



The Legion-Air

Jerry Kowalski
Commander

Jim Bojanowski
Adjutant/Editor



thelegionair@gmail.com
(716) 852-6500

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Commander's Message:

This is the New Year of 2026. It is also the 250th year that this country was born. We gather not just to mark a year, but to honor a journey.

250 Years, of a nation built on courage, sacrifice, and hope. From the first spark of Independence to the thriving spirit, we see today. America's story is on the resilience, and unity. Let us remember those who fought to give us this gift. Let us pledge to protect it for the generations yet to come.

250 Years ago, a bold idea took root, that all people are created equal and free. We now celebrate not just a milestone in years, but a golden chapter in the history of liberty. We honor the patriots who stood firm, the communities who built together, and the dreamers who still believe in a better tomorrow.

250 Years, has passed since our nation's birth. Yet the heartbeat of freedom remains strong as ever. We have faced trials, triumphed over challenges, and grown together as a people. Let us renew our promise to uphold the values that define us, liberty, justice, freedom, and unity, your spirit will never fade.

250 Years, seems like a long time, but it's really not in the history of the world. Let's all work toward the next 250 years.

I hope to see many of you at the Department Leadership Dinner at the George F. Lamm Post #622 on Friday February 13.

Membership: VC Howard Patton III

Membership is the backbone of the American Legion the 2026 we should be at or beyond 75% of our respective membership goal.

Last month we concentrated on Checking Post 1 for prospective members and performing Buddy Checks Retention. This month we want to continue with the Buddy Checks, Checking Post 1, and add to it creating video spotlights of your current members to post on your website and or Facebook highlighting the joys of American Legion membership.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: VC Howard Patton III

As of January 2026, the Erie County American Legion maintains a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), emphasizing support for all veterans, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Legionnaire of the Year – Kathleen Garvey

It's the time of year to submit the resume for your Post's Legionnaire of the Year for consideration as the 2026 Erie County Legionnaire of the Year. Resumes are due on April 3, 2026. The 2025 Guidelines and Information are available the Erie County American Legion Web page: <http://www.eriecountyal.org/Legionnaire%20of%20the%20year%20page.html>. The 2026 Guidelines will be similar to the 2025 Guidelines and will be posted shortly. Submit the resume of your candidate to Kathleen Garvey, 5792 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221, NO LATER THAN APRIL 3, 2026.

Americanism – VC Pat Murphy

We live under a constitution, which some people think is static and the words are in stone. Others believe it is a living document that moves and changes with the times. The founders of this country were a mixed bag of people, some born under a king, some born in America with no real tie to a king, some were slaves, indentured servants, free born, and poor and some rich. I take great interest in looking at our founding fathers, their lives, their thoughts, and ambitions. They have created a form of government that has stood the test of time, good leaders and bad leaders, good laws, and bad laws. As a People we have voted, protested, demanded and pleaded for changes to suit the times.

Today I would like to speak about George Washington, He was such an interesting man, and the one thing that above all else that gave him a spot in history was not being a rich land owner, not a general fighting for our freedom, or commander of our army, But he became the leader of our country, and after 2 terms gave up the power and office. This decision not to seek a 3rd term was a momentous event and set the terms of future office holders. This peaceful transfer of POWER was something new and reinforced democratic governance.

Washington's choice to step down and his example that no single individual should hold excessive power for an extended time. There are many reasons for his stepping down he wanted to retire; he was 65 years old this was advanced age at this time. He had been ill while in office, and personal views he shared with no one.

The only president to serve more than 2 terms was Franklin D. Roosevelt, this was during the depression and into WW 2, many thought his continued guidance was necessary, others thought him a dictator, but this action caused the 22 Amendment to become law stating the president can only serve 2 terms. Upon hearing that George Washington was stepping down from being the army commander and president peacefully transfer the power. King George said upon hearing he was stepping down "This will make him the greatest man in history"

This is a short look at a very involved policy and the lives of our leaders please take the time to read on these and other subjects and biographies of the leaders and shapers of the country.



Special Activities – VC Paul Wackowski

Greetings! Legionnaires

There are still some calendars out, with that note, any Post or individual[s] that may still have them, kindly return them ASAP. I have had a few winners that I'm not able to send the winnings to, because there isn't a stub with the person and address to send to. Also, I have a short list of calendars which I have numbers but no stubs. Kindly contact me at 716 - 262 - 5245 should you still have any calendar stubs and monies.

Electronic Bell Jar – Ted Balbierz

Approximately two years ago a resolution was passed by the MJ Brounshidle supporting the passage legislation in support of Electronic Bell Jar Gaming in New York State.

This resolution was subsequently passed by the Erie County American Legion and forwarded along with several other Counties throughout the Department and became part of Department of New York 2025 Legislative Agenda.

We are pleased to report that on December 19th 2025, after being encouraged to Veto this legislation Governor Hochul, signed this Bill into law, with some initial restrictions and the States Gaming Authority has one year to enact and roll out.

So that is the good news, the not so good news is that as the State is still negotiating the Seneca Nation Gaming Compact, and the current law as approved by the Governor will not allow Electronic Bell Jar gaming in counties that currently are home to Seneca Gaming.

We have been advised that it will be easier to amend this existing law and then remove the restrictions down the road rather than having to restart the whole legislative process from step one if this legislation had been vetoed. So, let's take the win for what it is and support and learn from those Posts who can take advantage of this updated revenue stream. Stay Tuned...

Boys State Chairman - Bernie Romanowski

By now all Posts have received my letter outlining the Boys State program for 2026. Our quota is 37 boys and last year we sent 24 young men to Morrisville. Hopefully we will send more this year. I know some of you have already conducted interviews. If you have not started yet, please put your foot on the accelerator and get your interviews started. As a reminder April 12th is the deadline for online submissions. Once they complete that process they should download and print all the forms, which are: Complete Application, Commitment form, Certification form and Physical Exam form. All forms should have a revision date of 10/8/2025.

The bad news is Department has raised the cost per boy to \$425. This forces us to raise our total cost of sponsoring one boy to \$575.00. Remember we have to pay for the bus, orientation program, and boxes lunches. Right now, I have an estimate of \$1, 300 for the bus alone. We are looking for delegates as well as alternates for Boys State. If you have candidates, but cannot pay for them, please submit them as an alternate. Maybe we can get another post or outside sponsor to help fund them. For those Post who would like to contribute to the program, We certainly appreciate your donation. Last as an aid during your interview you can also use the video of Episode 10 from "Those Who Served." It can be downloaded on You Tube.

Legion Family Variety Club – Ted Balbierz

With 16 Posts and multiple Units & Son's Squadrons participating to date, we are closing in on our final collection and will be preparing to present the Big Check, live on-air at this year's Variety Club Telethon the weekend of February 21st & 22nd.

That said, we are continuing to solicit donations from all the Erie County Legion Family organizations and we would encourage all those Posts, Units, Squadrons & Riders who have yet to participate in this very worthy cause, to make all donations payable to the Erie County American Legion (memo Variety Club), and mail to: Erie County American Legion, 65 Niagara Square Rm 609, Buffalo, NY, 14202. For those who have already donated, please ensure to include your donations in this year's Consolidated Post Report towards your organizations Children & Youth efforts for this last year.



Regular County Meetings at 7 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Erie County Committee will be held on Thursday 2/26 at the Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205 located at 3354 Delaware Ave. Kenmore, NY 14217. There will be no food service for this meeting.

Unfortunately, due to the very cold winter weather we had to cancel the January meeting. Thanks go out to the 19 Posts that were in attendance for the December County Meeting at the Francis J. Donovan Post #1626. Posts in attendance were; 63, 64, 78, 205, 362, 430, 431, 607, 622, 799, 838, 1131, 1346, 1586, 1587, 1626, 1672, 1780, & 1928. Hopefully we can see representatives from all the 35 Posts in Erie County on 2/26.

Future County Meetings;

March 26, David McKeever Post #64
April 30, East Aurora Post #362
May 21, Concord Post #431

Department Leadership Dinner

The Erie County American Legion Family will host Department American Legion Commander John Miga, Department Auxiliary President Maureen Morgan, and SAL Detachment Commander Joseph Guidice Jr., on Friday, February 13, 2026. The Dinner will be held at the George F. Lamm Post #622. Cocktails will be at 5:30 PM and the Dinner at 6:30 PM. Dinner cost \$35. **Please make your reservations through the Office by Wednesday February 4.**



**SUBMISSIONS
For the March
"The Legion-Air"
Due February 27
thelegionair@gmail.com**

Law & Order – VC Pat Murphy

As a Volunteer fire fighter and EMT in Colden, I am aware of illness and injuries in our area. As of right now all catholic hospitals have a mask policy in place and other will follow, I am sure ,as all our local hospitals are inundated with flu / covid cases, measles in other states.

But today I want to speak about all of you and your families. and give you a little advice or knowledge it may save you from illness or worse so he it goes.

This article was printed today in the Health Day News. It was about the Flu and other area borne viruses. Some flu patients were put in a room with healthy people who had volunteered for hours they had conversations and played cards. What do you figure Happened? Nothing turns out. Not a single person caught the flu from a room full of college aged flu patients in the bold real world experiment researcher reported on Jan 7th, in the journal of PLOS pathology.

This had nothing to do with vaccinations. in fact, only a couple of the healthy participants had gotten a flu jab. Researchers said. Instead, it appears that limited coughing among flu patients, and good circulation of the indoor air protected healthy people from their sick comrades.

Although the infected people had high levels of viruses in their noses. the fact that they coughed rarely meant only a small number of viruses were released into the air. this study indicates that coughing is a major cause of flu transmission. A new variant, called subclade K, is proving incredibly virulent and is spreading across the US. This test was conducted in Baltimore in 2 waves of multiple volunteers and none of the healthy people got sick.

Take this info to heart and remember the EMTs that come to your home to treat and transport you are exposing themselves too every day. to illness and disease, while trying to help the community. If you know an EMT or A first responder who has done something above and beyond or just years of service, please submit him for the law-and-order award

Please nominate a candidate for law-and-order awards. It will make you feel good and help your community.



Erie County Commander Jerry Kowalski attended the 2026 Observance ceremony for President Millard Fillmore who is buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery.



US Air Force Veteran Noah Coughlin who is running across every state in the USA as 'A Patriotic Tribute to the American People' and a special emphasis on honoring all Veterans was greeted by Iroquois Post #1587 Commander Ron Cook Jr. in January.



At the 2026 Albany Mid-Winter Conference, Erie County presented a check to leading Department Commander candidate Tom Schreck for his campaign. Pictured (L- R) Jim Bojanowski, Timothy Van Patten, Tom Schreck, Jerry Kowalski, Joe Porempski, and Tom Deinzer.

Saturday February 14, East Aurora Post 362 Vietnam Veterans Club will be having it's seventeenth annual Wine tasting Party from 7:00 – 9:00 PM. This event is for the serious wine drinker as well as the novice. For \$20 per person, you receive a souvenir wine glass, a tasting, house wines, continuous Hors d'oeuvres, a basket raffle and lots of fun. Attendance is limited so please contact Gary Wald at 716-655-0836 (hm) or 716-863-1919 (CP), and e mail address: gwald10@aol.com., in order to make arrangements for your tickets. The tasting is provided by Reed's Liquors, at the Circle in East Aurora.

Sunday February 15, 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.

Sunday February 22, Pancake Breakfast at Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205, 3354 Delaware Ave, Kenmore, 9 AM to Noon. \$10.

Orchard Park Post #567, 5784 Ellis Rd., Orchard Park, Dinners at the Post are from 4 – 6:30 PM (or until sold out). Monday: Beef on Weck, Tuesday: Tacos: Tacos, choice of beef or chicken, Hard shell or Soft. Thursday: Pasta Night! Comes with Salad, 2 meatballs and garlic bread. Friday: From the Grill.

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, 1965 Abbott Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218, serving Wed and Friday 2-8 PM, Fish Fry's, Seafood, Burgers and weekly specials, Wednesday 75 cent wings, Taco's \$4.

Francis J. Donovan Post #1626, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, Come enjoy the food from The Polish Villa 2U! We are their new home and serve dinners every Friday from 4-8 PM. We have live musical entertainment, bringing in new acts and performers weekly. Music starts at 7 PM and goes till 10 PM every Friday. And yes, of course we have the best Fish Fry in the area!

Send in your articles for the Legion-Air to thelegionair@gmail.com by 2/27 for the March edition.
PCC Jim Bojanowski Editor

Erie County Website – eriecounty.org

Phone: (716) 852 – 6500 Veteran14202@verizon.net

Office Hours, M,W,F – 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM

DNY website - <https://nylegion.net>

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