Commander’s Comments…

By: Clare Sullivan

We’re in it now!!!! We’ve started the slide into Spring and we’re getting more and more daylight all the time! Before you know it we will be run over by tourists and the town will once again be abuzz with activity. After the new year we had a snapshot of time to catch our breath but we were once again in the mix of activity following the holidays – we supported the hugely successful 31st anniversary of the Polar Bear Jump-off Festival in January. It was a fast and furious weekend and a lot of good work went along with the activities. I can’t say enough in thanks to all our volunteers! You guys make it happen, whether with fabulous food, supporting auctions, running the Karaoke Contest or down on the docks helping the jumpers - you did it all and managed to have some fun at the same time! I also want to thank those who came to the post to help out this cause by making donations, bidding on the fun items for the auction and cheering on the contestant in the Karaoke Contest. It was as always a great time! This town is amazing in how it pulls together to help others. What is really notable is the fact that so many of these wonderful people are members of our American Legion Family, not only here in Seward but from out of town and they continually step up to make things happen! Thank You for all you do in service for our veterans and our community.

Here we are in February and the Auxiliary has a really yummy dinner planned for Valentine’s Day and of course the Club has a fun Super Bowl party planned. 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 service members, 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 Education Program
- Citizenship Programs
- Voter Registration and Participation
- Boy Scouts of America
- ALR Legacy Run
- Boys State and Nation
- American Legion Baseball
- Oratorical Scholarship Program
- Operation Comfort Warriors
- Youth Cadet Law Enforcement
- Junior Shooting Programs
As you can see there is a lot to the American Legion and this is only under the one pillar of Americanism, there is so much more when you examine the other pillars.

February brings the post to our “first call for officers”, 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 and support throughout the community 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 2016 – 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 at the National Level. 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 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. Often times a welcoming hello is all that is needed for one to feel at home and we strive to make Seward Post 5 just that place.

I want to address something that is a common misconception that many folks believe about places like the American Legion posts. Contrary to what many believe, the post is not simply a bar - we are a service organization whose primary charter is to advocate for the veterans and their families. Granted the post has a social area and many members come and benefit from the camaraderie there however, we are so very much more as evidenced by what we do collectively as an American Legion Family all year long. Stop by and inquire as to what we are all about (even if you don’t have a meal or a drink - we also have a lot of tea and coffee drinkers too!!!).

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. Seward Post 5 has been around since 1919 and the post where it sits now has been there since the end of WWII. We are always seeking better ways to serve and in different capacities; so if you have some time and want to help, even a small amount of time, 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 get that good feeling of accomplishment by helping your friends and family in our Seward Community!

Welcome to the American Legion Family at Seward Post 5!

For God and Country!
House and Vice Reports...

By: Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice/Club,

I would like to thank all the great volunteers who helped us get through The Coast Guard Auxiliary Change of Watch, the Polar Bear Jump-Off Festival, and our Community Breakfast. We have such a great group of volunteers and we could not do most things here without you all!!

This month we will have the Super Bowl Party on Feb 7th, the Auxiliary Unit 5 Valentine’s Day dinner on Feb 13th, our Community Breakfast on Feb 21st, and the NOSB (Science Bowl) on Feb 26-28th. There is a lot going on so if you are in the volunteer mood or just getting cabin fever and need to get out, come on down and we will gladly put you to work.

Our next monthly meeting for the Post is on Feb 9th. We encourage all interested members to come and participate at our meetings. These meetings are not just for Post Officers but are general membership meetings open to all members in good standing. Come and share your thoughts and ideas concerning the direction of the Post and the legion programs we support.

We will be having first call for new officer elections at our meeting on Feb 9th.

We still have poker on Sunday and Monday nights, Bingo on Monday night, Pool League on Saturday night, and of course food every night of the week. Lots of things happening every week so come on in and enjoy some good food, intelligent banter, and great comradery.

The 2016 membership year is in full swing and we thank everyone who has renewed their memberships and encourage others to renew if they have not done so. Remember, membership is vital for the accomplishment of all things the American Legion and the Post 5 family do for veterans, their families, and our community.

Thanks to all of you who continue to support your Post and Club. I look forward to seeing you all and please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Salutations from the Sons!

By: Mike Calhoon

Greetings from the SAL First Vice Commander,

As we ease through winter I want to thank every Squadron 5 member who continues to show support for the Post and all the American Legion programs and mission. We have some truly dedicated and hardworking members and you should all be proud of Sons of American Legion Squadron 5.

The Polar Bear Jump Off Festival was a great success with lots of support from the Squadron. We also assisted the Post in hosting the Coast Guard Auxiliary Change of Watch.

This month we will have the opportunity to help with the Super Bowl Party on Feb 6th, the Auxiliary Unit 5 Valentine’s Day dinner on Feb 13th, the Community Breakfast on Feb 21st, and the NOSB Science Bowl on Feb 26-28th. All you great volunteers get ready to show your spirit of giving and your dedication to the Legion Family activities.

Remember that we have had our first call for new officer elections and the second call will be at our monthly meeting at 7:00pm on Feb 11th. All members are encouraged to attend these monthly meetings and give your input. We are always looking for individuals interested in being on the Squadron Leadership committee and would love to see new faces and get new ideas from our members. We are a member driven organization and I encourage all members to come check it out.

Remember that the new membership year is in full swing and please consider renewing if you have not done so. Membership drives everything in the Legion so let’s continue to move forward.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 224-5440. Thanks again for all your support of the Post 5 family and I look forward to seeing you all around the Post.

For God and Country
From the ALR Director...

By: Bobby Dunn

Hello from ALR Director,

So here we are at the start of February and contrary to popular belief spring and motorcycle season is right around the corner and approaching rapidly. Well at least for those of us who have an itch to get astride our bikes, twist a throttle and feel the wind break across a windscreen. There have already been a few days where I felt the temperature and balmy winter breeze and wondered to myself “could I get away with a short ride.” But soon the days will get warmer and the roads will dry up and we will be able to ride but until then we just have to content ourselves with getting our rides cleaned up and prepared for that first chilly excursion on the road out of town or out to exit glacier depending on your whim.

Just to remind those of us who wait till the last minute and then shortcut our preparations you can still find the Spring Ride Checklist on the American Legion Riders Alaska website at alaskalegionroders.org. Oil needs to be changed, brakes checked, cables lubed along with the cleaning and polishing that makes them all nice and shinier. The main thing is not to just look good but to be safe doing it. So let's start thinking about slapping in some new spark plugs, charging the batteries cause it won't be too much longer before we will be riding.

Another thing we riders need to start thinking about is the first week of March when we “come out of the dark” and have our first ALR meeting with lots to discuss and decide. It will also be the last meeting I will be at the head of the table cause I will not be Director next year. So among the decisions that need to be made who is to continue on as Director (with me as the assistant) along with other officer positions need to be considered. We also will be talking about the rides and events we are planning to attend and scheduling a few dessert auctions to continue our support of the Legacy Run. So food for thought as we patiently wait for the sun to warm and the roads to clear and we can all Get On Our Bikes And Ride!
Greetings from the Auxiliary President!

Can you believe it time for our annual Call for Officers again? This year we hope to see some new faces on our Board and encourage all members to bring a non-member to our next meeting which will be held on Wednesday, February 10th at 7pm.

We meet once a month and many positions take only a few hours of your time. It is such a good feeling to be able to help our community in such a great way. We can always use fresh ideas and extra volunteers. Don’t want to be on the board? We are always looking for volunteers to help with Bingo, Split the Pot and many other projects.

On Saturday, February 13th, the Auxiliary will be hosting our annual Valentine’s Day dinner. We hope you’ll come by the Post to enjoy a delicious Surf and Turf platter with roasted garlic red potatoes, asparagus, dinner rolls, fresh spring salad and dessert. Reservations can be made by stopping by or calling the post after 4pm at 224-5440. Seating begins at 6pm and tickets are $30. Proceeds will go to support our Scholarship Fund. We hope to see you there!

Thank you to all of our members who donate their time to our organization. I look forward to another great year with you!
Valentine’s Dinner
Saturday, February 13th
seatings begin at 6pm

Make reservations by calling 224-5440 or stopping by the American Legion on the corner of Jefferson and 5th Avenue after 4pm to reserve a seat.

Join us to celebrate with or without a sweetheart!

We will be serving a scrumptious prime rib Surf & Turf Platter with Roasted garlic red potatoes asparagus, dinner rolls a fresh spring salad all the fixings and dessert for only

$30 each

All proceeds will benefit the Unit 5 American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship fund. Thank you for supporting us and supporting kids and education!
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**Food Served Every Night!!!**