COMMANDER’S COMMENTS
By Clare Sullivan

Well, I bet you thought once the holidays were over we’d have things slowing down, but not at the post! We’ve been at it with auctions, fundraisers, the Polar Bear Jumpoff Festival and of course our nightly meals and activities! This town is amazing how it all pulls together to help others. What is really notable is the fact that many of these wonderful people are members of our American Legion Family who continually step up to the plate and make things happen! Thank You for all you do in service for our veterans and our community.

Here we are in February and we have things planned for Valentine’s Day and of course SuperBowl. The 2nd Vice will have more details on that in his section. Also make sure you take a look at the calendar for nightly activities and the yummy meals.

February is Americanism Month. Many may wonder what that means and essentially it is the month that we focus on one of “the Four Pillars” that make up the American Legion. In 1919, The American Legion was founded on four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. Each pillar encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation’s veterans, its servicemembers, their families, the youth of America and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

At the national level and at varying levels at the posts, Americanism encompasses the following programs:

- Flag Protection
- Illegal Immigration
- Voter Registration and Participation
- Boy Scouts of America
- The Pledge of Allegiance
- Establishment-Clause Lawsuits
- Legacy Run
- Boys Nation
- American Legion Baseball

As you can see there is a lot to the American Legion, what it does and can do to be a vital part of a community; these programs are under only one pillar, there is so much more when you examine the other pillars.

February brings the “first call for officers” for the post, and the Sons and the Auxiliary will have their second call. All positions are up for consideration in all our organizations. If you like what we are doing (or not) and want to get involved, this is a great way to participate. As you may already know we help many in our community and throughout the state by funding scholarships, holding community events, helping those in need, honoring our patriotic holidays, and generally running an organization that positively impacts many in this community. You may think it takes a lot of time but not really. The way posts are organized the division of labor is made so that it isn’t overwhelming for one officer or position. We all pull together to make things successful. We are happy to accept whatever you can do. Our decisions about our activities are made at our post meetings. You can help guide what we do by coming in and offering your input, your “2 cents”, and ideas. With this in mind, in order to participate you need to be a current member, so drag out your card from your wallet and if it doesn’t say 2014 - you need to renew (hint hint 😊).

Every membership makes us a stronger organization locally through the national level. Our membership numbers are a very loud voice for veterans’ rights and benefits. We have veterans throughout Seward ranging from WWII veterans to veterans from the ongoing military activities in the Middle East and throughout the globe. All have served and all deserve the consideration due to them for their honorable service. The post for many veterans is the starting point for them to learn what they are eligible for and can receive in terms of benefits and support from the Veterans Administration. By coming by the post, and speaking to one of our officers, a veteran can potentially learn what is out there for them - in terms of benefits and assistance; as well as finding a familiar and welcoming community with many shared experiences that many in the “civilian community” just can’t relate to.
Moving on to another topic that seems to haunt service organizations like ours, and contrary to what some believe, the post is not simply a bar. Granted the post has a bar and many members come and benefit from the camaraderie at the bar; but we are so very much more, as there are numerous opportunities available that help our veterans and our community. Also, over the last year I have become aware of another misconception of the American Legion here in town. There seems to be a notion that we get funding either federally or through the state. I wish it were true, but unfortunately we do not get any outside funding.

"The doors are open and the lights are on" by what we as an organization can earn through our membership who stop by for a meal and a beverage or two. And for that, especially in the winter we are extremely grateful!

Stop by and inquire as to what we are all about (even if you don't have a meal or a drink 😃). We do a lot as a service organization for the tiny town as we have. The American Legion has a long legacy of helping others and Seward Post 5 is committed to continuing that legacy. Our organization in Seward has been around since 1919 and the post where it sits now has been there since the end of WWII. We are always looking for better ways to serve and in different capacities; so if you have some time and want to help, even a small amount, we're always ready to have new talent thrown in the mix! It is amazing what we manage to pull together with the variety of ideas and skill that we can employ. We get a great sense of accomplishment when we hold events that help others and we get the collateral benefit of having a great time and making new friends!

We have a lot planned in the near term and will plan for more upcoming events, so come on down to the post, join a great crew in any of our organizations and let yourself feel good by helping others! Welcome to the American Legion Family.

The History of the Four Chaplains

On Feb. 3, 1943, the United States Army Transport Dorchester – a converted luxury liner – was crossing the North Atlantic, transporting more than 900 troops to an American base in Greenland. Aboard the ship were four chaplains of different faiths: Reverend George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic).

Around 12:55 a.m., a German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck Dorchester's starboard side, below the water line and near the engine room. The explosion instantly killed 100 men and knocked out power and radio communication with Dorchester's three escort ships. Within 20 minutes, the transport sank and more than 670 men died.

As soldiers rushed to lifeboats, the four chaplains spread out, comforting the wounded and directing others to safety. One survivor, Private William Bednar, later said, "I could hear men crying, pleading, praying. I could also hear the chaplains' preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going."

Another survivor, John Ladd, watched the chaplains' distribute life jackets, and when they ran out, they removed theirs and gave them to four young men. "It was the finest thing I have seen, or hope to see, this side of heaven," he recalled. As Dorchester sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying.

Fox, Goode, Poling and Washington were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart, and in 1948, Congress declared Feb. 3 to be Four Chaplains Day.
Because of the Medal of Honor’s strict requirements of heroism under fire, Congress authorized a one-time Chaplain’s Medal for Heroism on July 14, 1960. The award was presented to the chaplains’ next of kin Jan. 18, 1961. On Feb. 3, 1951, President Truman dedicated a chapel in the chaplains’ honor at Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia. When the building was sold, the chapel fell into disrepair, and the foundation overseeing the chapel moved it to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard in 2001. The chapel was repaired in 2004 and given the name Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

In 2006, at The American Legion’s 88th National Convention in Salt Lake City, the National Executive Committee passed a resolution that supported awarding the Chaplain Medal of Honor to Fox, Goode, Poling and Washington.

The Chaplain’s Medal for Heroism is a decoration of the United States Congress which was authorized by an act of Congress on July 14, 1960. Known as the Chaplain’s Medal of Honor and the Four Chaplains’ Medal, the decoration commemorates the actions of the Four Chaplains who gave their lives in the line of duty on February 3, 1943. The medal was designed by Thomas Hudson Jones (1892–1969) of the United States Army Institute of Heraldry. It was presented posthumously to their next of kin by Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker at Ft. Myer, Virginia on January 18, 1961.

House and Vice Report......
By Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice/Club,

Winter is sure taking its time getting here! Good for the heating fuel bills but not so good for the winter sports enthusiasts!!

The Club remains a bit quieter this winter as compared to the past but we still have had a lot of activities going on. Thanks to all the great volunteers from all the organizations we were able to pull off New Years, Polar Bear Jump-off, the community breakfast, the Lyon family fundraiser, Poker, and Pool League. Our volunteers are the backbone of this organization and we would be hard pressed to provide to our veterans and community everything we do were it not for those of you who give so much of your time and effort to this Legion Family!

We have Super Bowl Sunday, Valentine’s Day, community breakfast, and our normal weekly activities on tap this month. If you would like to lend a hand please contact us at the Post and we will gladly put you to work.

We will be having our first call for Post Officer nominations at the February meeting on Tuesday the 11th. I strongly encourage anyone interested in running for a position or just wanting to find out more about what we do, to attend this meeting and get more information about the mission and goals of Post 5.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2014 please consider doing so and help us continue our tradition of service to our veterans and the community of Seward.

Thanks to everyone who continues to support the Post and the Club. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 224-5440/362-2029.

“For God and Country”
Sounding Off from the Sons….  
By Mike Calhoon

Greetings from the SAL First Vice Commander.

We had a busy January with the New Year rolling in, Polar Bear Jump-off, Community Breakfast, and the Lyons Family fundraising auction.

I want to thank Mike Banas, David Osborn, Ozzie Walters, Eric Amberg, and Steve Lemme for the parts they all played in the success of those functions. It is great to see the SAL continue to support all the stuff going on at the Post.

We have more opportunities to help the Post this month with Super Bowl Sunday, Valentine’s Day, Community Breakfast, and other things that may come up. Please contact me if you would like to help with any of the upcoming functions.

We are in the process of nominating Squadron Officers for 2014-2015. If you are interested in running for an office or just want to find out more about what we do please plan to attend our meeting on Thursday, February 13, 2014 at 7:00 pm. We encourage as many members as we can to attend the meetings and give your input and help us make decisions about the business of Squadron 5.

We have now purged the Daily Sign In jug of all members who have not renewed. If you have not renewed we would like you to consider doing so to help us continue the tradition of support for the veterans and community of Seward.

Thanks again to all members for your continued support and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 224-5440 or 362-2029.

From the Director…
By Bobby Dunno

Well if you have been wondering as I have about the weather and asking “hmmm should I go ahead and get my bike out?” as I have, I would not through caution to wind too soon and wait for a day when the roads are dryer and the slick spots a bit easier to spot. But I have to admit I have been sooooo tempted. I also know that more than a few bikes have ventured out to test the waters so to speak, ya have to love that. Regardless the fact that it is February and it is time to make sure we get our bikes ready for spring when once again the rumble of our exhaust will sound out, wind will break across our handlebars and all will be right in the world.

The Spring Ride Safety Checklist will once again be available at our March ALR meeting but if you want to get hold of it sooner you can go the Alaska ALR website at alaskalegionriders.org. There you can find a link under the “Home Link” and ALR Direct-ions. Speaking of the March Meeting there is a lot to discuss with the ROMP coming to town in June and all important officer elections. I am also sure we will once again discuss beginning the dessert auctions once again since they were so successful at raising monies for the Legacy Run last year.

On the subject of getting our bikes ready for spring I know that Don has almost got his bike back together with a new “True Dual” exhaust system and is determined to get a full riding season in since his was cut way too short last year when he suffered a cracked exhaust on the ride back from North Pole and the 2013 ROMP. New brakes and clutches are in the works for two of my bikes and preps are being made to add a trailer hitch to the Harley so we can again carry the Post Flags in the 4th of July Parade. So get on the prep work make sure the plugs are not fowled charge the batteries and warm them up ’cause we are counting down the weeks until we can all “Get On Our Bikes And Ride!”
President's Day

Excerpt from Timeanddate.com

Washington's Birthday, also known as Presidents' Day, is a federal holiday held on the third Monday of February. The day honors presidents of the United States, including George Washington, the USA's first president.

Washington's Birthday officially honors the life and work of George Washington, the first president of the United States. The day commemorates past presidents of the USA. Washington's Birthday is sometimes known as Presidents' Day. This is because while most states have adopted Washington's Birthday, some states officially celebrate Presidents' Day.

Some states pay particular attention to Abraham Lincoln, as his birthday was also in mid-February. In the weeks or days leading up to the holiday, schools often organize events and lessons for students about the presidents of the United States and George Washington in particular.

The federal holiday is on the third Monday of February each year, but records show that George Washington's birthday is on February 22.

George Washington was the first president of the United States of America. His first term as president was from 1789 to 1793 and his second term from 1793 to 1797.

Washington's Birthday was first celebrated as a holiday in the District of Columbia in 1880. It was made a federal holiday in 1885. The holiday was originally held on the anniversary of George Washington's birth, on February 22. In 1971, this holiday was moved to the third Monday in February.

From the Desk of the President...

By Suzi Towsley

The American Legion Auxiliary has been enjoying our spring like January. We have had our first call for election of officers and need anyone interested in serving to please make it to the meeting on February 12th at 7pm. We welcome the fresh faces and new ideas!

Bingo is cruising along thanks to our awesome volunteers. Please check with Sharon on Monday evenings if you're interested in volunteering.

On the topic of our awesome volunteers: In order for us to get the credit that we deserve for the many hours we give, I need to send in our report. Please let me know the number of hours you spent in service of the Auxiliary, Post or Legion Family from January through December of 2013. You can email me at sewardsooz@yahoo.com or drop off a note at the office at the post. Thanks!

January also saw our Joanne H turn 85 or 58 depending on which side of the cake you were standing on. Thank you Joann for your years of dedication!

Happy February and Valentine's Day, looking forward to St. Patrick’s Day!
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To advertise in this space call Clare Sullivan at 224-7662
Rates are $5 per month or $50 per year BUSINESS CARDS ONLY, PLEASE!
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**Notes:**
- **KARAOKE 7PM**
- **Chicken Dinner**
- **Pool League**
- **Super Bowl Party**
- **Post opens at 1:30 pm**
- **Call the post for reservations!**