

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

Volume 12, Issue 6, Nov-Dec 2021



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5-Star Chapter – 2020,  
2017 & 2018



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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.*

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

As the Holiday season rapidly approaches with a focus on family and friends, I would like to take a moment to reflect upon our membership in the “MOAA Family”. The MOAA Family steadfastly maintains its mission to preserve and protect earned benefits for our uniformed services, retirees, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through advocacy, leadership, education and service, no matter what the world throws at it. As with any family, the benefits reaped require attention and effort by all family members. How is this accomplished? The key is “the I & I” formula—be **informed** and **involved**. Keep current with the pertinent issues MOAA is advocating for via their website and/or Military Officer magazine. Let your representatives in the House and Senate know you support MOAA initiatives, and get involved with Chapter activities and maybe give the gift of your leadership as a Chapter Officer or Board Member.

Happy Holidays to you all, family!

*Chris Costigan*

**NEVER STOP SERVING**

**January 17** is the deadline for submitting **news articles, photos, bio's, book reviews, or stories** for the *next* issue. If you know of a military or veteran event in our area, have a “war story” to tell, a “shout-out” for a volunteer helping veterans, or a review praising or panning a military-themed movie or book, please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at [ammmemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammmemole@gmail.com). THANKS!

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS



**We cordially invite *all* members to join us for our annual CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY PARTY AND BUSINESS MEETING on Sunday, DECEMBER 12, 1330 - 1600 hours at WHEATFIELDS Bistro & Wine Bar, 54 Crossing Blvd, Clifton Park**

YES, another new venue! Wheatfields is located conveniently in a shopping center between I-87 Exit 9, Route 146, and Route 9 in Clifton Park, between Big Lots and Kohls. The menu choices are:

- Steak Tips & Seasonal Vegetables
- Linguine & Clams
- Chicken & Sausage Scarpetta
- Eggplant Rollatini



INCLUDED: bread, herb butter, salad, non-alcoholic beverage, and, for dessert – *Tiramisu!*

The luncheon reservation form is at the [very end](#) of this newsletter. **PLEASE NOTE:** Due to inflation, the Board of Directors voted to raise the per-person rate we collect for luncheons to **\$35**, up from \$30, which we were able to maintain for almost a decade. The new charge enables the Chapter to cover meal prices and an 18% - 20% gratuity, depending on the venue, and makes more venues affordable.

**REMINDER:** *If you plan to attend our meeting, please get your reservation and, preferably, your payment to Treasurer AL MEMOLE NOT LATER THAN **Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**. The restaurant needs a final count and meal selection a week in advance of our meeting. If you plan to pay "at the door," please at least send Al your reservation by the due date. Thanks!*

**PROGRAM:** Per Chapter By-Laws, we will present our annual business report to the members present and members will vote on the slate of candidates volunteering for Chapter Officer and Board of Directors positions for 2022-23. Consequently, we do *not* have a guest speaker. We were hoping to have a rep from Toys For Tots, but have not heard back from them as of this writing. **We still want to support our local Toys For Tots, so you may bring *new, unwrapped* toys to the meeting, which we will bring to a collection site, OR, you may bring toys on your own to a collection site of your choice.**

### **HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → TOYS FOR TOTS (TFT)**

Several years ago, our Chapter opted to forego the traditional grab-bag at our annual Christmas Party and donate toys for needy children through the TFT program. The grab-bag was great fun, but many members acknowledged that we really didn't need to give each other inexpensive gifts. So we embraced this worthy, military-sponsored local charity. The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots mission is to collect new, unwrapped toys each year between October and December, and distribute them as Christmas gifts to needy children within a designated operating area. Last year, Capital Region TFT gave away **363,133 toys** to **206,128 children!** Not surprisingly, the Capital Region TFT Campaign was named USMC Toys for Tots National Campaign of the Year; two Marines assigned as Coordinators – Vinny Roman and Patrick Lurenz – earned National Marine LCO Coordinators of the Year honors.

*Continued on next page*

Collection of toys has been underway for a month and a half. **The last pick up from collection points is Dec 17**, and distribution of gifts will be made between Dec 3 and Dec 21. **Chapter members may contribute in one of two ways (or both): donating money or donating toys.** Our Chapter Board voted to donate \$100, as provided in our operating budget. You may also donate personally online through the Capital Region TFT website (see below). You may bring new, unwrapped toys to our meeting OR to *any* of the participating toy collection sites, also listed on the Capital Region TFT website. Sites include just about every Dunkin' Donut shop in the area, including one on Route 9 and one off Route 146 by I-87 exit 9, not far from Wheatfields. TFT accepts toys for children up to about 16 years old, but will not accept or distribute realistic looking weapons and gifts with food. For more information, check the Capital Regio TFT website at <https://albany-ny.toysfortots.org>

**CAPITAL REGION UPCOMING TFT EVENTS**

- 11/27/2021 - Stuff The Niskayuna Fire Truck
- 11/27/2021 - Waterford Christmas Parade
- 11/28/2021 - Stuff the Truck Five Below Latham
- 11/29/2021 - Broadalbin Christmas Parade
- 12/03/2021 - Ballston Spa Parade
- 12/04/2021 - Dirty Sweatshirts Paintball
- 12/04/2021 - Keller Williams Capital District Stuff the Van
- 12/04/2021 - Prescott Foundation Winter Hangarland
- 12/05/2021 - Stuff the Truck Five Below Saratoga
- 12/11/2021 - STACK'D Nutrition Collection
- 12/11/2021 - Southern Distribution Convoy
- 12/12/2021 - Northern Distribution Convoy
- 12/17/2021 - Quick Response Lights Collection
- 12/18/2021 - Quick Response Lights Collection
- 12/18/2021 - Alan Action Toy Drive Gala

**Chapter News and other local items of interest**


- **WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CHAPTER MEMBER!** A hearty welcome to **Edward E. Balaban**, LT USNR (Ret). Ed is a MOAA Life Member who returned a few years ago to the NYS Capital Region from Arizona where he is a member in good standing of their Chapter.
- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES for 2022.** Annual Chapter dues are still **\$30**. There are *THREE* options to pay annual dues: (1) Include your payment as part of your luncheon reservation or pay at the door when you attend a luncheon; (2) Mail a check, *payable to NYS CDC MOAA*, either directly to Treasurer, Al Memole, at 8 Rose Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144, or to our Chapter PO Box in Waterford; and *now* (3) **Pay by credit or debit card online through the MOAA website.** You can find instructions for paying online in our May-June 2021 newsletter on page 7. Quick link to the newsletter here: [https://cdnymoa.org/CDC-MOAA\\_Newsletter\\_2021-06\\_WEBversion.pdf](https://cdnymoa.org/CDC-MOAA_Newsletter_2021-06_WEBversion.pdf)

• **CANDIDATES FOR CHAPTER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR 2022-23**

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT	CANDIDATE
President	Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN, RET	<b>Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	<i>VACANT</i>	<b>Kathy E. Gates, COL USA, RET</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	<i>VACANT</i>	
Secretary	Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET	<b>Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET</b>
Treasurer	Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET	<b>Pat Piccirilli, LTC USAR, RET</b>
Board Mbr 1	Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR, USNR, RET	<b>Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR, USNR, RET</b>
Board Mbr 2	<i>Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz, MAJ USA, RET</i>	<b><i>Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz, MAJ USA, RET</i></b>
Board Mbr 3	<i>Anthony J. Ficara, COL USA, RET</i>	<b><i>Anthony J. Ficara, COL USA, RET</i></b>
Board Mbr 4	Kathy E. Gates, COL USA, RET	<b><i>Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN, RET</i></b>
Board Mbr 5	<i>Martin Leukhardt, RADM USNR, RET</i>	<b><i>Martin Leukhardt, RADM USNR, RET</i></b>
Board Mbr 6	<i>Edmund M. Scheiber Jr., Lt Col USAF, RET</i>	<b><i>Edmund M. Scheiber Jr., Lt Col USAF, RET</i></b>
Board Mbr 7	VACANT	<b>Vincent Memole Jr., LTC USAR, RET</b>
Board Mbr 8	VACANT	

*Italics denotes Past Presidents.*

- R.I.P. FLOYD MILBANK** We were deeply saddened to learn that our friend and comrade, Floyd L. Milbank, Jr., CDR USNR Ret., and Korea War vet, passed away at home on October 29. Floyd was a long-time member of our Chapter and served as Chapter President at the end of the millennium. He and his lovely wife, Pepper, were regular attendees at our meetings. Tall, dignified, yet jovial, Floyd embodied the ideals of a military officer. Our deepest condolences to Pepper and their family at their loss. Funeral services will be held Saturday, **Nov 20** at 11 a.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 15 Ridge Place, Latham. A celebration on life and interment will be held in the spring or summer of 2022, at Mountain Grove Memorial Church, Hulett's Landing. Memorial donations may be made to either church.


- WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™ – Update.** As of November 15 there were **6,280** wreaths sponsored for the Solomon Cemetery. That is 44.5% of the wreaths needed for all the graves. **7,820 more wreaths are needed!** Get your families and friends to sponsor wreaths *through our Chapter*. You may sponsor wreaths by mailing your payment along with the form on page 3 of the Sep-Oct newsletter to Wreaths Across America (WAA) at their Maine address, *or*, through the [WAA website](#) following the instructions on page 4 of that newsletter. The cost to sponsor a single wreath is \$15. Our Chapter's WAA group code is **NY0087P**. This year's local wreath-laying event will be held at the Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, 200 Duell Rd, Schuylerville, NY on Saturday, **December 18**. A memorial ceremony is planned at the cemetery on December 18 at 12:00 pm prior to laying wreaths. *We encourage everyone to attend the ceremony and help place wreaths on gravesites, if you are able.*

- **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT.** *(submitted by Pat Piccirilli)*

The latest edition of the **MOAA newsletter** cites the following three important issues as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2021-2022 works its way out of Conference- this is the last step in the legislative process.

1. **COLA:** Your cost-of-living adjustment of 5.9% is the largest in decades, and as that figure rises, the potential for Congress to leverage COLA reductions in your earned benefit to pay for other programs grows alongside it.

MOAA kept its members informed throughout the process, not just with monthly COLA Watch updates but related reading on inflation and the hard-fought history of the current COLA system. But in real numbers, what could a change to the system mean to your bank account – not just this year or next, but in the coming decades?

2. **Medical billet cuts:** recently released DoD report to Congress gave us the first glimpse at how medical billet cuts might impact individual military treatment facilities (MTFs) but offers few details on specific positions to be cut or mitigation plans for impacted beneficiaries.

Section 721 of the House bill – which has already passed its chamber – would halt DoD’s plan to cut medical billets for a year following the enactment of the FY 2022 NDAA. It also would require a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the analyses used to support billet cut plans, including an evaluation of medical manpower requirements and the effect of billet cuts on local health care network. However, the Senate version of the bill, at this point, does not reflect the language that is in the House version.

3. **Spouse employment:** this topic repeatedly makes headlines, yet the unemployment and underemployment rates remain unchanged – or get worse, due to the pandemic’s impact on women in the workforce. Military spouses are more educated than their civilian counterparts, according to a 2018 White House report, with a greater percentage of this population having college degrees or some level of college completed. Couple this with the number of resources and programs available to the military spouse community and one might think unemployment can’t possibly still be in the double-digit range.

It's time to pass the **Jobs and Childcare for Military Families Act** (S. 1532). This bill would expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to incentivize businesses to hire military spouses and create dependent care flexible spending accounts (FSAs) for military families to reserve pre-tax dollars from their paychecks to cover out-of-pocket childcare expenses (a benefit provided to their federal civilian counterparts).

**The Legislative Action Center is calling for renewed advocacy concerning the following issues:**

-Increase VGLI and SGLI from \$400,000 to \$500,000.

-Support for Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform legislation.

-Fix the Tricare Young Adult coverage gap.

-Establish a Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) to decrease food insecurity for junior service members and finally,

-Support the Major Richard Starr Act which would provide concurrent receipt of a full earned retirement as well as disability compensation from the VA.



**So it is requested that you contact your Congressional legislators by phone, postal mail, or click on the link at the end of this sentence to go to the MOAA site to send an email message. Thank you.** <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/app/write-a-letter?1&engagementId=513160>

- **OUR LAST LUNCHEON MEETING, OCTOBER 10.** This was the first luncheon we've ever held at *The Ripe Tomato American Grill* and the FIRST one outside of the Edison Club in many years. A pretty good turnout: **16** members and spouses and 1 guest speaker made a tight fit in what looked to be a long enclosed porch. The ambience was definitely "rustic", but clean, bright, and pleasant. The fare was 'fairly' good - better than what we had at our last luncheon at the Club. The staff was accommodating, but short-handed and noticeably overwhelmed by the influx of diners. Yet, service was good, despite that they completely forgot to bring rolls (which saved calories) and coffee. We would not rule out a return visit, but hopefully in a larger room on a less busy day!

We had a wonderful guest speaker: **Michelle Viola-Straight** [photo at right], Director of Community Relations for the Saratoga County Veterans & Community Housing Coalition (VCHC), which runs the Guardian House and the Vet House for homeless female and male veterans, respectively. Michelle, herself a proud mom of two sons serving in the armed forces, reviewed the many things that the VCHC is doing to assist needy vets. Their most challenging need right now is to build a home for homeless female vets and their children. *Sadly, there is no such facility in NY and no VA or government funding authorized to house veteran mothers with children.* It seems to be prohibited by law or regulation. So, the VCHC is trying to raise \$500,000 on their own to build a two-family home, which they've dubbed "Foreverly House".



[A side note: While Skip Bebernitz attended MOAA's annual national convention in October, he had an opportunity to ask the current Secretary of the VA about their restrictions on funding housing for veterans and their minor children. The Secretary wasn't aware of that and said he would look into it. No word from him yet, but ... you never know. Now that's real Advocacy In Action!]

**If you would like to help the VCHC effort**, contributions can be made to: Foreverly House, Veterans & Community Housing Coalition, 20 Prospect Street Building 2 Suite 313, Ballston Spa, NY 12020, or contact Cheryl Hage Perez at [chp@vchcnny.org](mailto:chp@vchcnny.org).

## NYS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS CONVENTION

Around 40 attendees from the eight member chapters of the State Council met for its 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention October 1-3 at the Double Tree Inn in Syracuse. Everyone had a great time chatting and laughing with old and new friends from around our great state. The Council was honored by the presence of **CAPT Frank J. ("Tank") Michael, USN (Ret.)** [photo at right], MOAA's Program Director for Council & Chapter Affairs. Frank spoke at the annual business meeting and at the installation banquet on Saturday night. At the Council business meeting, he provided updates on MOAA priorities, programs, such as the Quarterly Incentive Program to assist chapters, and issues, such as recruiting, retention, and advocacy. He briefly summarized the main points for the general audience at the banquet and injected some humor by recounting how he got his nickname – which we will not repeat here! At the business meeting, Council officers reported on the fiscal and operational status of the Council, which continues to do quite well. Reps from each Chapter also gave short summaries of their issues and activities over the past year, revealing extraordinary efforts and innovations that kept chapters up and running amid the ever-changing array of COVID restrictions.



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The Council elected a new slate of officers at the business meeting, and they were installed at the banquet. Our own **Skip Bebernitz** was elected and sworn in as **Council President!** Skip replaces the energetic *LTC Peggy Phillips, USA (Ret.)* from the Southern Tier Chapter, who did a magnificent job over the past four years maintaining the momentum created by her predecessor, COL Ben Margolius. *Lt Col Norma Weissend, USAF (Ret.)* from the Genesee Valley Chapter replaced Skip as Council Vice



*"Tank" administers the oath of office to Skip and Norma*

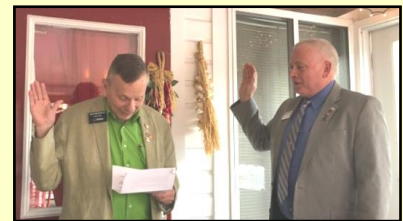
President. *Lt Col Suzann Hensley, USAF (Ret.)*, from Central New York Chapter is continuing as Secretary, and *Lt Col Jamie Scotland, USAF (Ret.)*, Western NY Chapter, continues as the Council's Treasurer. Our own Chapter President, **Chris Costigan, was reelected as Eastern**

**Regional VP!** Chris was unable to attend the convention due to work commitments (the nerve!), so Skip swore him in at our Chapter meeting the following week.



*Al Memole, Ralph Folger, Skip Bebernitz*

**Next year's Council of Chapters Convention will be the 50<sup>th</sup>!** No other State council has had 50 consecutive conventions – New York leads them all. The Council wants to do it big! But as of today, the Council has not selected a location or venue. Suggestions included a resort near Tonawanda near Buffalo, Alexandria Bay on the St. Lawrence River, Fort Drum (Hoo-ah!), Lake Placid, and Fort Ticonderoga. So, the Council tasked the Chapters to come up with ideas and submit them by **December 5<sup>th</sup>**. This task applies



*Pres. Bebernitz swears in VP Costigan at our Chapter meeting*

to all members so: **Where do you think the convention should be held?** If you have a suggestion, please let one of the Chapter officers or board members know, or write it in on the luncheon reservation form.



*Photos by Norma*



**HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE 50<sup>TH</sup>!!**

## CHAPTER MEETINGS PLANNED FOR 2022

**\* PRINT AND SAVE THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

*Meeting dates, times, and locations are always subject to change. Changes will be posted in newsletters.*

JANUARY – none	JULY – none
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>AUGUST</b>
5 – <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1000-1200 hrs., NYS Military Museum, Saratoga Springs	<b>TBD– Board Meeting</b> , tentatively at Scheiber’s house on Lake George
13 – <b>Chapter Luncheon Meeting</b> , TBD	SEPTEMBER – none
MARCH – none	<b>OCTOBER</b>
<b>APRIL</b>	9 – <b>Chapter Luncheon Meeting</b> , TBD
3 – <b>Chapter Luncheon Meeting</b> , TBD	<b>NOVEMBER</b>
MAY – none	5 – <b>Board Meeting</b> , 1000-1200 hrs., NYS Military Museum, Saratoga Springs
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>DECEMBER</b>
12 – <b>Chapter Luncheon Meeting</b> , TBD	11 – <b>Annual Xmas/Holiday Party &amp; Business Meeting</b> , TBD

## Luncheon Reservation Form

Date: **DECEMBER 12, 2021**

Location: **WHEATFIELDS, Clifton Park, NY**

Time: **1:30PM** - Social Mixer  
2:00PM – Dinner

*Where should the Council of Chapters hold its 2022 convention?  
Write your suggestion here:*

**Price: \$35 per person** (Please make checks payable to: **NYS-CDC MOAA.**)

*To also pay your Chapter dues for **2022**, you may add **\$30** to your total.*

*Please make your reservation **Not Later Than Saturday, December 4***

Send reservation form and check to: Al Memole  
8 Rose Lane  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
(OR call Al at: 518-641-8664)

### Qty Menu Choices

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Steak Tips & Vegetables

**Number of persons attending:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Chicken & Sausage Scarpetta

\_\_\_ Linguine & Clams

\_\_\_ Eggplant Rollatini