



# The Ribbiting News Communique

## *Presidents Message*

Have I told you lately how much fun I am having in my travels around this great Department of Florida? ☺ I have met so many great members already and look forward to more as I continue my 'official visits' to more Districts. The hospitality, friendship, and pampering bestowed upon me has been fabulous everywhere ... which leads me to the 1<sup>st</sup> part of this month's message:



Do you recall my 'Closing Thought' from last month's Ribbiting News? Here it is again:

☺ **"A SMILE IS A CURVE THAT CAN GET A LOT OF THINGS STRAIGHT."** ☺

Do you agree? I hope so. In my journeys and conversations with members, I have found that a lot of problems/issues within Units and The American Legion Family can begin to be worked out by simply stepping back, forgetting personal differences, remembering that we are here to work together for great reasons – our veterans, our communities, and our children, and then putting smiles on our faces and work to get the jobs done. "We Are Family" ... the great American Legion Family ... let's show it in how we act, what we say, and what we do. Thanks!

**National President's Special Project: ALA FOUNDATION – Donations Needed:** On the 2011-2012 Donation Remittance Form, bottom of the right-hand column, are listed 2 special projects: "Department Pres' Project – Homeless Veterans" and "National Pres' Project." I've explained to you personally and in a previous issue of Ribbiting News about my special project of Homeless Veterans and how your donations to that account will be given out. However, you may not have heard much about the National President's Project. There is full information about

the program on National's website: [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org). Below is information to get you started on donating. ☺

### **The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation**

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation supports America's core values by providing additional resources necessary to ensure the long-term success of the American Legion Auxiliary and the success of the American Legion Auxiliary's programs and services benefiting the lives of our veterans and their families, our communities and our youth. The Foundation is a critical partner to the womanpower of the American Legion Auxiliary. Your donations to the Foundation expand the impact of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission.

**I am requesting** every Unit, and member, to consider donating to the ALA Foundation. Let's all help secure the future success of the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs. If every Unit made at least a \$5 or \$10 donation, just think of the difference we can make to the future of our great organization. So, yes ... I guess I'm begging ... please, send in donations to HQ now. Thank you so much!

**L = Learn:** Let's do a little more for the "L" in "Leap to Success" ... this month let's reflect on what the American Legion Auxiliary Emblem represents. We hear it explained during Initiation Ceremonies for new members – below is that segment of the ceremony. So if you haven't attended one in awhile, this is a refresher. ☺

### **The American Legion Auxiliary Emblem**

The emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary is your badge of distinction and honor. It stands for God and country, and the highest rights of mankind. It consists of several parts and each part has a meaning. The rays of the sun that form the background stand for the

principles of the American Legion Auxiliary: Loyalty, Justice, Freedom and Democracy – dispelling the darkness of violence, strife and evil. Unity and Loyalty are represented by the unbroken circle of blue. The field of white exemplifies the hope of Freedom. The star of blue is the emblem of service in war. It is no less the emblem of service in time of peace.

“The emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary is the emblem of Americanism. Americanism is unity of love, singleness of allegiance, practicality of purpose, care of the distressed, and the education of children, all directed to the promotion of a common good. As members of this organization, we must preach and teach the principles of Americanism. Let us not forget that to each generation comes its patriotic duty and that upon your willingness to sacrifice and endure as those before you have sacrificed and endured, rests the hope of the nation.”

**My recent travels:** I was on the road for 10 days, starting January 19<sup>th</sup>, while visiting the 14<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Districts. Phew! What a whirlwind time that was. ☺ In the 14<sup>th</sup>, District President Pat Trippe along with PDPs Beverly Evans and Alma Zeller kept me moving. There was a great dinner with Unit 154 in Marathon and then breakfast with them at The Stuffed Pig. Then ‘played tourist’ for a few hours in Key West ... had a yummy dinner at Post 28 with members from Units 28 and 168 ... lunch with members at 333 Key Largo ... dinner at Post 31 with members from lots of other greats Units from the 14<sup>th</sup> District ... visited the Miami VAMC, the Mailman Center, the Ronald McDonald House, the Miami Children’s Hospital – where I donated blood at their blood drive! – and of course had more meals in between visits. Wow!

Then came the 9<sup>th</sup> District where District President Gail Dupuis had us hopping: Judy Sessums gave us a tour of the great Sandy Nininger Veterans Home, toured the fabulous Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital, toured the Broward VA Clinic in Sunrise, had great dinners at 180 Plantation and 162 Deerfield Beach, assisted with the 9<sup>th</sup> District Oratorical held at Post 222, and also assisted with the 9<sup>th</sup> District’s great Four Chaplains Ceremony. Oh ... and yes ... if you hear that I was singing and dancing at Post 142, Pompano Beach, I cannot deny it because too many pictures were taken. ☺

Took a couple days to unpack and then repack ... and Chuck and I went to Connecticut for Chuck’s Uncle Bizzy’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party. It was terrific – saw lots of relatives we hadn’t seen in many years ... and Uncle Bizzy looked great! Oh, it was 25 to 45 degrees and no snow.

After unthawing, I headed to the 8<sup>th</sup> District where District President Barbara Field also kept me moving. PDP Ruby Bell assisted in giving us a tour of the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans’ Nursing Home – where I got to meet Mrs. Jacobson! ... visited the Sarasota VA National Cemetery ... attended a Past Presidents’ Parley luncheon with members from several Units ... enjoyed the fish fry and Dean Martin show at Post 24 ... while in Venice, Julia Griffiths took us to lunch at Sharky’s (by the beach and wharf!) – and yes, a fisherman did let me use his fishing pole to try to catch a fish to no avail – and was pampered with a pedicure before leaving! Wow!

On Valentine’s Day, I attended Unit 335, Hudson’s 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon for Lady Veterans. It was fabulous. (Does it sound like I’m eating my way around the state? I am!)

Before you hear from me again, I’ll be off on my next adventures to the 12<sup>th</sup> District, then to the Washington D.C. Conference, then to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Districts, then to National SAL Commander Jim Robert’s homecoming, and then I venture up to the panhandle. Off I go! ☺

**Year End Reports:** By the time you read this, it’ll be late February or early March ... so you know what that means ... you should be putting together all of the information for year-end reports. Unit Chairmen must get reports to District Chairmen by April 15<sup>th</sup>. District Chairmen must get reports to Department Chairmen by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Department Chairmen then get that information to me by May 15<sup>th</sup> so I can immediately consolidate everything into the Department Year-End Report to National. Please report everything that you’ve done ... even the little things add up to a lot when it’s consolidated on a statewide basis. Thanks everyone!

**Membership:** Florida can be at least 100% in membership ... I know we can do it. Come on everyone ... let’s pull together and make it happen. Membership is everyone’s responsibility. Go out and get those renewals – call those members who haven’t paid – personal contact is the best way to reach your hand out and pull members back in. On the National report, Florida has been up and down between 18<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> place the past few weeks ... we can do better than that! Remember, even 1 or 2 will make a difference. Let’s go team! Get that membership in!

Leap To Success,

Diane Rousseau  
Department President

# Chaplain's Report



Hello ALA; I must apologize for the LACK of an article in the December Communique to be included. So, I will include December's deceased names in this month's article. I have been busy the last few weeks, District 16; Unit 79 had a Chili Cook Off (I did NOT win) but had a good time. District 6 in Eustis, FL had a wonderful Four Chaplain Service, I had the honor to participate in this service. District 9 held the Southern Area Past Commanders & Presidents Ball. The next day we were in Tequesta, FL at the Boy Scouts Skills Adventure Camporee, attended there Chapel service. It was outside and it was 43 degrees! ! Legion Chaplain Bob V. helped in their service. Wonderful young men. District 16 (Madeira Beach 273) had their Four Chaplain service on the 19<sup>th</sup>. That is our next stop. I have had an opportunity to meet with several Unit Chaplain's in my travels. We, in the ALA, are blessed to have such great ladies in this position.

## Deceased List

### District # 1

Unit 193 Jones Carolyn A.

### District # 2

Unit 131 Reams, Patricia

Unit 383 Rich, Joan

### District # 4

Unit 56 Northrup, Ellen A.

Wolf, Delores D.

Unit 91 Calloway, Linda K.

### District # 5

Unit 250 Hough, Barbara

Unit 316 Sieber, Marie

### District # 6

Unit 80 Wouters, Maria

Unit 219 Bernard, Betty

Bowling, Eva M.

Labeau, Diane

Mann, Beverly

Miller, Norma J.

Smith, Leilani W.

Wilkinson, Kim

Unit 330 Mele, Jean

Stein, Karen

### District # 7

Unit 8 Fry, Sandra M.

Miller, Katharyn L.

### District # 8

Unit 69 Hersberger, Earla

Kirwan, Ann

Unit 74 Schuler, Clarice

### District # 9

Unit 142 Josey, Jackie L

Unit 157 Annacone, Theresa A.

Barnes, Ellen V.

Boetakis, Barbara A.

Whittakee, Frances S.

### District # 12

Unit 81 Vaughn, Gladys

Unit 23 Lombardo, Alice

Unit 117 Allen, Peggy A.

O'Connell, Margaret M

Penna, Helenla

Unit 126 Dixon, Carol E.

Ebbersten, Joyce

Rayborn, Connie G.

Unit 163 Kalczynski, Nancy

Niclsn, Donna

Taggart, Martha

Unit 189 Savone, Anna

### District # 13

Unit 110 McKinnon, Laura

Unit 130 Dye, Donna

Nolan, Kathi W.

Wingard, Faye D.

Unit 135 Lee, Sandra

Unit 303 Brumbaugh, Eve M.

Kress, Verna A.

Lachance, Mary

### District # 14

Unit 28 Miller Martha

### District # 15

Unit 186 Durking, Norma J.

### District # 16

Unit 79 Nickerson, Connie

Unit 119 Hardman, Marliene

Unit 273 Davis-Burke, Debra L.

Unit 275 Baver, Penny

Burkhardt, Marilyn

Calvin, Troy L.

O'Riordan, Catherine

Ryan, Marianne

Unit 305 Rathmann, Renata

Strebler, Connie

### District 17

Unit 101 Earley, Florence

Unit 120 Chevrette, Rita

McGilligot, Nancy

Mundy, Dorothy M.

Shiflett, Linda

Unit 293 Clark, Alda

Hall, Ann

Rosencrans, Lois

**Thank you for being prompt in getting these names to me so we can honor each deceased member. If I have miss-spelled someone's name, please let me know. Sometimes it is difficult read others writing. I will not be offended if you correct me. God Bless the American Legion Auxiliary.**

**Marion Vick  
ALA Department Chaplain**



# From the Secretary's Pad...



**Girls State . . .** the 2012 session is now full. All 300 applications have been awarded to Units. If your Unit missed out on participating this year and still want to contribute to the program; the Unit can make a donation to the session by mailing a check to Department marked GS donation.

We still do not have any Orientation information for the 15<sup>th</sup> District! As soon as I have that information we will post the Orientation list on the web site.

Check your Plans of Action for deadline to have completed applications to Department. Make sure all legible and complete before returning them to Department. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

**Unit Information Form . . .** All Units will receive a Unit information form listing the address we currently have on file for the Unit and asking what dues will be for the 2013 membership year. **Every Unit MUST return this form** indicating any change to the Unit address and the amount of the Unit's dues. **Remember, the dues must match what we have on file in the Unit's Constitution & Bylaws here at Department.** If what you put on the form does not match the file, we will change your form.

**Department Convention . . .** If you have not made your reservation for Department Convention, please do so. Convention will be held at the Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld from June 7, 2012 – June 10, 2012. Their reservation number is 800-266-9432 and the rate is \$129.

**Department President's Homecoming . . .** Diane's Homecoming will be held at Post 219 in Fruitland Park on April 21, 2012. The flyer for her Homecoming is included in this Communiqué and is available on the Department web site.

**Membership . . .** we have been mailing out letters to all members of Units below 75% that have not paid their dues. We are receiving many phone calls telling us they have paid their dues indicating the Units are not processing to Department in a timely fashion. You must remit dues promptly once you receive it from a member. If a member of your Unit proves to OUR office they have paid their dues we will process it and invoice the Unit.

**Do not mail applications for wives of new Legion members until you are sure the Legion has processed the new Legionnaires' dues.** We cannot process the Auxiliary member until the Legion processes the Legionnaire.

**IRS Problems . . .** In last month's Communiqué I gave the IRS address to write to change your fiscal year. You must include a cover letter listing your tax ID (EIN) request the change to July 1 – June 30 per enclosed documents and then enclose a copy of your Unit's Constitution & Bylaws highlighted where your fiscal year is to be the same as Departments and a copy of ours highlighted that it is July 1 – June 30. If you are unable to copy ours from the Unit guide you can request a copy from Department.

If your name is wrong, and most of them are, you need to write requesting that be fixed and to do that you must send a cover letter and a copy of your charter. All units must be registered with the IRS with their legal name, which is:

American Legion Auxiliary (Name on charter) Unit (Unit #) Inc. An example would be; American Legion Auxiliary Ocoee Memorial E-Unit 109 Inc. If your name is listed any other way it is incorrect and must be corrected.

All Units must renew their corporation by May. Once you have done so, mail a copy of the annual report to Department. Again, your name must appear as it does above and if it doesn't it is wrong and must be corrected.

Do not mail papers that you filed your 990 N. We need the report that shows your 990 N was accepted. Make sure your Unit name and # are on the paper when you mail it to Department. We have received many reports we are unable to identify what unit they are for.

**Please correct your Unit Guide page 12** to reflect Past Department President, Jan Croft, has moved to 1854 Hendersonville Rd, Suite A APMB3, Ashville NC 28803-2495. Jan is also recuperating from recent surgery. Get well and thinking of you thoughts can me mailed to her at her new address.

Robin Briere  
Secretary-Treasurer



# Historian News



First and foremost, please accept my apology for not being able to attend the Fall Conference last year. I heard I missed a great one. I rarely get sick, and when I do, it's a dosie. Special Thanks to PDP Shirley Fraser for conducting the Historian Class. I heard it was full. Also, a sincere apology to NEC Irma Wehrli for not being able to present her with her Scrapbook of her year, that will happen at the up coming convention.

So, as I am reading the issues of the Ribbiting News, I see our Department President Diane has been a very busy President traveling the highways and byways of our great state. So Unit and District Presidents, why have I not heard from you. Please, Please, Please send me pictures, programs, newsletters etc. of when you have functions that President Diane is attending.

I also need to know what your Units are doing throughout the year. The History that I have to write is not only what the Dept. President is doing, but what WE are doing

throughout the state. I do get a few newsletters from districts, but I really do need more information about the great stuff we are doing, so Please, Please send me your Unit and Districts functions and programs.

For those of you working on your Scrapbook for the Scrapbook Competition, please remember that the first rule is that you **MUST** have submitted a Traditional History according to the rules. **NO ACCEPTIONS!!!!**

I have enclosed the Plan of Action in this Ribbiting News so that everyone can have the information, Please Follow The Rules, if you have any questions please contact me at [historian@alaf1.org](mailto:historian@alaf1.org) I am truly looking forward to reading some great Histories and looking at all the different Scrapbooks.

Debie Showalter  
Dept. of Fla. Historian

Hard to believe that it's only a couple of months and we will be handing in our year end reports and making recommendations for those special awards. While doing this please remember to recognize all those hard working members of your Unit and consider recommending someone for the Helen Gardner Unit Member of the Year Award and please don't forget about those awesome female military members and veterans.

On Saturday, February 18th, I was honored to join President Diane and District 12 President Ann on a bus trip to the West Palm VA Medical Center as part of the National Hospitalized Veteran appreciation week. While there, Auxiliary members of the 12th District visited with many of the residents and patients and brought lots of wonderful gifts to distribute to both the men and women. They all loved it. Several of us also got to visit with PDP Linda McKeon, who was appreciative of our visit and the poppy corsage and visit from Frieda the Frog. Please keep Linda in your prayers.

Dorothy Walsh, Chairman  
Department of Florida  
Past Presidents Parley

Please make a note of Wanda Brandt's new  
phone Number 904-612-7687.





**LEAP ON OVER  
TO THE HOMECOMING OF  
DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT DIANE ROUSSEAU**



**Saturday, April 21, 2012**

John Gella Memorial, American Legion Post 219  
194 West Fountain Street  
Fruitland Park, FL 34731

\$25.00 per person

Cocktails at 5:00 p.m.

Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Tropical & Casual Attire welcome!

Entertainment to follow.



Area hotels:

Sleep Inn, 2476 N. Citrus Blvd. (27/441), Leesburg. (352) 326-9002 \$55 and up.  
{Go to [www.sleepinn.com](http://www.sleepinn.com) for best prices for Advance Purchase, Senior Rates, Gov't Rate, etc.}

Stay & Save Inn, 1308 N. 14th Street (27/441), Leesburg. (352) 787-0500 \$45  
{Mention American Legion for this \$45 price or talk to Ray.}

The Leesburg area and The Villages have others that you can find on-line for those who have discount plans with certain hotel chains.

Also, Lake Griffin State Park is located at 3089 U.S. Hwy. 27/441 in Fruitland Park. They have camping/RV/Trailer sites. (352) 360-6760



Make your reservations by April 1st. {Only 100 seats available!}

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Unit/Post/SAL \_\_\_\_\_

# of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ at \$25 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed

Dinner Choice: Pork Roast \_\_\_\_\_

Prime Rib - Rare \_\_\_\_\_; Medium-Rare \_\_\_\_\_; Medium \_\_\_\_\_; Well \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Chuck Rousseau

Mail check & this form to Chuck at: 5250 Byron Road, Fruitland Park, FL 34731-6101

# REFLECTIONS

*"Sometimes the answers we seek are in our own backyard."*

Seven members from The Department of Florida attended the Southern Area Mission Training Conference held in Mobile Alabama. Mary Heenan, Shirley Fraser, Robin Briere, Lois McFall, Erna Schwabe, Gerri Bailey and myself. My expectation was to obtain information that would make me a more informed Auxiliary member.

I can say that I did acquire some information that I was not aware of, but the most prevalent thing I learned was that THE DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA HAS OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS IN PLACE TO EDUCATE AND INFORM OUR MEMBERS. The information presented at the Southern Area Mission Training Conference was what we present at a Department Workshop. National Officers and Chairmen were the presenters and I feel that our Department Chairman do a more effective job of presenting the programs of The American Legion Auxiliary.

Department Boot Camp trains our Department Chairman. Under the guidance of Past Department Presidents and Department Secretary they prepare their Plans of Actions and presentations. The Department Chairman then presents the programs to the District Officers and District program chairman at Department Workshop. The next step is the District Chairman then presents the program Plans of Action to Unit Chairman and Unit members at the District School of Instructions. This progression in training allows every Auxiliary member in the State of Florida to have the information to successfully implement the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. Department also offers to its members the ABC (Auxiliary Basic Concepts) School. This class informs members on how to run a meeting, the duties of Unit Officers and protocol do's and don'ts. If a District wants

to have an ABC School all you have to do is contact the Department Leadership Chairman. Break-out sessions are also offered at Fall Conference and Department Convention. For these education opportunities to be successful District Chairman and District Officers need to attend Department Workshop, and Unit Officers, Unit Chairman and Unit Members need to attend District Schools of Instructions. If you have attended one of these events in the past and feel you don't need to go again—WRONG! Each year could bring changes to programs, IRS rules and regulations, etc. We need to stay informed.

Am I sorry I spent the time and money to go to the Southern Area Mission Training? Absolutely Not! I did receive useful information, but most of all I came away with a great sense of pride in The Department of Florida on the educational opportunities we offer the Auxiliary membership of our State. If you want to be a more informed Auxiliary member and have the ability to assist your Unit in carrying out the programs that benefit our Veterans, their families, children & youth and your community—ATTEND THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES! With The Schools of Instructions and ABC Schools being offered to every District, *you can find answers to your questions in your own backyard.*

Peggy Hearlson  
1<sup>st</sup>. Vice President  
Department of Florida





**ALA Program Brain Teaser: ANSWER KEY**

**Americanism:** We build on the fundamental basics of freedom by acts of Patriotism and instill the spirit of Americanism in our youth through educational programs and in turn create Patriots that will be our future leaders.

**Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF):** Do you know that the ALA has a program that helps its members in a financial crisis?

**Cavalcade of Memories:** We honor our veterans, Auxiliary officers and members by displaying examples of their accomplishments and learning from them.

**Children and Youth:** We work in collaboration with The American Legion to direct and sponsor programs and services that provide services for our nation's children, especially those of our military and veterans.

**Community Service:** Community Service through dedicated and committed volunteers who know and understand the needs of their communities while initiating projects to provide for the betterment of its citizens is a vital component to the survival of every community.

**Constitution and Bylaws:** Up-to-date governance documents benefit our members in many ways, including providing an understanding of our organization, its purposes, lending direction to the smooth operation of group meetings and programs, and creating a better environment in which to accomplish our goals and objectives.

**Education:** More than just scholarships, this program involves helping others learn whenever possible.

**Finance:** The American Legion Auxiliary has an annual budget of around \$8 million and assets of over \$20 million.

**Girls State:** One of the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction, this is a participatory program that develops tomorrow's leaders by helping them understand how our government works and the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship.

**Junior Activities:** If we don't connect with our young people and get them involved, our organization will become that extinct dinosaur archeologists look for.

**Leadership:** We develop and prepare knowledgeable and capable leaders to carry on the growth and success of the Auxiliary by promoting activities and resources that educate, motivate and mentor members of all ages and at all levels.

**Legislative:** ALA members work to keep veteran's issues in front of legislators, which not only strengthens our mission to serve veterans, but also their families.

**Membership:** To increase membership and volunteer base through program partnership and innovative recruiting ideas, while we Retain and Re-Energize our membership.

**National Security:** This program is vital for maintaining and promoting a sound national defense by strengthening military families and preparing citizens to respond to both natural and man-made disasters.

**Past Presidents Parley (PPP):** We recognize and honor female veterans and utilize past Auxiliary leaders as ambassadors for the Auxiliary to ensure strong leadership at all levels of the organization.

**Poppy:** Since WWI the Poppy has been our memorial flower, representing the sacrifices that our military servicemen and women have served to keep our country out of harm's way.

**Public Relations:** To promote, publicize and re-educate the general public and our members about our core program values of serving Veterans and their families.

**Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R):** Even though the Auxiliary's mission is to serve veterans, this committee has a specific goal of helping our veterans transition back to civilian life--whether that involves adaptation because they are wounded, need counseling for emotional or family issues, readjusting to society or finding work.



Educating our communities about the particular challenges military children face with the deployment of a family member is one of the many goals of the American Legion Auxiliary. Located under "Gateway to Services" on our National website –

[www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org)

"10 Things Military Teens Want You To Know" is a list of a collaboration of input from teens on what they think is important for others to know about military teens. Provide ALA KIDDS (Kids In Danger of Depression and Suicide) brochures to local schools. Another link on our National website is the Military Child Education Coalition, whose focus is to ensure quality educational opportunities for all military connected children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition. Included in the training programs MCEC offers are a Student 2 Student and Junior Student 2 Student Program that trains civilian and military –



connected high school students to establish and sustain peer – based programs in their schools to support mobile children as they transition to and from the school. Collaborating with Family Readiness Groups, known as FRG' s, to assist with special projects for schools on military bases is yet another initiative. FRG' s are located nationally, many within the State of Florida. To learn

more about FRG' s in your area or to get involved, contact local military bases, the National Guard, or Google: Family Readiness Groups, (your city). In closing, please take advantage of the wealth of information available on our National website. Knowledge is the key to education and to share that knowledge is a priceless gift.

Cheryl LaBarge  
Committee member

## *A Poppy On My Chest*

*Winner of the poppy Poem Contest*

*"What is that man doing? My son asked and looked at me. I questioned my ability to answer this child of three. How could I explain what the paper flowers meant? He wouldn't understand how many lives were spent. I stooped down to his level, still wondering where to start. Then all at once it hit me, just say what's in my heart. The man that you standing there with paper flowers in his hands, is helping us remember we live in a free land. The flowers are called poppies and they're made with love and care, By our American Veterans who have a message they want to share. They hope we remember all the lives that have been lost, While fighting for our county and paying the highest cost.*

*When you wear a poppy, proudly on your chest, It reminds other people that our soldiers are the best. My son looked at me again with wonder in his eyes. A huge smile crossed his face, as if he'd won a prize. Then my three year old son, wise beyond his years, Said something that made me fight to hold back all the tears.*

*"Mommy, I know my daddy died fighting and he was the very best. Please give the man some money so I can wear a poppy on my chest."*

By Maureen Sondhein





Ladies the mid-year report for our units, was not good. I truly believe that there has been more done for education, then was reported. If you do the work you should get credit for it.

Here are some ideas that you/ unit can do.

1. Each member can donate one item toward the Give 10 to Education program.
2. Place a poster and collection box at local sites (i.e., grocery store, bank, senior center, post office) and invite local residents to donate to the Give 10 program.
3. Unit members can copy and deliver copies of both the American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion scholarship applications to local schools
4. Prepare a news release about scholarships that are available through the Auxiliary and send it to your local media.
5. One or more unit members can mentor a student (e.g., bring a student to your job to shadow for a day, tutoring, test prep help, etc.), particularly a military child.
6. Bring a Veteran to the Classroom to speak about their real life experience in the military.

We are over half way through this year, and If you have not done anything for Education, then you have a few more months to do at least one of the above suggestion or do all of them and make sure to fill out the year end report, so the unit can get credit.

Wanda Brandt  
Education Chairman

## COACHES

I hope all of you had a wonderful Valentine's Day and did something fun. I want to thank-you for getting membership into Department. What a great job they have been doing processing the renewals and new members. A round of applause for TEAM FLORIDA!!-Clap, clap clap. Membership chairman –thank-you for staying on top of getting membership in. Membership never stops. A couple of tips ,if you are not already doing them is:

1. Membership is a Unit thing. If you are having some challenges with getting in membership-take the list , with phone numbers, divide the list up and hand out to your members and have them call, write or any other means to contact the member. Remind people that their dues help fund our programs.
2. Send out post cards to members reminding them about their dues.

## CORNER

3. Ask ladies that you see in the canteen if they have paid their dues-hopefully canteens aren't letting them in with an old card.

We are at the 80 plus yard line and it would be nice to be almost in the "End Zone" so we can do our dance. This is the best time of year to recruit new Members, actually any time is the best for that. Ladies , please give your membership chairman a hug and help her. Many Units are already in the "End Zone" doing their dance –come on and let's join them. If you are having challenges please let your district Membership Chairman know or myself(Sandy Beasley) so that we can help. Your district President wants you to be a 100% . SO, remember"we're gonna ahave a good time this year, it's membership-it last through-out the year-so bring a good pen and a good attitude, will be a 100% when the year is through!"

Sandy Beasley  
Dept. Membership chairman

# HOMELESS VETERANS

**President's Special Project – Correction!** Last month's Ribbiting News contained incorrect information. I had one section entitled "Units in the 5<sup>th</sup> District" ... and part of that included information on what Unit 120, Holly Hill, and Unit 270, Port Orange, had done. Well ... sorry Units 120 and 270 ... I didn't mean to move you to the 5<sup>th</sup> District. You are part of the great 17<sup>th</sup> District and should have been listed separately under the 17<sup>th</sup> District! Thanks for all that you do and keep up the great work.

## **The Ribbiting News is honored to brag about ...**

### **V.O.R.R.H.**

V.O.R.R.H. (Veterans Organization for Resource and Recovery for the Homeless) is an eight bed residential program for homeless veterans located in Eustis. The program is designed to provide transitional housing and supportive services to the identified population of homeless veterans in Central Florida.

Their Mission Statement is: The long-term objective is to have a comprehensive homeless program that significantly helps willing veterans gain dignity and independence, where as we provide a residential therapeutic program that encourages veterans to reintegrate into the mainstream of society through education, training, employment and health. To this end, V.O.R.R.H. will help improve the veterans' overall quality of life.

Unit 219 in Fruitland Park and Unit 347 in Lady Lake are supporting V.O.R.R.H. Unit 219 has delivered clothing and household items to the shelter. Unit 347 recently had a blanket drive for them. Great job!

If you'd like to support V.O.R.R.H., check out their website at [www.vorrh.org](http://www.vorrh.org) and/or contact them at (352) 552-3899. Thanks!



### **N.V.H.S.**

NVHS (National Veterans Homeless Support) was formed by veterans for the sole purpose of locating and assisting the more than 4,500 homeless veterans living in the parks, forests, and streets of Central Florida. They are 100% volunteer managed and operated;

there are zero paid employees in NVHS. In the 2011 calendar year, 92.15% of their 'income' went for program services to our homeless heroes.

NVHS' mission is clearly defined: "To Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans in Central Florida." They offer a very unique service to the community in that they physically go out into the field searching for the veterans, providing supplies when they are found, and work with other organizations to get them out of the woods and back into society again. Check out all the information on NVHS and how you can help by going to [www.nvhs.us](http://www.nvhs.us) or call (888) 787-6847. Thanks!

Here is a report from NVHS on their Thanksgiving with homeless veterans:



### **Thanksgiving with homeless veterans**

It was a great day. NVHS volunteers held the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Thanksgiving Picnic in the Park and served Thanksgiving Dinner: dressing, salad, fruit cocktail, apples, turkey, ham, 2 kinds of taters, cranberry sauce, broccoli and cheese, string bean casserole, yummy gravy - all made by our dedicated volunteers and 4 kinds of pies - and our homeless heroes absolutely loved it!!!! They were so appreciative. All together at the park volunteers served close to 50 homeless, including 25 - 30 veterans - it was a great day. NVHS volunteers also cooked, served and delivered about 250 meals to veterans and their families in need.







I received the following information from Brenda Collins, Southern Division Children & Youth Chairman, which I would like to share with you.

April is Children and Youth Month

Children...Our Most Precious Natural Resource is the American Legion Family's national theme for "April is Children & Youth Month." We encourage your use and support of this theme in promotion of all your Children & Youth programs.

In 1938 April was formally designated as the Child Welfare Month but was later changed to Children & Youth Month and is continued still today. The American Legion each year asks us to get involved by teaching Child Health, Family Preservation or Child Safety. Let us all get involved with your units, post and other organizations to let everyone in your community know that the Children of today are our most precious natural resource.

We, as auxiliary members, can help the community by helping with a Child Safety Day. Ask your local police departments to help by having some of their officers come to participate.

1. A fingerprint person could come to your post and make fingerprints of the children for the parents to keep on file. If a tragedy happened the parents would have the prints to help with identifying their child.
2. An officer from Drug Control could speak and give out literature on drug abuse.
3. Another officer could talk about child abuse. Let the children know it's OK to tell an adult if someone touches them inappropriately.
4. Also ask someone to set up a digital photo station to make and print pictures of the child for the parents.
5. The fingerprints and picture should be placed in an envelope and clearly marked as to what is inside. The envelope should be given to the parents for safekeeping.

We pray that nothing will ever happen but we live in a society where things do happen. This is information all parents should have on file.

In January, I visited the Mailman Center in Miami. Upon asking if there was anything in particular that they were in need of, Director Daniel Armstrong said their current project is purchasing I pads for three and four year olds with Autism. Make your donations to the Mailman Center on the remittance form so we can assist with this project.

I also had the opportunity to take a tour of Miami Children's Hospital. Our guide, Ann Lyons explained the different areas of the hospital, which has 269 beds. The hospital was started in 1950 and was known as Children's Variety Hospital, which was later changed to Miami Children's Hospital. Ann asked if we were aware of the fact that there is talk about cutting Medicaid. She stated that 65% of their patients are on Medicaid, 25% have insurance and 10% are self-pay. If Medicaid is cut it will not only affect them but also All Children's Hospital. Let's contact our elected officials and let them know what could happen to our children. Our most precious natural resource, if Medicaid is cut.

While attending the Mission Training in Mobile AL. (which was definitely worth the 10 hour drive) we were informed that due to the privacy act it is not necessary to have the youth's date of birth on the Youth Hero applications. So if that has been the hold up on getting them sent to department let's get them done.

Keep on leaping for all the children!

Lois McFall  
Children and Youth Chairman



**Membership Statistical**  
*Membership Keyed as of 2/27/2012*

DISTRICT 1					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
75	CRESTVIEW	167	149	89.22%	-32
78	MILTON	51	46	90.20%	-10
121	JAY	19	17	89.47%	-4
193	PENSACOLA	135	88	65.19%	7
221	NICEVILLE	62	65	104.84%	-22
235	FT.WALTON BCH	208	167	80.29%	-21
240	PENSACOLA	308	232	75.32%	-16
296	DESTIN	70	68	97.14%	-19
340	PENSACOLA	287	258	89.90%	-57
356	LYNN HAVEN	251	188	74.90%	-12
375	SOUTHPORT	62	30	48.39%	13
378	GULF BREEZE	18	23	127.78%	-10
382	NAVARRE	117	98	83.76%	-16
392	PANAMA CITY	74	89	120.27%	-37
District		1829	1518	83.00%	-512

DISTRICT 4					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
16	GAINESVILLE	66	68	103.03%	-22
27	OCALA	33	27	81.82%	-4
56	STARKE	24	20	83.33%	-3
58	DUNNELLON	76	61	80.26%	-8
77	INVERNESS	50	47	94.00%	-12
91	TRENTON	27	11	40.74%	8
149	NEWBERRY	47	31	65.96%	2
155	CRYSTAL RIVER	239	301	125.94%	-134
210	OCALA	18	14	77.78%	-1
225	FLORAL CITY	30	28	93.33%	-7
230	HAWTHORNE	50	37	74.00%	-2
236	WILLISTON	16	18	112.50%	-7
237	BEVERLY HILLS	60	65	108.33%	-23
284	BELLEVIEW	204	179	87.75%	-36
314	STARKE	23	19	82.61%	-3
District		963	926	96.16%	66

DISTRICT 2					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
13	TALLAHASSEE	91	74	81.32%	-10
42	GRACEVILLE	42	3	7.14%	26
51	CHATTAHOOCHEE	31	24	77.42%	-2
82	LANARK VILLAGE	51	68	133.33%	-32
84	HAVANA	29	21	72.41%	-1
100	MARIANNA	63	63	100.00%	-19
114	CRAWFORDVILLE	30	29	96.67%	-8
172	HOSFORD	20	18	90.00%	-4
217	QUINCY	48	39	81.25%	-5
241	SNEADS	64	66	103.13%	-21
272	BLOUNTSTOWN	16	11	68.75%	0
District		485	416	85.77%	-149

DISTRICT 5					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
37	ST. AUGUSTINE	118	109	92.37%	-26
54	FERNANDINA BCH	232	220	94.83%	-58
88	JACKSONVILLE	98	98	100.00%	-29
129	JACKSONVILLE BCH	350	289	82.57%	-44
137	JACKSONVILLE	587	561	95.57%	-150
174	FERNANDINA BEACH	14	0	0.00%	10
194	ST. AUGUSTINE	36	11	30.56%	14
197	JACKSONVILLE	55	39	70.91%	-1
202	KEYSTONE HGTS	100	93	93.00%	-23
233	PONTE VEDRA BCH	146	122	83.56%	-20
244	SO. JACKSONVILLE	47	55	117.02%	-22
250	MIDDLEBURG	346	277	80.06%	-35
283	JACKSONVILLE	286	232	81.12%	-32
316	ATLANTIC BCH	470	364	77.45%	-35
373	ORANGE PARK	19	20	105.26%	-7
District		2904	2490	85.74%	-893

DISTRICT 3					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
49	MONTICELLO	24	17	70.83%	0
57	LAKE CITY	229	212	92.58%	-52
107	LIVE OAK	31	40	129.03%	-18
131	GREENVILLE	42	39	92.86%	-10
215	JASPER	43	42	97.67%	-12
224	MADISON	37	28	75.68%	-2
291	STEINHATCHEE	138	131	94.93%	-34
322	LAKE CITY	18	17	94.44%	-4
383	OLD TOWN	134	137	102.24%	-43
District		696	663	95.26%	-280

**All membership, new & renewal  
received by February 24, 2012 has  
been keyed!**



DISTRICT 6					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
10	KISSIMMEE	314	282	89.81%	-62
19	ORLANDO	253	188	74.31%	-11
21	UMATILLA	45	37	82.22%	-6
35	MOUNT DORA	132	72	54.55%	20
52	LEESBURG	16	21	131.25%	-10
53	SANFORD	238	200	84.03%	-33
55	CLERMONT	144	117	81.25%	-16
63	WINTER GARDEN	34	37	108.82%	-13
76	TAVARES	36	36	100.00%	-11
80	ST. CLOUD	257	224	87.16%	-44
101	BUSHNELL	134	122	91.04%	-28
109	OCOE	36	39	108.33%	-14
112	WINTER PARK	15	14	93.33%	-4
183	ALTAMONTE SPR	132	95	71.97%	-3
219	FRUITLAND PARK	262	249	95.04%	-66
242	ORLANDO	177	153	86.44%	-29
286	PINE CASTLE	332	301	90.66%	-69
330	LEESBURG	48	44	91.67%	-10
331	ORLANDO	71	73	102.82%	-23
347	LADY LAKE	706	730	103.40%	-236
District		3382	3034	89.71%	-1174

DISTRICT 7					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
3	BARTOW	76	70	92.11%	-17
4	LAKELAND	111	97	87.39%	-19
8	WINTER HAVEN	691	601	86.98%	-117
34	HAINES CITY	89	75	84.27%	-13
72	MULBERRY	192	150	78.13%	-16
118	ZEPHYRHILLS	46	34	73.91%	-2
201	FLORENCE VILLA	46	45	97.83%	-13
339	CRESTHAVEN	72	57	79.17%	-7
District		1323	1129	85.34%	-401

DISTRICT 8					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
11	ARCADIA	53	29	54.72%	8
24	BRADENTON	483	406	84.06%	-68
25	LAKE PLACID	396	331	83.59%	-54
30	SARASOTA	58	39	67.24%	2
69	AVON PARK	279	237	84.95%	-42
74	SEBRING	86	82	95.35%	-22
113	ROTANDA WEST	419	367	87.59%	-74
159	VENICE	856	770	89.95%	-171
254	NORTH PORT	131	97	74.05%	-5
266	FRUITVILLE	172	125	72.67%	-5
309	PALMETTO	279	268	96.06%	-73
312	ONECO	254	251	98.82%	-73
325	ELLENTON		26		
District		3466	2999	86.53%	-1093

Checkout the Friday report on the  
Homepage!

DISTRICT 9					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
36	FT. LAUDERDALE	104	80	76.92%	-7
92	HOLLYWOOD	166	132	79.52%	-16
142	POMPANO BEACH	341	304	89.15%	-65
157	MARGATE	353	314	88.95%	-67
162	DEERFIELD BEACH	362	297	82.04%	-44
180	PLANTATION	127	115	90.55%	-26
209	DANIA	41	32	78.05%	-3
222	FT. LAUDERDALE	92	70	76.09%	-6
287	DEERFIELD BEACH	35	14	40.00%	11
304	DANIA	272	246	90.44%	-56
310	HALLANDALE	52	30	57.69%	6
321	COOPER CITY	181	160	88.40%	-33
District		2126	1794	84.38%	-625

DISTRICT 11					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
12	PALM BEACH	42	10	23.81%	19
20	BELLE GLADE	66	59	89.39%	-13
47	LAKE WORTH	144	125	86.81%	-24
62	STUART	71	68	95.77%	-18
64	OKEECHOBEE	164	107	65.24%	8
65	DELRAY BEACH	45	55	122.22%	-24
141	WEST PALM BCH	117	83	70.94%	-1
164	BOYNTON BEACH	177	169	95.48%	-45
188	DELRAY BEACH	32	15	46.88%	7
199	WEST PALM BCH	66	48	72.73%	-2
258	GREENACRES	29	21	72.41%	-1
268	RIVIERA BEACH	166	110	66.27%	6
269	LANTANA	27	26	96.30%	-7
271	JUPITER	157	157	100.00%	-47
277	BOCA RATON	102	97	95.10%	-26
288	BOYNTON BEACH	80	74	92.50%	-18
367	ROYAL PALM BCH	53	52	98.11%	-15
District		1538	1276	82.96%	-430

DISTRICT 12					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
1	TITUSVILLE	288	265	92.01%	-63
22	COCOA	115	96	83.48%	-16
39	VERO BEACH	180	183	101.67%	-57
40	FORT PIERCE	246	211	85.77%	-39
81	MELBOURNE	138	134	97.10%	-37
117	PALM BAY	339	326	96.17%	-89
126	JENSEN BEACH	165	175	106.06%	-60
163	EAU GALLIE	379	351	92.61%	-86
171	FORT PIERCE	38	21	55.26%	6
189	SEBASTIAN	100	78	78.00%	-8
191	MELBOURNE	155	140	90.32%	-32
200	SATELLITE BEACH	87	83	95.40%	-22
318	PORT ST LUCIE	347	314	90.49%	-71
332	KENNEDY SPACE CT	34	30	88.24%	-6
348	CAPE CANAVERAL	206	177	85.92%	-33
355	W PORT ST LUCIE	110	95	86.36%	-18
358	FORT PIERCE	49	47	95.92%	-13
359	PORT ST JOHN	232	211	90.95%	-49
366	BAREFOOT BAY	80	73	91.25%	-17
394	PALM BAY	35	35	100.00%	-11
District		3323	3045	91.63%	-1217



DISTRICT 13					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
38	FORT MYERS	120	100	83.33%	-16
90	CAPE CORAL	187	135	72.19%	-4
103	PUNTA GORDA	327	286	87.46%	-57
110	PORT CHARLOTTE	511	474	92.76%	-116
123	SANIBEL	93	63	67.74%	2
130	LABELLE	177	188	106.21%	-64
135	NAPLES	445	365	82.02%	-54
136	PINE ISLAND	401	353	88.03%	-72
192	FORT MYERS	34	21	61.76%	3
274	FORT MYERS BCH	617	530	85.90%	-98
303	BONITA SPRINGS	371	338	91.11%	-78
323	LEHIGH ACRES	419	416	99.28%	-123
336	N. FORT MYERS	210	214	101.90%	-67
351	FT MYERS SHORES	102	95	93.14%	-24
388	BONITA SPRINGS	41	15	36.59%	14
District		4055	3593	88.61%	-1363

DISTRICT 16					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
7	CLEARWATER	489	371	75.87%	-29
14	ST. PETERSBURG	159	127	79.87%	-16
79	NEW PORT RICHEY	327	266	81.35%	-37
104	PINELLAS PARK	286	277	96.85%	-77
119	LARGO	372	330	88.71%	-70
125	GULFPORT	345	376	108.99%	-135
158	TREASURE ISLAND	107	123	114.95%	-48
173	HOLIDAY	307	255	83.06%	-40
238	SAFETY HARBOR	266	221	83.08%	-35
252	CROSS BAYOU	535	524	97.94%	-150
273	MADEIRA BEACH	2078	1,927	92.73%	-472
275	DUNNEDIN	297	256	86.20%	-48
305	ST. PETE BEACH	165	139	84.24%	-24
335	HUDSON	213	204	95.77%	-55
District		5946	5396	90.75%	-2126

DISTRICT 14					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
28	KEY WEST	82	73	89.02%	-16
29	MIAMI	28	10	35.71%	10
31	MIAMI	131	118	90.08%	-26
43	HOMESTEAD	67	52	77.61%	-5
67	NORTH MIAMI	107	84	78.50%	-9
98	CORAL GABLES	51	46	90.20%	-10
133	PERRINE	104	88	84.62%	-15
154	MARATHON	171	162	94.74%	-42
168	KEY WEST	29	38	131.03%	-18
333	KEY LARGO	97	60	61.86%	8
346	MIAMI	34	36	105.88%	-12
374	KEY BISCAVNE	72	71	98.61%	-21
District		973	838	86.13%	-303

DISTRICT 17					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
6	DELAND	120	100	83.33%	-16
17	NEW SMYRNA BCH	230	242	105.22%	-81
45	PALATKA	41	30	73.17%	-1
115	BUNNELL	101	88	87.13%	-17
120	HOLLY HILL	235	226	96.17%	-62
127	LAKE HELEN	25	25	100.00%	-8
204	DAYTONA BEACH	59	43	72.88%	-2
255	DELTONA	37	27	72.97%	-1
259	DEBARY,ORANGE CT	35	35	100.00%	-11
267	ORMOND BEACH	182	158	86.81%	-31
270	PORT ORANGE	162	141	87.04%	-28
285	EDGEWATER	309	279	90.29%	-63
293	INTERLACHEN	167	132	79.04%	-15
361	SOUTH DAYTONA	170	154	90.59%	-35
District		1873	1680	89.70%	-650

DISTRICT 15					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 85%
5	TAMPA	41	40	97.56%	-11
26	PLANT CITY	39	36	92.31%	-9
99	BROOKSVILLE	45	41	91.11%	-10
111	TAMPA	72	55	76.39%	-5
138	PORT TAMPA CITY	305	275	90.16%	-62
139	TAMPA	185	159	85.95%	-30
147	ODESSA	60	34	56.67%	8
148	RIVERVIEW	203	190	93.60%	-48
152	TAMPA	329	286	86.93%	-56
167	TAMPA	31	11	35.48%	11
186	SPRING HILL	417	373	89.45%	-81
248	WEST TAMPA	26	23	88.46%	-5
334	TAMPA	60	46	76.67%	-4
389	RUSKIN	30	25	83.33%	-4
District		1843	1594	86.49%	-580

**All Membersip received by 02/24/2012 has been keyed.**

**DISTRICT ORDER  
ALL MEMBERSHIP KEYED AS OF 2/24/2012**

District 4	.....	96.16%
District 3	.....	95.26%
District 12	.....	91.63%
District 16	.....	90.75%
District 6	.....	89.71%
District 17	.....	89.70%
District 13	.....	88.61%
District 8	.....	65.53%
District 15	.....	86.49%
District 14	.....	86.13%
District 2	.....	85.77%
District 5	.....	85.74%
District 7	.....	76.19%
District 9	.....	84.38%
District 1	.....	83.00%
District 11	.....	82.96%

The 2012 Department Membership Goal is 37,242.

As of 2/24/2012, **32,649** membership have been processed.

**We are currently at 87.67%**