

# CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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5-Star Chapter – 2017



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

The Board of Directors has agreed with the recommendations of the team that put together a budget and recommended a **new dues level of \$30.00/year**. This will allow us to accomplish a few things, stabilize dues level for several years to come, prepare us for any future price increases from those who provide services to us, and most importantly allow us to contribute financially to the worthy causes that the chapter supports.

**Melody Burns, Director of the Veterans Miracle Center**, spoke at our last meeting of all the great things that the Center does. She also gave us complimentary tickets for up to four eight person tables at the Center's Gala Event these seats usually cost \$100.00 to \$1,200.00/person. Chris Costigan, Neal Berntson (Dana's) son, Mary Lou and I attended this fantastic event. It was held in the evening of Veterans Day at the Albany City Center. There were a lot of things to watch or see during the social hour. A large group of people of whom a relatively small percentage was veterans were in attendance. A great percentage was politicians and business leaders from throughout the Capital District. The speaker was Karen Vaughn, Gold Star Mother of Navy Seal Aaron Carson Vaughn. Her speech was very inspirational. It was fantastic to be able to represent the Chapter. I hope that many more of you will be able to attend next year! The event usually occurs around Veterans Day.

My comments in the last newsletter included the challenges facing the Albany Area **"Toys for Tots"**. There is some good news to report. A wealthy person from Pennsylvania has sponsored the "Toys for Tots Train" this year. Due to railroad licensing limits, the Railroad contracted to do the train only is able to use the tracks for the southern portion of the trip, Binghamton to Albany which will occur on Saturday 1 Dec. The northern route, Albany to Rouse Point, will be done with buses and tractor trailers. This will happen on Sunday 9 Dec. The result of this major change in their schedule is that there may not be a Marine who is available to attend and speak at our meeting. Also "Dunkin Donuts" has stepped up and donated \$300,000.00 to the Albany group.



Please consider donating wreaths to the Saratoga National Cemetery. There is a direct link to our chapter's fund raising site on our website or go to **"Wreaths Across America"** and do a location search for **NY0087P**. Thank you.

Now is the time to start planning for the annual **STRIDE Wounded Warriors Snowfest Welcome Banquet**. The next will be held on 2 Mar. Those of you who have attended in the past know what a moving event this is. If you have yet to attend, please consider doing so this March. You will be real glad that you did!

**Terri Coles, COL, USA, Ret** will be attending our meeting. She is MOAA's Director of Council and Chapter Affairs. She has requested that we stay after our regular meeting for a leadership and legislative presentation.

*Skip Bebernitz*

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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

**Annual Business Meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party, Sunday DECEMBER 9, 1300 - 1600 hours, Edison Club, Rexford, NY**



**SPECIAL GUEST:** – *COL Terri Coles, USA Ret, MOAA Chapter Affairs*

At the conclusion of our dinner meeting, we ask all MOAA members to remain for an important informational presentation by Colonel Coles. Spouses and guests are cordially invited but not required to stay in the room for the presentation.

At this year's **annual business meeting**, the Selection Committee will present a slate of candidates for all Chapter leadership positions – five officers and eight board members. [See page 4 of this issue.] Chapter members will have the opportunity to approve the nominees or nominate others. Once confirmed by the membership, the officers and board of directors will serve for two years.

**REMINDER:** Please get your reservation and payment to CHRIS COSTIGAN NOT LATER THAN Tuesday **December 4**. The Edison Club needs a final count by the Wednesday before our meeting. If you plan to attend, even if you aren't 100% sure, PLEASE PAY IN ANTICIPATION. THE CLUB NOW CHARGES US FOR MEALS ORDERED, not only for those served. [The luncheon reservation form is on page 5.]

### HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → TOYS FOR TOTS

It's that time of year again, and our Chapter is collecting toys for the local U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. This program collects new, toys during October, November and December each year, and distributes them as Christmas gifts through bona fide social service agencies to needy children in Albany, Broome, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Fulton, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Washington and Warren counties.



**If you are attending our annual meeting, here's what to bring:** a new, unwrapped toy or gift appropriate for children up to early teens. Appropriate gifts for *pre-teens/teens* would include sporting equipment/bags/balls, books, backpacks, cosmetics, purses, watch/wallet gift sets, bath gift sets, board games, radio control cars/trucks, hand-held electronics, skateboards/helmets, curling irons, hair straighteners, and hair dryers. **Do not give realistic looking weapons or gifts with food;** such items will NOT be distributed. For more information about the program in our region visit: <https://albany-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/Default.aspx>

### News and other items of interest

- **Wreaths Across America™:** The cut-off date to donate wreaths this year is 3 December. Currently there are only enough wreaths donated to be placed at 42% of the graves of these fallen heroes. If you have already given, thank you very much. If you have not already done so, please contribute. The cost per wreath is \$15.00. And don't forget, you are invited to attend the memorial ceremony and place wreaths, December 15, starting at 1200 hrs.
- The **West Point Band's Christmas Concert** will be 1&2 December at 1300 hrs in Ike Hall on West Point.
- The **new rep for Martin's Point is Keith Prairie**. His office is in Clifton Park. He is willing to help those serving and veterans to figure out which plan is best for them in Tricare's new open enrollment period, including the new vision and dental plans. *His email address is [keith.prairie@martinspoint.org](mailto:keith.prairie@martinspoint.org) and his phone number is 518-588-4441.*

**Jan 17** is the deadline for submitting news articles, photos, bio's, or stories for the *next* issue. Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at [amemole1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:amemole1@nycap.rr.com)



## A SALUTE TO SKIP



Our Chapter has been blessed to have an uninterrupted succession of world-class leaders for several decades, all building on the achievements of their predecessors. In 2019 we will have a new Chapter President, Chris Costigan. So the December 9 is the last annual meeting with **Skip Bebernitz** as President. We look back on the past three years in awe at what the Chapter accomplished under Skip's direction. Skip's relentless, energetic pursuit of MOAA goals has led us to become a 5-star Chapter! He inspired and led the Chapter to seek out and establish a supporting relationship with a wide variety of worthy causes in our region to serve the needs of active service members, veterans, and children. He made sure our meetings had the most interesting guest speakers, and personally recognized the contributions of Chapter officers and directors, graciously inviting each to West Point football games and a Saratoga Battlefield tour. With deep gratitude, we thank Skip and Mary Lou for their dedicated service to our Chapter. Skip will remain one of the Board of Directors when he becomes the Immediate Past President. Skip will continue to serve on our Program and Legislative Affairs Committees. He will also continue as a Regional Vice President for the NYS Council of Chapters. Skip epitomizes the MOAA slogan: **"Never Stop Serving!"**



## VOTING ON CHAPTER LEADERS

Our Chapter has five titled leadership positions, known collectively as Chapter Officers, and eight members comprising the Chapter's Board of Directors, one of whom is the Immediate Past President. Incumbents serve a two-year term starting at the beginning of an odd-numbered year. At the end of the second year, a nominating committee seeks out volunteers for these positions. Nominees are confirmed by the general membership present at the annual business meeting in December. **At this year's meeting on December 9, we will be voting to confirm nominees for the 2019/2020 term.** Prior to the vote, we will open the floor to allow members to make additional nominations.

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chris Costigan, CDR USN Ret., presently the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, has volunteered to replace Skip as the President. The President presides at general membership and Board meetings, represents the Chapter at State and National events, and provides overall direction for the Chapter. Chris will also continue duties on the Program committee. We will be voting to confirm Chris and replace him as 1st Vice President. We will also be confirming the 2nd Vice President, currently Manny Biondi, MAJ USA Ret.,  
*(Continued on page 4.)*



Current 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Chris Costigan accepts our MOAA 5-Star Chapter Award at this year's MOAA National Convention



*(Continued from page 3.)*

Secretary, currently Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR Ret., who is also our 5-star award winning Webmaster. We will also be filling the vitally important position of Treasurer, currently vacant.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board, together with the Officers, forms a deliberative body that makes decisions by majority vote on Chapter policies and operational matters. These include decisions on spending, revenue, such as dues, and program policies and events. A diversity of experience and perspectives helps the Board make sound decisions. Most of the Officers and Board members head or serve on the various committees that coordinate Chapter activities. Skip Bebernitz, MAJ USA Ret., will rejoin the Board as Immediate Past-President. All current members might be returning, but we might some new volunteers.

#### COMMITTEES

Past issues of this newsletter have described in detail the functions of the various committees; no need to repeat that information here, except to remind everyone that the committees, often only one person, plan and accomplish the specific tasks needed to run Chapter operations and advance the MOAA agenda.

*One need not be an elected official to serve on or head up a committee: Any Chapter member or auxiliary may participate. Committee heads are automatically members of the Board.*

## MOAA GOALS, CALL TO ACTION

MOAA is pressing the 115th Congress during their “lame duck” session to accomplish their legislative agenda. Congress must first achieve a spending agreement to fund the federal government after December 7. They are also working on a Coast Guard reauthorization package and holding hearings on delays of GI Bill payments to students. If Congress fails to act on any of the defense bills before adjournment, MOAA will be “back to square one in January,” to get legislation reintroduced and cosponsors to sign on. MOAA goals for the final session include these stand-alone bills:

- Expand presumptive exposure to Agent Orange of Blue Water Navy veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam (H.R. 299 and S. 422). *(Senator Gillibrand is the original sponsor of S. 422; Senator Schumer and all three of our current Congressional representatives, Faso, Stefanik and Tonko are co-sponsors of these respective bills.)*
- Eliminate the widows tax on military survivors (H.R. 846 and S. 339): will repeal the requirement to reduce survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation. *(Senator Gillibrand is a co-sponsor of S. 339; all three of our current Congressional representatives, Faso, Stefanik and Tonko are co-sponsors of the House version)*
- End financial penalties for disabled veterans by allowing full concurrent receipt (H.R. 333 and S. 61): will permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50% to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay *and* veterans' disability compensation, and to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service.



Time is of the essence. *Please send a MOAA-suggested letter to your elected officials. See the MOAA website Legislative Action Center page:*

<http://takeaction.moaa.org/?0>

KEEP THE TOP HALF OF THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

**2019 CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON DATES & GUEST SPEAKERS**



All general membership meetings are scheduled on Sundays at the Edison Club, Rexford, beginning with a social hour at 1300 hrs. followed by dinner at 1400 hrs.

- Feb 10** - Keith Prairie of Martins Point speaking about Tricare
- Apr 7** - Steve Trimm as General Grant on “Grant's Friendship with President Lincoln”
- Jun 9** - Daniel Way, MD, on his book "They Were There: World War II Stories from the Adirondacks' Greatest Generation"
- Oct 13** - TBD
- Dec 8** - Christmas/Holiday Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting

**2019 CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS**

- Feb 9** – 1000 hrs., NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga
- Aug 10** – 1000 hrs., Scheiber’s home, Bolton Landing [tentative]
- Nov 2** – 1000 hrs., NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga



**LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM**

Date: **DECEMBER 9, 2018** Location: **Edison Club, Rexford, NY**

Time: 1:00PM - Social Hour  
2:00PM – Dinner

**Menu Choices:** FLAT IRON STEAK CHICKEN ALEXANDER PECAN-ENCRUSTED SALMON

**Price:** \$30.00 per person (Please make checks payable to: NYS-CDC.)

To pay Chapter dues for **2019**, please add **\$30.00** to your total.

Send reservation form and check to: **Chris Costigan** (phone: 518-884-2943)  
153 Paisley Road  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020-2109

Please make your reservation Not Later Than Tuesday, December 4.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Choices: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of persons attending: \_\_\_\_\_

- | Qty   | Menu Item              |
|-------|------------------------|
| _____ | Flat Iron Steak        |
| _____ | Chicken Alexander      |
| _____ | Pecan-Encrusted Salmon |



New York State Capital District Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
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*The NYS Capital District Chapter and the Military Officers Association of America are non-partisan member organizations that honor, assist, and advocate for all who serve and have served honorably in the uniformed services of the United States of America.*

## MOAA ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTIONAL - REPORT

By Chris Costigan, CDR USN Ret., Chapter 1<sup>st</sup> VP



On November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, I had the opportunity and privilege to attend the 2018 MOAA Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, with plenty of sunshine and temperatures in the low 80s. The two-day meeting consisted of annual report presentation by MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), which covered MOAA accomplishments over the past year, such as the 2.6 pay increase, as well as some short falls, such as the repeal of the widow's tax. In addition, there were numerous break-out sessions that included question/answer forum with MOAA national leadership, chapter roundtable discussions, the new blended retirement system, and a discussion regarding the new dental and vision plans available for retirees this year (don't ask me which plan is preferable as I am still trudging my way through each option). It was a fantastic opportunity to meet chapter members from all across the country and discuss best practices for membership and recruitment, community service, and legislative advocacy. My favorite moment was when I had the distinct honor of accepting the 5 Star Level of Excellence Award for the Capital District Chapter; this was an especially proud moment for me to accept this on behalf of all the hard work our Chapter's leadership and members do each year to be a viable chapter and to live the MOAA motto of "Never Stop Serving". Thank you all for what you do, and, if you get a chance to attend an annual national meeting in the future, please do so.



*Admiral Walt Doran and Chris reconnected at the convention – the Admiral is always looking out for us!*

## LOCAL EVENTS OF INTEREST

### WWII 75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION EVENTS AT THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

Friday, Dec 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Observance

Thursday, Jan 17 - Battle of Monte Cassino

Tuesday, Jan 22 - Battle of Anzio

Thursday, Jan 31 - Battle of Kwajalein

### WEST POINT BAND UPCOMING EVENTS

#### West Point Holiday Show

Dec 1 & 2, 1:30 pm, Eisenhower Hall Theatre, USMA West Point

*This concert is free and open to the public. No tickets are required, but please RSVP*

#### Concert Band Winter Series

Jan 19, 2:00 pm, Eisenhower Hall Theatre, USMA West Point [snow date – Jan 20]