore, laughter and joy must also be aspects of the holy. Bottom line? We are children of a God with a sense of humor. To be whole, we must be willing to share all of ourselves with God—the anger, the pain, the tears, and the laughter. It's all holy.

5-Thou Shalt Pray It and Say It: I'm Grateful!

Start your day with a prayer of gratitude. Acknowledge your blessings. Then, act on that gratitude. Say "thank you" to at least three people during your day—preferably someone you don't know. Share a kind word, a written note of thanks, a smile. Pray it and say it! Gratitude is the autobahn to joy.

6-Thou Shalt Laugh with Your Neighbor—Even if Your Neighbor is a Telemarketer

When we laugh with someone, whether family, friend, or telemarketer, our worlds overlap for a split second. We share something. It's then that the differences fade, and the commonalities gleam through. Remember: You can't hate someone with whom you've laughed.

7-Thou Shalt Laugh and Eat Chocolate and Chili Peppers

All three make us feel good. The increased oxygen from laughing, the serotonin in chocolate, and the capsaicin from chilis produce a boost of endorphins, nature's own "happy pill." You can also do an hour on the treadmill to get that same endorphin high, but I'd suggest laughing while nibbling on a chili dark chocolate bar.

8-Thou Shalt Be Like the Little Children

Children are said to laugh approximately 300 times a day and adults less than 20. Somewhere between cartoons and carpools, our laughter gets lost. Spend a few minutes watching a little child squealing with laughter, eyes full of awe at everyday miracles. When was the last time you laughed out loud or were awed by something wonderful? Start today.

9-Thou Shalt Lean on Laughter in Times of Trouble

Laughing in a place of pain is the most courageous and rebellious thing you can do. That pain does not own you. It is only what you are experiencing. By tapping into your ability to laugh, you are reminding yourself, and everyone around you, that “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

10 -Thou Shalt Not Waste ANY Opportunities for Joy

To paraphrase Erma Bombeck, think of all the women on the Titanic, who, on that fateful night, said “no” to dessert. It’s easy to postpone joy in times of crisis or pain, but time keeps ticking. No matter where we find ourselves in life, it’s still life—it’s still a gift. And we must honor that gift in all we do.

Offered from Rev. Susan Sparks, Senior Pastor

Madison Avenue Baptist Church—New York City, New York

****This is my April Offering for our beloved Auxiliary. Find your peace as you rejoice in the coming of spring.**

Remember to be kind and share the goodness of God.

Michele N. Sandridge, Chaplain



History

Patti Watson

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Now is the time to prepare your reports please be sure to include a narrative with your submission to your Department Chairmen. Remember the deadline is April 15th! Scrapbooks are also due by April 15th!

Please remember to include any work you did to Celebrate Women's History Month, Members Remember, and Veterans History Project.

Your Unit history should include what your Unit/members did in all programs, especially Americanism, Children and Youth, VA&R, and National Security!

DEPARTMENT AWARDS - Deadline for submission April 15, 2026

1. Certificate(s) of Achievement will be awarded to the Unit submitting the best annual narrative report.
2. Certificate(s) of Achievement will be awarded to the Unit submitting the best History Scrapbook.
3. Certificate(s) of Achievement will be awarded to the Junior submitting the best History Scrapbook.
4. Certificate(s) of Achievement will be awarded to the Junior submitting the best Junior History.
5. Plaque will be awarded to the Unit with the best all-around Senior History.

Membership

Mindi Rue, 1st Vice President

Chairman

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Recruiting and retaining members is part of everyone's role

Spring is a chance to start fresh on new ideas for recruitment, retention, working the programs, and more. Use that positive momentum of the idea of renewal and recruit new members to the Auxiliary.

Start off right for new members

New members are joining the Auxiliary for the first time in 2026. That means a lot of firsts this year — first time at a meeting, first time volunteering at an ALA event, first time bringing a Junior member to a meeting, and many other firsts that come along with being a new member of our storied organization.

Their initial impression of how they are made to feel at a meeting or outreach event will determine if they continue coming to in-person functions or not. It's crucial to ensure their first experiences and interactions are warm and welcoming — and that positive atmosphere continues for them into their first year of membership, their fifth year, and so on.

When we think about new members, consider all of the ALA information they need to be successful. Following are just a few suggestions:

- A welcome letter from the unit president
- Why the ALA matters
- The unit's Constitution & Bylaws
- The unit's calendar of events
- A list of resources on where to find information
- A list of current unit officers to contact
- A list of acronyms you use at your meeting
- Junior Activities information

A great way to have a new member feel extra welcome is to have a seasoned member sit with them during the meeting to lead and guide them on what is taking place. Think back to when you first joined the ALA — think of ideas that would have made it better for you at the start of your membership and implement those for your new unit member.

Current member renewals, new recruits still matter

By actively engaging with members, not only will they want to renew, but they'll share their stories with others about their experience with your unit. Word of mouth is one of the most valuable tools we have to help grow and enhance our organization's membership.

1. Remember our purpose. The American Legion Auxiliary is focused on *Service Not Self* — we honor our veterans, military, and their families. We have a legacy of support and patriotism across the world.

2. Embrace your fear. Talking to new people can be scary but think of your experience in the ALA and all of

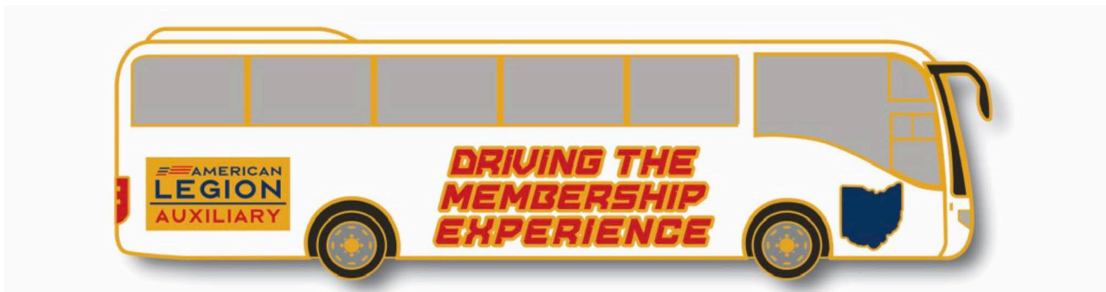
the positive things you and your unit have done for your community. This is what you want to share with new members.

3. Focus on our impact. How does your unit impact your community, your veterans, or your local military?

4. Be passionate. Make the person feel your excitement when you're sharing your positive stories about your experience.

5. You are not alone! You are not alone when it comes to serving. Many people want to serve and connect in their communities; they just don't know how or they have never been asked. By reaching out, you are asking them to be part of something great. Invite them to join you at a meeting or at an event. Even if they are not a member yet, let them meet unit members and get to know them. It may encourage them to join!

From the ALA blog



NATIONAL SECURITY

Pam Brenneman

It's that time of the year again! Reporting time.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

How have you supported military service members and/or their families?

How have you collaborated with other like-minded organizations (ASYMCA, Blue Star Families, Quilts of Valor, USO, etc.) that also support servicemembers and their families?

How have you raised awareness of POW/MIAs and the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in the search for missing personnel?

How have you supported those families whose service members made the ultimate sacrifice?
What CERT training has your department accomplished this year?

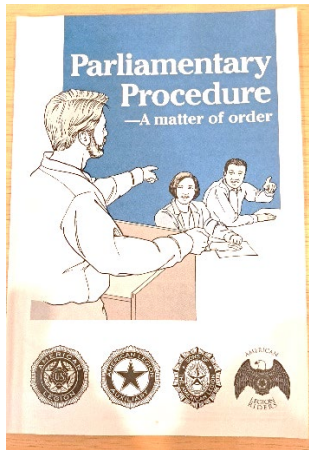
One thing we need to talk about is Bereavement & Grief.

For survivors of active-duty deaths, let them know that support is available to help them through their bereavement and grief journey.

They were part of the military family when they supported their service members in their mission — and their still part of the family. The military honors their connection and recognizes the deep grief that can follow a service member's death. That's why there are resources designed to support them. From immediate needs such as grief and trauma counseling to long-term assistance, survivors can access a wide range of resources.

They remain a valued member of the military community, and they don't have to navigate this journey alone. And don't forget the Salute to Servicemember Award. You can find more information on the National Website. The deadline for nominations is June 1, 2026. Award recipients will be recognized at the ALA National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

Remember all National Security Reports are due to me, Pam Brenneman, 2209 Valley Brook, Toledo, Ohio 43615 by April 15th! I look forward to reading what you have done for our active military.



Pam's Parliamentary Pearls
Pam Bates, Department
Parliamentarian
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OPEN THE TREASURER CHEST OF CHALLENGE PEARLS

**Help your District President & Yourself WIN a prize!
HELP YOUR DISTRICT PRESIDENT & Yourself WIN**

THE PARLIMENTARY PEARLS CHALLENGE!

RULES: Helping Your District Chairman: (1) For each member in your District that answers a Buckeye Messenger or Bulk Mail Parliamentary Procedure question correctly, your District President will receive 1 point and the member will receive 1 point per their correct answer. Answers will only be accepted up to 7 days after the question has been posted. Your Name, District Number, Unit Number and date of the Buckeye Messenger and/or Bulk Mail issue number. (The entry will not count without the information...Winners will be announced at the 2026 Department Convention

IN THE BEGINNING TO DO:

- Review your governing documents to see if they are up to date
 - Make a yearly budget
- Have a plan whether it's the officers and/or the chairmen

GAVEL GAFFS

- Lawsuits over improper use of parliamentary procedures have involved:
 - Not giving proper notice
 - Improperly call of adjourned meetings
 - Violating a member's right to speak or vote
 - Failing to establish or maintain a quorum
 - Using an improper method of nomination

ROLE OF THE PARLIMENTARIAN

Parliamentarians do NOT rule. They are an advisor and therefore makes no final decision. The only person who can rule is the chair of the meeting. If you disagree with the chair, you can “appeal the motion” of the chair.

THE PRESIDENT: FACILITATOR, NOT A DICTATOR

- Preside at all meetings
- Serve as official representative of the organization
- Report at each meeting and prepares an annual report
 - Signs documents on behalf of the organization
- Makes position appointments in accordance with the bylaws
 - Serves as ex officio member of committees
- Works with secretary to prepare the meeting agenda



THE VICE PRESIDENT

- Main duty of this office is to be prepared to take over the president should they become unable to fulfill their duties. It is inappropriate to accept the position if you are not willing to do so. She should resign if not willing.
- In some cases there is more than one vice-president and there for each should be numbered.
 - Make sure that all duties are outlined in the governing documents.



SECRETARY

- Work with the president before the meeting to prepare the agenda.
- Distribute to the members any necessary packets they need for the meeting.
 - Send out the call of the meeting (official notice)
- In the absence of the president and vice president the secretary call the meeting to order and immediately conducts the election for the chairman pro tem.
- Has access to the minutes book, governing documents and list of current membership.
 - Has ballots ready for a ballot vote.
 - Maintain the file of committee reports.
 - Prepare the minutes for the meeting.
 - Distribute the minutes for the meeting.
- Give each committee any information that has been referred to them.
- Notify officers, delegates, and committee members of their election or appointments.



TREASURER

- If treasurer handles large sums of money, she should be bonded which is paid by the organization.
- The treasurer receives all incoming money and disperses the money in accordance the governing documents or the will of the body at a meeting.
- Treasurer is usually involved in preparing the budget, making sure that the books are audited and filling out the appropriate tax forms.
- The budget should be reviewed by the board members for adoption and in turn presented at a meeting for the members to adopt.

Question # 1 Basic Parliamentary Principles do what?



“The object of Robert's Rules of Order is to assist an assembly to accomplish the work for which it was designed, in the best possible manner.” Henry M. Robert.

HOW THINGS ARE DONE IN MEETINGS

MAKING A MOTION:

- 1st-Starts with a member being recognized by the Chair.
 - Always state your name so that it can be in minutes of the meeting
 - If you are at a District or Department Meeting...always state your unit
- 2nd Then the motion...I MOVE THAT...(NEVER I make a motion that)
 - Motions shall be in the positive not the negative...(ie never say “I move we don’t do...”
- 3rd A second is made by another member.
 - If there is no second...the Chair can state that “the motion has died for lack of a second” or the Chair can asks if any wishes to second the motion.
- 4th The Chair restates the motion and opens the floor for discussion...discussion shall only happen after the 2nd is made
 - The maker of the motion speaks before anyone else
 - Anyone else who has not spoken gets to speak before anyone who has already spoken
 - Discussion should be both pro and con
 - The maker of the motion can speak against their own motion or even vote against it
 - If the Chair speaks on the motion, she shall relinquish the gavel for the rest of the process
- 5th When discussion is completed, the Chair restates the question before the vote
- 6th The Chair shall ask for those for and those against
- 7th The Chair shall announce the results

Note: There are several ways to handle the types of motions and I strongly suggest the that the Chair find a source that explains them. Here are some resources:

- **Robert’s Rule of Order**
- **Complete Idiot’s Guide to Parliamentary Procedure (one of my favorites)**
- **Complete Idiot’s Guide to Robert’s Rules (another favorite of mine)**
- **Amazon sells a “Parliamentary Procedure – World’s #1 Quick Reference (another favorite)**

Note: All the above guides talk about rescinding, breaking, many others you may encounter.



Question # 2

In short...what are the 7 important things to remember about a motion?

There are three things that we control that will improve the quality of our lives: the thoughts we have, the words we use, and most importantly, the actions we take. (Mindset quotes)

QUESTION #3



What are the 6 methods of Voting (hint it was in Issue 1)

Have you reviewed ALL your Governing Documents? Do they all coordinate correct information with each other? Do your members and officers know their responsibilities on how to handle a meeting? Here is some GREAT INFORMATION from the National Parliamentarian that **YOU** should read and learn.

Basic Parliamentary Procedure

Basic Parliamentary Principles facilitate your meeting and protect the members rights. Parliamentary procedure is based on Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Christine Dickey, PRP (National Parliamentarian)

www.parliamentarian-chris-dickey.com 2011
https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/Basic_Parliamentary_Procedure_ALA_2011.pdf
(provided by Pam Bates, Department Parliamentarian)

Eight Steps in Processing a Main Motion

Step 1: Member rises and addresses the chair when nothing is pending. "Mr. President." Or "Madame President."

Step 2: Chair recognizes member by nodding at the member or stating his name. "Mr. Williams." Step 3: Member states his/her motion. "I move that we have a canned food drive."

Step 4: Another member seconds the motion (without recognition). "Second." Step 5: Chair states the motion and places it before the assembly for discussion. "It is moved and seconded that we have a canned food drive. Is there any discussion?"

Step 6: Members have the right to get recognition and debate the motion. During debate subsidiary motions (i.e. amendments) may be introduced to help the assembly make a final decision.

Step 7: When discussion is finished the Chair puts the question to a vote. "The question is on the adoption of the motion that we have a canned food drive. Those in favor, say AYE." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say NO." (Pause.)

Step 8: Chair announces the results of the vote. "The AYES (NOES) have it; the motion is adopted (lost); we will (not) have a canned food drive; the next business in order is ..."

Methods of Voting

- Unanimous Consent – no member objects to a proposal that meets with general approval; a vote of silent agreement.
- Voice Vote – regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote; most common form of voting.
 - Rising Vote – method used when a two-thirds vote is required for adoption; is also used when a member calls for a division of the assembly.
 - Show of Hands or Voting Cards – an alternative method for a rising vote.
- Counted Vote – can be ordered by the chair when it appears a voice vote is unclear and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly.

- Ballot or Roll Call Vote – can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly and is required if specified in bylaws. **COMMON DEFINITIONS**
- Parliamentary procedure: Rules by which meetings of deliberative assemblies, societies, boards, clubs, etc. are formally conducted.
- Chair: Short form of the word “chairman,” used to refer to the member conducting the meeting. Chair, chairman and chairperson are all correct and may be used at the preference of the chair.
- Gavel: The traditional mallet used by the presiding officer to keep order. It is to be used on the table and not on the members.
- Quorum: The number of the members needed to conduct business. Quorum cannot be suspended.
- Agenda: A list of the order of business to be considered. (usually set by the Chair and recommended that each member at the meeting receive a copy)
 - Minutes: A record of the meeting kept by the secretary.
 - Amendment: A specific proposal to change an organization entity/governance documents.

“To be a leader, you have to make people want to follow you, and nobody wants to follow someone who doesn't know where he is going.” “If you don't believe in yourself, why is anyone else going to believe in you.” “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.” Author unknown

The Toadstool Times

Public Relations

Rebecca Long



Spring is here and it is a great time to renew our commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary .

April is a great month to emphasize our mission to our veterans and military families.

There are lots of good opportunities presenting themselves in the Spring. April is the month of the Military Child with April 15 being Purple Up day. Get into your schools and let them know that we support our Military children. Do you have a Military Children's table set up? Take some time to show our appreciation for the sacrifice these children are making as many parents are deployed.

Remember the last Saturday in April is American Legion Family day. What a fantastic time to use your social media to let the community know what we are all about. Make a day of it and invite the community to experience what we do as a family. Use this opportunity to recruit new members to not only the Auxiliary but to The American Legion and to the Sons of the Legion.

And of course, May will bring Memorial Day and National Poppy Day. Make sure you are taking lots of pictures and putting them on your social media.

I could go on and on about ways we can use Public Relations to further our mission. I have been so inspired by the reports that I have received so far regarding what units have done over the past year. Keep up the good work and continue to grow like the spring flowers that are popping up this time of year.

As always if you have any questions, please contact me by email (rebecca.ohala@gmail.com), phone or text (614-314-3746).