



# For God and Country

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Seward Post 5 Newsletter  
American Legion Post 5  
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## Commander's Comments...

By: Clare Sullivan

Another busy and successful year down! Happy New Year to all in our American Legion Family at Post 5 and the Department of Alaska! I wish all a prosperous and healthy 2016! What a full year of service to the community and our veterans we have accomplished. All should be proud of what we have put together throughout the year; I am particularly humbled by the ongoing support by an amazing cadre of folks who consistently show up to help others. You folks are incredible! You have risen to the challenge every time to help out and make things better by helping veterans and their families, our active duty, and our community. We have some incredibly generous and talented people who help out wherever they can. It is hard to keep track of all who help as often times these folks just drop in - fortunately just when it is needed and don't expect anything in return. They're here "just to pitch in." That is what I call selfless service and Seward has a good representation of these kind of quality folks!



2016! What a full year of service to the community and our veterans we have accomplished. All should be proud of what we have put together throughout the year; I am particularly humbled by the ongoing support by an amazing cadre of folks who consistently show up to help others. You folks are incredible! You have risen to the challenge every time to help out and make things better by helping veterans and their families, our active duty, and our community. We have some incredibly generous and talented people who help out wherever they can. It is hard to keep track of all who help as often times these folks just drop in - fortunately just when it is needed and don't expect anything in return. They're here "just to pitch in." That is what I call selfless service and Seward has a good representation of these kind of quality folks!



As this the beginning of a new year, I'd would like to mention some of our events in 2015 to highlight of what we can and did do and to mention and show some of our amazing folks "in action." We started the year of course with **New Year's Eve** at the post with some yummy noshies and good friends to ring in the New Year. We closely followed with supporting the **Polar Bear Jump-Off Festival** where we helped with the weekend festivities.

Although we have special events throughout the year, we also had weekly activities of Texas Hold 'em and Omaha poker, pool league, and Bingo once again supported by incredible volunteers - of particular note Charlie Jackson and Dan Coisman for poker and Sharon Dillon, Rocky Regis, Susan St Amand and Mike Mooter helping in running Bingo.

In early February we had our **Super Bowl Party** where we enthusiastically rooted on some great teams and had a wonderful **Valentines' Day Dinner** for our members and their sweethearts.



In March we had the **Annual Spring Breakup Festival** where our outdoorsmen and women in town showcased their skills, outdoor enthusiast equipment, and outdoor culinary prowess!



We also couldn't forget our **St. Patrick's Day Party** where we all were Irish for the day! We also celebrated the **96<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the American Legion** and we installed our new officers at our **Installation Dinner**.



In April, besides tax relief day J we had a community **Easter Breakfast**. We also had the **Annual Department of Alaska Convention** at the post where the Legion Posts, Auxiliary, and Sons' delegates from throughout the state met for business and fun! Our Post 5 Family did amazingly well with all sorts of awards! It was a proud day for all of us at Post 5 and reflects the dedication and hard work by all of us in our American Legion Family!



We followed in May with our **Mother's Day Breakfast**, the **Armed Forces Combat Fishing Tournament** support and the **Memorial Day Weekend** at the Legion Cemetery. We also had good representation at the **Memorial**



**Day Byers Lake** run with our **ALR** riding proudly - we were fortunate, we had great times and the weather cleared just in time for our ceremonies!

June really kicked off our summer and our long days, we celebrated **Flag Day** with a ceremony and we "retired" several flags that were no longer of service. We had a yummy **Father's Day Breakfast** to honor our dads, as well as celebrating **Armed Forces Day**.



July's activities followed quickly with **4th of July** festivities where our **USCGC Mustang** Crew marched and our **ALR** road motorcycles in the parade and of course we served up the Post 5 "world famous ribs!"



Later in July and into August we helped to celebrate the **USCGC 225<sup>th</sup> Birthday** at the post with the **USCGC Healy** who came to visit. It was a wonderful visit and the crew was awesome as they helped out with some heavy lifting at the cemetery aligning our rows of headstones.

We also benefited by the arrival of the **Seward Silver Salmon Derby** and all the members who came to town, visited the post, and had a great time fishing. It was surprising good weather and lots of Silvers were caught to fill freezers!

In September, we had our **Early Bird Dinner** and it was a great turn out and a tasty meal for all as we looked to continue our membership drive. We also observed **Patriot Day**, **POW/MIA Recognition Day** and **American Legion Day**.



As we started looking toward the cooler weather we forged ahead with activities, we honored our veterans with **Veterans' Day** ceremonies and a dinner at the post. The Auxiliary had their **Toys for Tots Auction** where funds were raised to buy presents

for children and families in need during the holidays, and of course we had our ever tasty **Thanksgiving Dinner** where we fed many in the community on a truly American Holiday. As the year was winding down, we surely weren't!



December brought lots of activities including getting ready

for the holidays. We sent out **Operation Apple Pie** packages to the service members from the Seward and Moose Pass areas and we helped out with Santa and Mrs. Claus visit to the post. Their arrival allowed us to pass out lots of wonderful gifts for the children in town. It was one again one of the



busiest visits from Santa we've had where over 120 kids came to visit with Santa and the elves, but we were ready and had a great visit with tasty snacks, hot chocolate and cider! We also prepared and treated many in town by delivery of a Christmas meal and those coming to the post to a wonderful **Christmas Dinner**. And to end the month, we had a fabulous **New Year's Eve** get together with our membership to ring in the New Year!

What a year! And what I have here is just the highlight of what we got going on! Without the American Legion and our incredible volunteers from the Post, Auxiliary and the Sons we couldn't do what we do in service to "God and Country!" Thank you for another fabulous year!

Now, I'd like to address something that is essential to our organizational survival - **Membership**. We talk about how good it is to have a healthy membership and the reason we do this is that if we're healthy in membership then we are able to help others. If you support what we do in the community and believe what is done for veterans and our community please show it by renewing your membership and encourage others to do the same. We're one of the last service organizations

We don't generally brag about what we do but your support and membership has allowed us to do some good work in town over the last year as in many years before. We as an American Legion Family have donated over \$15,000 in scholarships, about \$4,000 for veteran meals at the Senior Center, utility

and heating bills, and airfare for family emergencies and the Honor Flight trips. We provided holiday meals for many in the community, and have provided numerous gifts for children in town during the holidays as well as our Seward military members who can't be home for the holidays. And, in total, our American Legion Family has donated over \$85,000 to local causes and military support functions. As you can see with a strong and involved membership we can help others and make a difference in people's lives.

As it is 2016 we'll be starting the "election season" and we will be looking to elect **new officers** in all our organizations in the next few months. The selection of new officers keeps the forward momentum of the organization and infuses new ideas with new people; new folks keep things fresh and exciting. Membership participation and the new and bright ideas from individuals who get involved energizes all to do what we can in the areas of veterans support, Americanism, child welfare and education, and community service here in Seward.

It sounds like a lot is being done and it is, but volunteering is not altogether a time consuming activity within our organization such as ours, and many of our positions do not require a lot of time commitment. We can always use a helping hand and new ideas without demanding too much time away from one's normal work and family routine. It is fun to be involved, and you get a good feeling when you do something good for others. One real benefit besides feeling good for helping others is you establish friendships with good people who are also motivated by doing what is right and contributing positively to our community. Please consider volunteering or filling an officer position (or both **J hint, hint!**) if you have even just a few hours a week or in a month to help.

The Post 5 Family has been here for many years and has been a solid foundation as a service organization within our community, and a reliable source for assistance and camaraderie for veterans and many members in Seward. We have helped many people in the community over the decades and now we could use a little help too, so please consider supporting your post, unit or squadron by renewing your membership and when you have some free time come on by and see what we have going on and know that your efforts will help not only a few but many throughout our community.

Best regards, all the best for a wonderful 2016, and I'll see you at the Post!



## House and Vice Reports...

By: Mike Calhoon

Hello from the Second Vice/Club,

Winter may come to stay one of these days but just teasing us for now.

Another year has passed and the Club was instrumental in helping the Post with all the functions, including the Department Convention, dinners, breakfasts, and special events that assist our veterans, our active duty personnel, and the community of Seward. With our staff of two and all the wonderful volunteers in the Post 5 family we were able to accomplish great things and somehow keep the lights on and the doors open 365 days. Great job everyone!!!!

I would like to thank all the Post Officers, Clare Sullivan, Bobby Dunno, Melody Moline, Vernon Willet, John Christensen, Patrick Burnett, William (WC) Casey, Ron Buckley, and Matt Brinkley. These dedicated members chose to take ultimate responsibility for the actions of Post 5 and without that leadership nothing would get accomplished. You all did a fantastic job.

I also need to thank all of our great volunteers. Without your time and effort, we would not be able to accomplish our goal of support to the Post 5 Family. The Club is a nice place to come together but it is also a great tool to help serve our veterans and the community of Seward. You volunteers make it happen and should be proud of the year we had.

I would like to thank the Club staff, Connie Kullander, for her continued dedication and support from which the Legion Family and the Club benefit greatly.

This month we will have the opportunity to continue our tradition of volunteerism with the **Polar Bear Jump Off Festival** and community breakfast. We will need lots of volunteers for the weekend of **Jan 15-17** so let us know if you can give some time and effort in support of this great fundraising activity.

We still have poker on Sunday and Monday, Bingo on Monday, Pool League on Saturday, and for you sports fans, we always have a game on TV. Come down to the club, drinking alcohol is not a requirement, and enjoy good food every night along with fun and good company.

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,

Winter is still just teasing us. Hopefully it shows up for real before Polar Bear Jump Off.

Squadron 5 had a successful year in 2015. We finished with over 100% of our membership goal and we assisted Post 5 in all of the activities throughout the year which is our main mission in life. Squadron 5 members were present and actively participating from the Polar Bear Jump Off through New Year's Eve.

I want to thank all the Squadron Officers, Al Dykstra, Dave Dieckgraeff, Mike Mooter, Vernon Willet, Scott Wilde, and David Osborn for taking on the responsibility of the leadership of Squadron 5. It tends to be a labor of love at times but is truly a benefit to the Post and the community of Seward. I would like to thank **Dave Dieckgraeff** for having METCO continue to keep our parking lot safe all winter. I also want to give **David Osborn** a huge thank you!! David rarely missed, if any, our dinners, breakfasts, veterans, active duty, or community functions and special events. David Osborn also worked spring through fall keeping our cemetery in great shape with little help and on a purely voluntary basis. Great job everyone!!

Now don't any of you go getting the big head. There is still lots of work coming up so let's look forward to 2016 and make it the best year yet for the Post, the Squadron, and the Auxiliary Unit 5.

This month we will have the Polar Bear Jump Off activities on Jan 15-16, community breakfast on the 17<sup>th</sup> so there will be plenty of work for everyone.

January's meeting will be the first call for new officer nominations so if anyone is interested please plan to attend the meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

The 2016 membership year is in full swing so please consider renewing your membership if you have not done so already. Membership is what drives the train for the Sons of American Legion programs so please help us continue the great work being done by the Post 5 family.

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

## President's Post...

By: Nancy Perea

As the year comes to an end, it's a wonderful time to think about those who are special in our lives and what we can do as members of the American Legion, to make others feel special too.

The Auxiliary was very busy in December preparing for the annual Christmas Parade and Children's Party. With the successful Toys for Tots Auction in November bringing in over \$8,000 with the auction, food and donations, we were able to provide every child that attended, some great gifts from Santa.

Elizabeth Johnston with the AVTEC Culinary program was gracious enough to donate 200 sugar cookies, complete with colored icing. What a treat that was for the kids! They weren't the usual store bought cookies, but cookies made with love and kindness. Cookies that melted in our mouths (yes, the elves had to have some too!). I can't give enough Thanks to Elizabeth and her crew for this donation.

Something new this year was our "**Sensory Santa**" party for our children with special needs. This was a small, intimate party for children who may have Autism, or other sensory disorders that prevent them seeing Santa. Many children with sensory disorders never get the chance to see Santa up close because of long lines, loud music, flashing lights and their fear of the big jolly guy.

Because this event was new to Seward, we were unsure of what to expect. We had a small turn out, only 5 children were in attendance, but small and intimate was our goal. The lights were turned down, and activity tables were placed throughout the room. Santa and Mrs. Claus sat with the children and played with play-doh, colored pictures and assembled Legos and Lincoln Logs. There was even a special chair placed between Santa and Mrs. Claus so that the children could sit between them for their picture.

One child came wearing her special headphones to dampen the noise. After only a few minutes, the headphones came off and she was happily coloring with Santa. They drove all the way from Kenai to attend our party because she could not visit with regular Santa like the other children.

One little girl in particular stole my heart and brought a cascade of tears down my cheeks. She was very shy, and quiet but when she saw Santa come in and sit down, she squealed

with delight and ran right up to him. Although she didn't sit on his lap, she lingered for quite a while and was happy to sit between them and have her picture taken. To see the excitement in her eyes reminded me of the videos you see where the parent has been deployed and sneaks home unexpectedly to surprise their loved ones. The videos that leave everyone in happy tears. This was a Kodak moment for all. To see these children have this experience and get to visit with Santa on their own terms with very heartwarming. Not one of them felt out of place. I look forward to having a Sensory Santa party next year.

I would also sincerely like to thank Vernon and Susan Willet for their dedication to our children. They arranged to have Santa and Mrs. Claus ready for the Parade and both Children's Christmas parties. When someone likes what they do, it shows. Those two have the true meaning of Christmas deep in their heart. Thank you. You brought joy to many children and left each one of them feeling special.



And finally, on a business note....It is almost time for the annual **Call for Officers**. If you would like to be part of our amazing group of Officers, please come to our meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>. We meet once a month and spend our time making our community a better place for all. Each term lasts 12 months and you will make a difference in our community. I hope to see you there.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>JANUARY 2015</b>					1 <i>Steak Night</i>	2 <i>Pool League 6:30PM</i>
3 <i>No Poker Tonight</i>	4 <i>Bingo at 6:30PM  Omaha Hold'em 7:00PM</i>	5 <i>Mexican  Martes</i>	6	7	8 <i>Steak Night</i>	9 <i>Pool League 6:30PM</i>
10 <i>Texas Hold'em 6:00pm</i>	11 <i>Bingo at 6:30PM  Omaha Hold'em 7:00PM</i>	12 <i>Mexican Martes  Post Meeting 7:00pm</i>	13 <i>Auxiliary 5 Meeting 7:00pm</i>	14 <i>SAL Meeting 7:00pm</i>	15 <i>Steak Night  Polar Bear Jump Off Festival</i>	16 <i>Polar Bear Jump Off Festival  Karaoke Contest 8:00pm</i>
17 <i>Community Breakfast 9:00AM  Texas Hold'em 6:00pm</i>	18 <i>Bingo at 6:30PM  Omaha Hold'em 7:00PM</i>	19 <i>Mexican  Martes</i>	20	21	22	23 <i>Pool League 6:30PM</i>
24 <i>Texas Hold'em 6:00pm</i>	25 <i>Bingo at 6:30PM  Omaha Hold'em 7:00PM</i>	26 <i>Mexican  Martes</i>	27	28	29	30 <i>Pool League 7:00pm</i>
31 <i>Texas Hold'em 7:00pm</i>	<b>FOOD SERVED EVERY NIGHT!!!</b>					