



# The Family Tree

August 2015 Vol. V, Issue I

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**How to file a 990**

**Meet the President**

**Troopons**



## Mission Statement

In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

## Vision Statement

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

## The Family Tree

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## [ This month ]

- 1 Meet the President**  
**Meet Pearl McIntyre — Our New Department President**
- 3 What you need to know about Membership**  
**Our Department Secretary-Treasurer answers FAQs about Membership**
- 6 From the Family**  
**This month, we hear from the American Legion Department Commander — Jim Ramos**
- 11 Troopons**  
**Support Our Troops — by clipping coupons!**



# FROM THE PRESIDENT



PEARL MCINTYRE

[president@alaf.org](mailto:president@alaf.org)

First, I must thank Maureen Costello for the beautiful Installation Ceremony at Convention. She made my day very special. Thank you also to Unit 162 for the beautiful bouquet and champagne for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I was also so proud to have my family there with me on that special day, along with many friends that traveled a long way to come for my installation.

It has been an amazing start of the year that I am embarking on. My first stop was to visit Unit 254 in North Port for their installation of Officers. What a surprise when they brought out a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake for us! It had my pin printed on it and what a beautiful cake!

Next, it was off to Safety Harbor to participate in the Fourth of July parade. It is the only parade put on solely by an American Legion Auxiliary Unit, Unit 238.

It had a splendid turnout. The streets were lined with spectators and many children waving the flag. Then, I was honored to participate in the program held afterwards. The members of Unit 238 also made our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary special with a day at the spa and a massage for both my husband and myself. It was really a treat. Thank you Unit, Post, Sons of the Legion and Legion Riders of Post 238 for a special weekend. While in the area, I dropped in at Unit 275 in Dunedin and chatted with our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Kelli Becraft.

Next, it was seeing the girls off to Girls State. The Department Historian, Gail Dupuis; Membership Chairman Ann King-Smith and myself followed the buses to Tallahassee. It is a very long drive, but well worth it when you see 300 girls getting settled in for a week of



learning about our government. I addressed them at their Opening Ceremony and handed out Blue Star Banners to the girls that have relatives on active duty. We also visited Unit 13 in Tallahassee and was given a nice tour of their grounds by the Post

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander and the Unit President. My next stop was to Auxiliary Unit 141 in West Palm Beach. There, I had the honor of installing their new officers. Thanks for the delicious meal that was

— continued on page 2

— continued from page 2

served after the ceremony. The next day, it was off to the VA Hospital in West Palm Beach for their Christmas in July party. They held this for the veterans in the hospital. There were such a great group of ladies, dedicated to serving our veterans by giving out wheelchair bags to all that attend-

ed. My husband, Gail Dupuis, Linda Grevera, the Hospital Representative and myself then took two carts loaded with goodies to give to the veterans who could not make it to the party.

I attended the Installation of Officers at my Post home 162 and it was a great crowd. Then I was heading

up and down the East Coast, visiting Units 163 (Eau Gallie), 142 (Pompano Beach) and 318 (Port St. Lucie) for their Installations of Officers. Now, [as I write this] I am off to Boot Camp for a working weekend with all your Department Chairmen. If you have any special events coming up,

please call or email me so that I can get as many as I can in my calendar. See you at workshop! Until then, stay safe and happy!

—**President Pearl McIntyre,  
Department President**

## A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE NEC

**Our Past Department President gives a special thank you to those who were supportive during her term of presidency.**

**Erna Schwabe**  
**nec@alaf.org**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the support you have given me as your Department President. (Hard to believe that I am now one of the “OLD GRAY MARE’S”!

We had an amazing year for our Auxiliary. What makes our Auxiliary great is because of all the wonderful Ladies who devote so much time volunteering and “doing” to keep us strong.

My President’s Char-

ity “CARING FOR COTA KIDS” was such a success because of you.

As I move onto being your Department of Florida NEC, I ask for your continued support for President Pearl. New beginnings and going forward!

Let’s remember: **WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, AND WHY WE MATTER.**

Thank all of you for what you do.

— **Erna Schwabe,  
Department NEC**



NEC Erna Schwabe (2nd from left) being escorted to the podium at Texas Department Convention in Beaumont.



# FROM THE SECRETARY



**KIMBERLY SULLIVAN**

[secretary@alaf.org](mailto:secretary@alaf.org)

Welcome to our new program year, 2015-2016! We have had many questions about membership, so I'll try to answer the most common questions here.

**Q: When will Department start processing 2016 renewals?**

A: July 1, 2015

**Q: When will we be able to send in new members for 2016?**

A: September 1, 2015. However, do NOT hold an application for more than 20 days. If you receive it prior to August 11, it will count as a 2015 new application.

**Q: Can we still renew for 2015?**

A: Absolutely, any time! And you can pay back year dues as well.

**Q: What are our membership goals for 2016?**

A: National set goals for each Unit. These can be found on the membership page under programs at [www.alaf.org](http://www.alaf.org).

**Q: If one of our Unit's members renews online, how and when will we be notified and paid?**

A: National is creating an ALAMIS report for Units to pull that will tell you who paid online, and when. Units could run this report as often as they wish. If your Unit is not an ALAMIS user, I strongly recommend you become one. The schedule for paying Units is still in the works, but we should hear something in August. As of 7/28/15, only 8 members from Florida have paid renewals online. A few more unsuccessfully tried, but typed in wrong zip codes, used cards other than MasterCard or VISA, or did not have money available to spend on the card.

**Q: How can I get my 2016 membership cards?**

A: Several Units have still not yet done at least one of the following: completed a valid 2015-2016 officer list; paid poppy proceeds; cleared invoices; and/or paid their membership notice. If you do not have your cards, simply call your District President, or Department to find out what you owe for us to release your cards. (applies to Units: 11, 26, 29, 76, 78, 99, 118, 147, 168, 194, 199, 204, 209, 213, 215, 221, 258, 287, 293, 296, 299, 358, and 375)

As always, call the office with any questions. See you at Workshop, August 14-16!

— Kimberly Sullivan,  
Department Secretary-Treasurer

# From the Units

## Unit 188

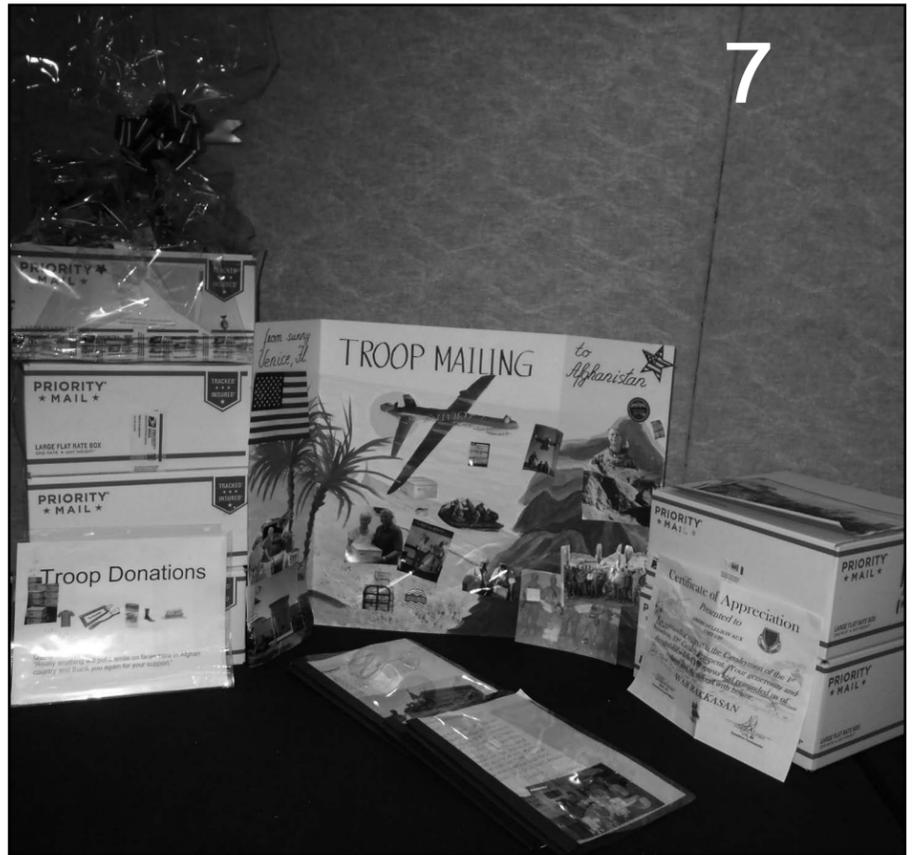


*Photos 1-6: At Post 88's Fourth of July Celebration, the Ladies Auxiliary provided a bouncy house with a water slide and crafts for the children to make & take home, along with snow cones and root beer floats.*





*Unit 159*



*Photo 7: Unit 159 reveals its display supporting the troops in Afghanistan for the 2015 Department Convention.*

# FROM THE AMERICAN LEGION

# FAMILY



## A WORD FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

**Jim Ramos**

**commander@floridalegion.org**

The Family Tree:  
Yes, we are family. Pearl and I can make a difference with the Auxiliary and Legion.

I welcome Pearl and already we have been in a parade together on the 4th of July in Safety Harbor, Post 238.

We will continue to help our Veterans

and their families and Pearl and I have made the Fisher House our charity of choice.

What a difference we make for our Veterans.

Thank you for the Auxiliary.

— **Jim Ramos,**  
**Department**  
**Commander**



Commander Ramos (right) with Department President Pearl McIntyre at Post 238.



Commander Ramos and Peesident Pearl pose for a picture, just before the Safety Harbor parade at 8:45 a.m.

# GREETINGS FROM THE DETACHMENT COMMANDER

**Joe Eckenrode**  
firejoe52@gmail.com



Hello! I'm Joe Eckenrode, Detachment Commander of this great State of Florida.

I have been a member for 31 years my eligibility is through my father who was a Korean War Veteran. I am a proud member of Squadron 120 of Holly Hill in the 17th District.

After convention, we were off with a BANG! It was my privilege to be with Commander Jim and President Pearl as we were honored to ride in the Safety Harbor Independence Day Parade.

A HUGE THANK YOU goes out to Ruth Burgess who has coordinated this event for many years. What a joy it was to see all the flag waving spectators and so many patriotic Americans young and old.

I am Proud to share with

all of you that this is the 20th year the Detachment of Florida is at an all time high with over 17,000 Sons members. We volunteered over 275,000 man hours and with this we were able to donate over \$900,000.00 to Veterans, their charities and our Community.

I look forward to meeting and working with all you hard working Auxiliary members and a HEARTFELT THANK YOU for all you do!

God Bless the American Legion Family Tree and God Bless America. Serving Veterans and their Charities.

Respectfully Yours,

— Joe Eckenrode, Dept. Detachment Commander

# Think outside the box: Ways Units can help their local schools

By Eleanor Amato  
education@alafl.org

School bells ringing, children singing, it's back to school again!

This is the time when everyone takes the opportunity of sales for school supplies. Caution! Check with schools first.

Last year I concentrated on our Education program and when I contacted schools they advised me that some of the supplies they received they could not use. The crayons from the Dollar Tree do not work. The teachers throw them away. They prefer Crayola.

The traditional back packs cannot be used in some Elementary Schools. They need to use the drawstring type. They also said they get a bit of supplies from corporations in the area. I am not saying that they do not need the supplies, I am just saying check with the schools before you spend the money.

We will still be doing 10 for Education. This is sanction from National. Ask the school clinic if they can use anything; you will be surprised. One day a

boy came to school without shoes. When the teacher asked where his shoes were, He replied "they hurt". The counselor took him to Payless and bought him a pair of shoes with her own money.

When my unit heard of this, we purchased shoes in various sizes and delivered to two elementary schools. If you are going to give a gift card, give it to a store that sells shoes only in the event the parent wants to buy something other than the shoes.

What I'm asking is "Think outside the box". We can help in so many ways.

Please document what you do for the school that is different. I would like to hear about it. I will try to keep you informed as to what is happening around.

Thanks for all you do and God bless you.

For God and Country,

**Eleanor Amato,**  
— **Education**  
**Chairman,**  
**Department of**  
**Florida**

## Calendar of Events

EVENT	DATE
Workshop	Aug 14-16
National Convention	Aug 28-Sept 3
Begin Accepting 2016 New Members	Sept 1
National Day of Remembrance	Sept 11
District 1 School of Instruction	Sept 12
District 6 School of Instruction	Sept 12
District 12 School of Instruction	Sept 12
Membership Renewal Notices Sent	Sept 15
POW/MIA Recognition Day	Sept 18
District 2 School of Instruction	Sept 19
District 5 School of Instruction	Sept 19
Fall Conference	Nov 13-15

For more information on upcoming events, visit our website at:  
**www.alafl.org**, under Events.

# Same-gender spouses now eligible for ALA membership

Mary “Dubbie” Buckler  
dbuckler@alaforveterans.org

On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges. The Court’s ruling requires a State to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-State.

Because of the recent Supreme Court decision mandating that all states legally recognize same-sex marriages, I am receiving many questions asking how this ruling affects membership eligibility of same-gender spouses of female Legionnaires.

In a female same-gender marriage, if one of the female spouses is a member of The American Legion (or who is eligible for membership in The American Legion and becomes a member of The American Legion, same as the membership requirement for any spouse of a wartime veteran

meeting the Legion’s eligibility criteria), then the other female spouse is eligible for membership in the Auxiliary.

The matter of same-gender spouses and membership eligibility is addressed in the ALA Dept Operations Guide. Even prior to the recent Supreme Court ruling on the universal legality of same-gender marriages, if a same-gender marriage was allowed in the state in which the department is incorporated, then the female spouse of the female veteran who is a member of The American Legion was and is eligible to become a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

If the couple moved to a state where same-gender marriages had not been recognized, they still remained members of the Legion and Auxiliary provided they remain members in good standing (paying their dues current or not being removed for disciplinary reasons). Their membership could not

have been revoked because they joined the Legion and /or Auxiliary in a state that recognized same-gender marriage and then moved to a state that that did not.

The 6/26/15 Supreme Court decision requires all states to recognize same-gender marriages, so the information in the ALA Department Operations Guide will be updated to reflect that same-gender marriages must now be recognized in all states, and that the Legion and ALA will continue to accept into membership those individuals who meet membership eligibility criteria regardless of the gender of their spouses.

The Auxiliary is incorporated as an all-female organization; males are not eligible for membership. The recent Supreme Court ruling begets the question also now being asked by some about the eligibility of individuals undergoing medical/surgical changes to become physiological females. Gender is determined

by the gender specified on the person’s driver’s license or other legal document verifying gender at the time the ALA applicant’s membership eligibility is determined. A person’s gender-specific physical body parts determine gender. If the person has not undergone the complete sex-change medical/surgical transformation and there are no official documents attesting the person’s gender at the time of application, then the person is not yet eligible for membership. The person becomes eligible for membership at such time as the gender transformation is completed and, other ALA membership eligibility criteria having been met, the person can produce documentation attesting that the person is legally classified a female.

—Mary “Dubbie” Buckler, ALA National Executive Director & National Secretary

# Steps for Filing Your Unit's IRS 990-N e-Postcard

**Step 1:** If you have never filed before or you just want a refresher, go to: [www://efile.form990.org](http://www://efile.form990.org) (Urban Institute) and watch the video/go through the tutorial.

**Step 2:** Click on the link to the 990-N form in the box in the middle of the page marked "IRS Forms Supported" or just go to [www://epostcard.form990.org](http://www://epostcard.form990.org) to begin.

**Step 3:** Be sure to have your Unit's login and password and the Unit EIN available if the Unit has filed in the past.

**Step 4:** If your Unit has never filed before, click on step 1 to register as a new user. Be sure to **WRITE DOWN** the Login ID you are assigned! You will use this each year when you file.

**Step 5:** Create your password using the following format - ALAFLUNIT \_\_\_\_, filling in the blank with your Unit #. **WRITE DOWN** your password because you will need it each time you file.

**Step 6:** If your Unit has filed before, you can begin with Step 2 on the Urban League page.

**Step 7:** Verify the filing year. It should always be 7/1 of the preceding year through 6/30 of the current year. If it's not July-June, you'll need to contact the IRS to have your fiscal year changed so you are in compliance with national.

**Step 8:** Fill in the appropriate answers to the questions:

- a. Has your Unit gone out of business?
- b. Was the Unit's gross receipts less than 50,000 for the year?
- c. Confirm the Unit's legal name
- d. Confirm the Unit's EIN

**Step 9:** Click next and fill out the information as requested.

**Step 10:** **SAVE THE PAGE**

**Step 11:** **PRINT THE PAGE** (preferably to PDF so you can save it on your computer).

**Step 12:** **CLICK SUBMIT.**

**Step 13:** Print the "Congratulations" page that shows you've submitted the return.

**Step 14:** **YOU ARE NOT DONE UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE IRS ACCEPTANCE CONFIRMATION VIA EMAIL.** You can go to the control panel on the Urban League page (button across the top of the page) to check on your returns progress.

**Step 15:** Once the Acceptance confirmation is received, **PRINT** either the email you receive or the acceptance confirmation you can see on the control page (preferably to PDF) and email to the Department - [secretary@alafl.org](mailto:secretary@alafl.org)

**Step 16:** Make sure to keep hard copies of your filing report and acceptance in your financial records for your Unit. Your District President will want to see this during her annual visit to your Unit.



# SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

## -- Bagging Instructions --

The commissaries have requested that Troopons be bagged and delivered to them as follows.

1. Cut out the coupons
2. Sort coupons into two piles by status
  - a. Expired. Not expired more than 2 months. (e.g. if today's date is 3/1/2013, you would cut out coupons with an expiration date that is not older than 1/1/2013).
  - b. Unexpired. At least two months of life left.
3. Sort each of those two piles into four piles by type:
  - a. Food items
  - b. Non-food items
  - c. Baby food/items
  - d. Pet items (like dog food)
4. Stuff them into plastic baggies.
5. Write the status (Expired or Unexpired) and the type (food, non-food, baby, or pet) on them.
6. Total the retail savings of the baggies and write it on them. This helps us track the value of the overall program.
7. Mail them to SOT as follows:

Support Our Troops ®  
P.O. Box 70  
Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0070

Only "Manufacturer's Coupons" can be used. They can be from the newspaper, dispensers in grocery stores, tear-pads, and elsewhere as long as they state "Manufacturer's Coupon" on them. No assistance vouchers. No food stamps. No store coupons. No restaurant coupons. No Internet coupons.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our military troops and their families!

Happy clipping!

Diann Dircz  
National Security Chairman  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of Florida  
239-229-2570



# Because we ♥ our heroes.

For 25 years, the Fisher House program has provided a “home away from home” for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. These homes provide free temporary lodging to military and Veterans’ families so they can be close to their loved one during a medical crisis, allowing them to focus on what’s important — the healing process.

Due to the generosity of people like you, Fisher House Foundation is able to build and help support the operation of more than 60 existing homes, the core of our mission. Additionally, our Hero Miles program assists with travel needs, and our scholarship program offers educational opportunities to military children and spouses.

With your help, we will continue to meet the needs of our military community today, and long into the future. Show your love by making a donation to Fisher House. To learn more, please visit [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org) or call (888) 294-8560.



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