



# *The Legion-Air*

Wayne Sorrentino  
Commander

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July 2015

## **Commander's Message:**

Greetings Legionnaires & friends. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me to lead Erie County during our 2015-2016 Legion year. My goals for this year are to fully support the 4 Pillars of The American Legion, and to focus mainly on membership. We each need to do everything possible to stop the downward trend of membership loss, and to begin building up our membership in Erie County once again. There are over 62K veterans in this county according to 7th & 8th District Membership Chairman Dennis McCarthy. I see veterans all over the community and in every place I go each day. Every time you see a veteran (and many are identified in some way - a ball cap or a shirt perhaps) as you go about your daily activities, PLEASE ask them if they belong to The American Legion, offer your elevator speech and ASK THEM TO JOIN. Carry an application with you (preferably not one that's all rolled up or wrinkled). Tell them all of the great things The American Legion does collectively to help the local veteran and our local communities. Tell them about our youth programs: Boys State, Oratorical Contest, Eagle Scout of the Year, Americanism Contests, Flags for 1st Graders and the Coloring Contest. Each new membership helps other local veterans, keeps The American Legion strong and gives our Department and National leadership a strong, loud voice when they present the needs of all veterans before the Congress and state legislatures. The American Legion is the premier Veterans Services Organization in the world, but how many civilians know that? Our goal today, is to work toward a Legion Family of 4M members by 2019, our 100th Anniversary. We help the Legionnaire and the non-member (veteran) equally. Now is the time to act and for each one of us to sign up a new member; please don't wait for someone else to do the work. Finally, thank you to all of my staff and our Committee Chairs for stepping up to make this a great & productive year.

## **Membership – VC Nelson Oldfield**

I would like to thank the Commander for my appointment. This year brings a lot of Challenges in ways to reverse the trends of lost members and I look forward to this task! As our total membership will be about 7000 members in Erie County I am hoping to come up with a plan to address this issue, more to follow on this. The Commander has come up with a Program to work at the local veteran facilities and I am pleased he has this in place and has 3 Aides who will be working them on a rotation basis. It was shocking to realize that about 10% of our veterans are members of the American Legion. This organization does too many good things not to be a member!

If you have any ideas that have worked for your Post I would very much like to hear them. We need to share this information. I think we need to extend the "Thank a vet program" to more Posts in the hopes the traffic will bring in new members. I also have a concern about the revolving door, we recruit a member and the next year he or she does not renew and is gone. When I first joined my post I sat at table all alone. After 3 months of attending meetings I thought what was I doing there? No one came over and sat with me or explained anything.

When I became the Post Commander I made sure that no new member sat alone. I wanted them to be welcomed and made sure several of our members sat with them for their first few meetings. Many people do not come back because they do not feel welcomed.

Does your Post display the recruiting sign that Commander Sorrentino distributed last year? If you need these signs or want some made with your Post Information please let me know.

### **Special Activities – VC Joe Orzechowski**

I want to begin by thanking everyone who supported my nomination for and election to the office of Erie County Vice Commander. I sincerely hope that I can continue to count on your support throughout my term (I will need it) and I look forward to serving with Commander Sorrentino.

First and foremost on my mind right now is the annual Erie County Golf Tournament which raises money for the Legacy Scholarship Fund and the County's Children & Youth programs. The tournament will take place on Friday August 21<sup>st</sup> at the Elma Meadows Golf Course located in Elma NY. Registration will be at 12:30 pm and play begins for all registrants at 1:00 pm (shotgun start). Teams will be scored using a "best ball" format. Following the tournament there will be 3 hours of open bar and a steak dinner at the Francis. J. Donovan Post #1626. The price is \$90 per golfer. Tournament details were mailed to all Posts at the end of April. We are looking for golfers, hole sponsors, and donations of cash or prizes. If you know of an individual or an organization that might be able to help, either contact them directly or send me the information and I will contact them. Email me at [bjorzechowski@verizon.net](mailto:bjorzechowski@verizon.net) or call 839-9109. Please help us to make this a successful event again this year.

### **Membership – continued**

If you have any old newsletters it would be great to staple one to your membership application so that the veteran can see what your Post does and may convince them to join.

If you have not received your 2016 Membership cards for your Post I will have them at the July Meeting. Please pick them up or have someone from your Post pick them up from me.

I would like to remind you that the 7<sup>th</sup> District will host a Membership workshop meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup> sign in at 9:00 AM. The meeting will conclude at 1:00 PM, followed by a free lunch. It is being held at Turner-Schrader Post # 34 1513 Palmyra Street, Shortsville, NY 14548. Open to all interested in membership. Mark your Calendar. If you are interested in carpooling, please let me know.

Till the Next Issue!



### **Americanism – VC Suzanne Quirk**

For my first report, I would like to use this platform to thank all the individuals and organizations that helped to make my first month as VC a rewarding experience. Kudos to Jurek Post and the Erie County Committee for organizing a comprehensive and smooth running county convention. Three events during the convention influenced me in a very positive way. First, I was given the exalted honor of being selected as the Erie County Legionnaire of the Year. For this, I would like to express my deep gratitude to ERIECO Women's Post for my nomination and the Legionnaire of the Year Committee for selecting my resume. My second positive experience was my election to the high office of Erie County Vice Commander. I will try to live up to the trust placed in me by the Erie County Delegates. The third positive form of recognition occurred after the convention parade. I marched with the ERIECO Women's Post Color Guard and the judges presented us with the first place award. I went home after the convention a very grateful and happy person. According to the American Legion Officers Guide, the purpose of the Officer responsible for Americanism to inspire patriotism and good citizenship through patriotic observances, instruction in schools, and youth activities such as Boys State, Scouts, Oratorical Contest, School Award Medals, Baseball, Flag Etiquette, and other similar community services as well as provide a listing of available scholarships. I will be concentrating on these areas. I have already received offers of help and support from fellow Legionnaires which is an indication of the teamwork that as always been demonstrated by the Erie County American Legion. I look forward to working with the Erie County Staff to serve Erie County Veterans, youth and Legion Posts.



**SUBMISSIONS  
For the August  
"The Legion-Air"**

**July 24**

**[thelegionair@gmail.com](mailto:thelegionair@gmail.com)**

## Boy's State

Mrs. Angela Ellard, the Chief Trade Council to the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, and niece of former Kensington Post 708 member Erzenovicco Paolini has for the second year sponsored our Boy's State candidate Soe Moe Thein, a junior at McKinley H.S. with a donation of \$350. Erzenovicco was a decorated World War II veteran. We are very grateful to Mrs. Ellard for her generosity.

**Newly elected Erie County Commander Wayne Sorrentino received the key to the County Office from Jr. PCC Paul Steward.**



**The American Legion and the Auxiliary staffed the registration tables at the June 18 Hiring Our Heroes Job Fair at the Connecticut Street Armory. Pictured from the left; Joe Porempski, Jim Maloney, Karyn Porempski, Jim Bojanowski, Tim Van Patten, Wayne Sorrentino, Suzanne Quirk, and Monica Thompson.**



**Thursday County Meeting Dates**  
Executive Dinner Meeting: 6:30 pm

**July 23, George F. Lamm Post # 622**

962 Wherle Dr. Williamsville, 14221

Menu: Salad, Cole Slaw, Macaroni Salad, Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Coffee & Tea. No limit on the dogs and burgers.

**August 20, Hamburg Post # 527**

**September 24, Concord Post # 431**

**July 16 -18 New York State Convention**

We will be welcoming the American Legion Family from across New York State, with the Department convention held here in Buffalo. The Legion will meet at the Hyatt hotel and the Auxiliary and SAL will meet at the Adam's Mark hotel. Please join us in welcoming our visitors. Join us for the parade which will be held Friday July 17 at 6:30 pm, starting at Franklin St., in front of the Buffalo convention center. I have previously listed all of the hardworking Legionnaires who are busy preparing for this endeavor. We are all committed to make Erie County American Legion shine! Hats off also to Past Department President Karyn Porempski, the Auxiliary Chair, and to SAL District Vice Commander Timothy Van Patten II, the Sons of the Legion Chair.

Jim Bojanowski  
2015 General Chairman

**Sunday July 26**

**8<sup>th</sup> District Organizational Meeting**

**Sackett-Merrill-White Post # 575**

**21 Lake Rd., Bergen, NY 14214**

**August 29 – September 3**

**National Convention Baltimore, MD.**



**Sunday July 26**

Chicken BBQ at A. J. Jurek Post #1672. Dinner includes 1/2 delicious chicken, boiled potatoes or macaroni salad, cole slaw, roll/butter, dessert and one cool beverage. Serving from 12 noon to 6 pm. Only \$9 for eat in or take out!

**Francis Donovan Post # 1626** Fish Fry every Friday at Francis Donovan Post, except Holidays, from 4 – 8 pm. There are also none fish menu items. Take outs are available, post phone 896-3346

**East Aurora Post # 362**

Visit us on our cruise nights held the third Monday of every month, starting May 18 from 5 to 8:00 PM, running through Sept. 21st. If you bring a car to show, you get a ticket for a chance to win one of many door prizes. We also have a DJ playing 60's music, with hot dogs for a nominal fee.

**County Honor Guard – PCC John Kasmer**

We need your help! Several months ago I asked for volunteers, no response. Today, we turned down requests because we ran out of manpower. For example, I have too many requests for Memorial Day weekend for us to handle. If interested in volunteering, call 634-1128.

**Erie County Office Hours** Staffed by Tim Van Patten every Mon., Wed., & Fri. from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, excluding holidays.

**Erie County Website – [eriecountyal.org](http://eriecountyal.org).**

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to [thelegionair@gmail.com](mailto:thelegionair@gmail.com) by July 24 for the August edition.  
PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor

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