



Happy
New Year
2012



The Ribbiting News Communique



Presidents Message

Dare To Dream! What does that mean to you?

Think about it ... what dreams do you have about what you'd

like to do, where you'd like to go, and what

you'd like to accomplish? These questions are posed to you not only for your Auxiliary "life" but also especially for your whole life in general.

I started with the paragraph above because on January 16th, I had the honor of participating in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Unity Parade and Celebration in Ocoee along with members of the whole American Legion Family. As I was driving the Auxiliary vehicle down the parade route, I could sense the feelings of pride and self-confidence from people of all races as they cheered for the organizations taking part in this special day to honor Dr. King who helped make our society a better place. It was wonderful. The keynote address was given by Lucas Boyce, Director of Community Relations, Multicultural Insights & Government Affairs, Orlando Magic. His story is wonderful ... he did Dare To Dream ... and encourages others to do the same. Take time to look up information on this young man at www.lucasdanielboyce.com - be sure to click on "Meet Lucas" and "Living Proof the Book."

So ... remember ... DARE TO DREAM! A new year has just begun. Think about your dreams ... and go for them! You'll be amazed at what you can do. 😊

What's Next? We're well into January 2012. We all need to Leap To Success!

National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is

February 12th to 18th, 2012. This is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women who are cared for every day in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs), outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes. The purpose of this program is to pay tribute and express appreciation to veterans, to increase community

awareness of the role of the VAMCs, and to encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers. An easy way to do this would be to send Valentine cards to our hospitalized heroes in the VAMCs. Don't forget to have our Junior members help with this program.

Membership: I know that Florida has the ability to be at least 100% in membership. 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.

My recent travels: Chuck and I went to Tallahassee for the December 18th meal for homeless veterans and their families held by the American Legion Family of 84 in Havana. Since I was dressed like an Elf (kind of 😊), I filled in for the real Elf who didn't make it. Had a great time helping Santa distribute gifts to the children as well as posing for pictures. Also, Commander Williams and myself were interviewed by the local TV station of WTXL-ABC 27. Hope you saw the news clip. If you didn't, I can send you it. 😊 It was truly a great day!

Following the holidays, I was off and running again on official visits. January 6th to the 8th found me enjoying the hospitality of the 15th District where I met many members at different Posts, toured Liberty Manor For Veterans – a wonderful place for homeless veterans (see separate article), and helped with the District Initiation of New Members.

The following weekend (January 13th to 15th) I was in the 11th District. I had the opportunity to meet with Mary Phillips, Chief of Voluntary Service at the West Palm Beach VAMC and got to hear first-hand how more help from our Auxiliary is needed there. I also visited The Stand Down House of Faith*Hope*Love*Charity, Inc. (FHLC) in Lake Worth (see



separate article), visited Forgotten Soldiers Outreach where thousands of packages have been and will continue to be shipped to our troops overseas, and toured the Boy Scout Camp in Tequesta where a Camporee will be held in February. Also met lots of great members at several Posts ... had a great visit.

Mary Montgomery's passing was a shock to all of us. I was glad to be home and able to attend the services honoring her. She was a great asset to the ALA Department of Florida having served as 4th District President and Department Community Service Chairman in addition to many other positions during her years as a member. Please keep her husband Jerry in your prayers.

I am off and running again. Leaving for the 14th District on January 19th ... will spend time down in the Keys and then back on the main land (as they say!) ... and then will spend a few days in the 9th District. Ten days on the road ... then back to my husband. 😊 After that, it's a quick weekend trip to Connecticut for Chuck's Uncle Bizzy's 100th birthday party! After we unthaw from that, it'll be a trip to the 8th District. Phew, I'm tired just thinking about all of this.

Okay: Be sure to check out the separate articles pertaining to Homeless Veterans. Also, don't forget to send me information

on what you're doing for our homeless heroes so I can include it in an upcoming issue of The Ribbiting News! Thanks.

FYI: Our Vice Presidents, Secretary-Treasurer, and several other members are headed to Mobile, Alabama for the Mission Training Workshop being held January 21st & 22nd. Due to my traveling schedule, I am unable to attend ... but I know those attending will bring back lots of information for all of us. Thanks ladies.

Plan Ahead: My Homecoming will be held the evening of Saturday, April 21st at John Gella Memorial Post 219 in Fruitland Park. Details to follow in the next Ribbiting News.

Closing thought: As we continue to Leap To Success in 2012, let's remember that we are all working for the same cause, the same mission. Everyone put on a happy face and keep in mind that **"A smile is a curve that can get a lot of things straight."** 😊

Diane Rousseau
Department President



"Celebrate good times -come on -it's membership!" You ladies have done the most amazing job at getting Department at 70% (70 yard line), a head of of time . WAY TO GO !! Unit membership chairmen , you are doing a great job. Thanks to all District Presidents and District membership chairmen for encouraging the Units in your District. HATS off to the ladies at Department headquarters who have been processing all the membership that has been coming in. They in one period did over 1400 membership renewals. BIG hugs and thank-you from me. Let them know how much we appreciate their hard work. I also would like to thank the wonderful ladies on the membership team for all their work with membership. In the South- Patti Kurtz; the West- Doris Clark; the North- Tina Kirchoff; Central- Judie Gray. If your Unit is having

problems with renewals-these ladies will be glad to help. Check the YELLOW unit guide for their phone/e-mails. One suggestion that might help, would be to send out a letter from your Unit to those who have not paid-explaining how their dues help fund the programs that your Unit does. You can give an example of a couple of programs that the money from dues is used for. Most of all don't give up we are here to help you -so please call. We are heading for the "Bomb" which will put us at the 85 yard line. A touchdown is in sight. Congratulations to all Units that are in the end-zone. HAPPY 2012!! May it be filled with lots of new members and renewals.

Sandy Beasley
Membership Chairman



Chaplain's Report

I look forward to the New Year with hope!!
 Hope for no more deployments to foreign countries
 Hope for the Growth of the A .L. Auxiliary
 Hope for the health and well-being of all we know.
 Hope for a better year for the United States of America.
 Let's take Psalms 31: 24 to mean just what it says.
 Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart,
 all ye that hope in the Lord.



Deceased list for the first month of 2012

District # 1

Unit 240 Phillips, Ethel

District # 2

Unit 100 Jenkins, Brianna N.

District # 4

Unit 155 Hanson, Vickie D
 Kausky, Rita E.
 Montgomery, Mary E.

District # 5

Unit 316 Markham, Dorothy

District # 11

Unit 164 Ireland, Eileer "Barb"

District #12

Unit 40 Stone, Mary

District # 13

Unit 103 Halsema, Dorothy J.
 Vogt, Marilyn F.
 Unit 130 Wingard, Faye D.

District # 16

Unit 238 Holuk, Wanda T.
 Unit 273 Ryan, Geri D.

District #17

Unit 127 Fletcher, Elizabeth E.
 Unit 267 Harper, E. Marie

Marion Vick

Department Chaplain

Psalm 39:7 – And not, Lord, what wait I for? My
 Hope is in thee.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

COMFORT ARTICLES URGENTLY NEEDED
 LAP ROBES AND KIT BAGS ARE NEEDED AT THE
 JAMES A. HALEY V A MEDICAL
 CENTER, TAMPA

MAIL TO:

DAWN POSCICH, REP. (PHONE NUMBERS IN UNIT GUIDE IF NEEDED)
 C/O VOLUNTARY SERVICES 135
 1300 BRUCE B DOWNS BLVD. TAMPA, 33612



From the Secretary's Pad...



Happy New Year! After being away for so long and having the office closed, we are getting back to normal here again. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and has a healthy 2012!

Girls State . . . The registration closes on February 1st and many Units have not sent in for a spot in this year's session of this writing. Keep in mind; girls get one chance in their lifetime to attend Girls State and if your Unit has sent girls from a particular high school for several years and all of a sudden stop, you will be disappointing girls that have been looking forward to this opportunity and will never have the chance again. Think carefully before giving up this very important program.

Following the close registration, over quota slots will be filled and then Units will be awarded extra slots even if they have not earned them based on their membership numbers per the Standing Rules. If your Unit has extra money and wants to send more girls to Girls State, send a check along with a completed form today!

Orientations . . . We are still waiting for Districts 1,7,11,13,14,15 & 16 to turn in their date request so a schedule can be put out. As soon as we have the information it will be posted on the web site and in the next Communique.

Compliance . . . Letters will be going out any day to Units that are not in compliance with the IRS and that are not incorporated with the State of Florida per our Bylaws. We have found many Units that are having a problem are due to either name or address discrepancies with the IRS. All Units' legal names are "American Legion Name on Charter Unit 123, INC" You must use this name for all legal business beginning with your checking account!! When you file your 990 N you have an opportunity to list DBAs (Doing business as) and this is where you would put ALA Unit 123 or "Your Town Name" Unit 123,

but these are only DBAs they are not your legal name! As an example; Unit 63 in Winter Garden's legal name is American Legion Auxiliary Hugh T Gregory Unit 63, INC. This name must appear on their check, 990 N, their Corporation, Solicitation Permit, and Tax Exemption etc. Their DBAs would or could be; Unit 63, Winter Garden Unit 63, ALA Unit 63, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 63 etc. You get the idea!

Another problem we have encountered is many municipalities have given streets Legion Posts are on names like Legion Way or American Legion Dr as a courtesy and they are not really the legal address of the property so the IRS does not recognize them when they get used on annual reports filed causing the reports to get rejected. You must always use the legal address of the property and if the Post home has moved, a letter must be sent to the IRS notifying them of the change of address so the Unit's records can be updated. Department is considered a third party with the IRS so the Unit must correspond with them directly on all Unit business.

All Units should have 2011 990 N reports on file with Department at this time. Any Unit able to file a 2011 report has an incorrect file year with the IRS and must get that corrected. All Units' fiscal year must be July 1 – June 30. If your Unit has any other fiscal year than this, please change by writing to the IRS Attn: EO Service Entity, MS 6273, Ogden UT 84211.

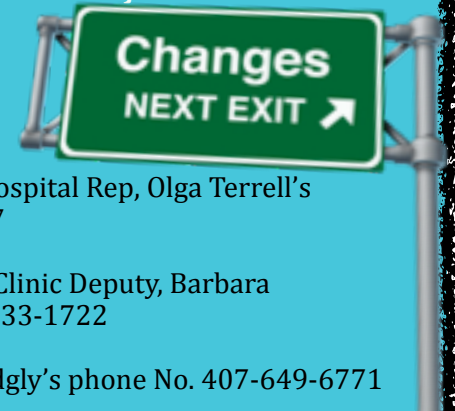
Corporation Renewals . . . are due beginning January 1 through May 2012. As soon as you file your renewal with the State, you must mail a copy of your report to Department for the Unit's file per the Department's Bylaws. If Department has renewed your Corporation and invoiced your Unit in the past do not assume we will automatically do it for you this year. You must request this from us if you want us to do so. The cost is \$62.50.

Dues . . . In the next couple of weeks each Unit will receive the form to report the correct dues amount for 2013 along with verifying the Unit's mailing



address. It is important that you remember that beginning with the first recap for the 2013 year Units will be mailing Department \$16.50 for each Senior member and \$3.00 for each Junior member. Make sure you are collecting enough dues to cover this per capita and the required quotas, Sock fee and Bonding Fee the Unit has to pay. **If your Unit needs to make a change to the dues amount it must be handled by a Constitution and Bylaws change NOT a change to your Standing Rules!** If the revised documents are not in our office, signed by the Department Constitution and Bylaws Chairman, by the date we have to report dues amounts to National, your Unit will not be able to raise the Units for the new year. It is very important to handle this immediately!

Please make the following
changes/corrections in your Unit Guide!



Page 4 - Florida State Hospital Rep, Olga Terrell's
phone No. 850-259-0937

Page 6 - Ft Myers VAOP Clinic Deputy, Barbara
Kelley's phone No. 239-433-1722

Orlando VA Rep, Fran Ridgly's phone No. 407-649-6771

Page 13 - PDP, Olga Terrell's phone No. 850-259-0937

Robin Briere
Secretary-Treasurer

2012-2013 Endorsements Received by Department

National Executive Committeewoman
Department President & NECA
Department 1st Vice President
Department 2nd Vice President
Department 3rd Vice President
Department Chaplain
4th District President
5th District President
16th District President
17th District President

Diane Rousseau, Unit 219 Fruitland Park
Peggy Hearlson, Unit 347 Lady Lake
Gerrie Bailey, Unit 193 Pennsacola
Lois McFall, Unit 323 Lehigh Acres
Erna Scwabe, Unit 120 Holly Hill
Marion Vick, Unit 79 New Port Richey
Alice Brumett, Unit 77 Inverness
Robin Combs, Unit 88 Jacksonville
Kelli Becraft, Unit 275 Dunedin
Eleanor Amato, Unit 285 Edgewater

The above Units properly mailed endorsements to Department following the rules as set forth in the Department's Standing Rules and are on file at Department.



American Legion Auxiliary Brain Teaser

Match each of the American Legion Auxiliary programs to their elevator speech.

Americanism	Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)	Cavalcade of Memories	Constitution & Bylaws	
Children and Youth	Community Service	Education	Finance	Girls State
Junior Activities	Leadership	Legislative	Membership	National Security
Past Presidents Parley	Poppy	Public Relations	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)	

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

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

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.

We help 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.

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.

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.

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

Initiating projects to provide for the betterment of its citizens is a vital component to the survival of every community.

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.

To promote, publicize and re-educate the general public and our members about our core program values of serving veterans and their families.

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

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.

We work in collaboration with The Legion to sponsor programs and provide services for our nation's children, especially those of our military and veterans.

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

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 meetings and programs, and creating a better environment in which to accomplish our goals.

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.

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

Do you know that the American Legion Auxiliary has a program that helps its members in a financial crisis?

ANSWER KEY WILL BE IN THE NEXT COMMUNIQUE



VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

Happy New Year! Florida Units and Districts have been super busy “Honoring Their Service” proving that they” Will not forget, It’s all about the Vets” with activities that included, volunteering and or sponsoring stand downs, taking care of the homeless veterans, Ride 2 Recovery, Cycle fest, Field and Home Service, Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas parties, and much more, Thanks for honoring our veterans and their families. Some are assisting with the opening of new facilities for the homeless veterans. Don’t forget to make the “Buddy Baskets” for these veterans that are getting their new homes.

Congratulations to all that attended the Field Service Class at Fall Conference and received certification, thanks to Sue Eaton for doing a good job as a novice Instructor. Congratulations to the newly approved Field Service Instructors.

My visit in November to the Orlando VA Medical Center was great and exciting, thanks to VA Rep Fran Ridgley and Chief of Voluntary Service Sandra Placencia. The facility will soon be relocated to Nona Lake and will include a Fisher

House. There is an extensive “wish list” that units may want to contact the Voluntary Service Office at 407-629-1599 X-6310. I also was privileged to witness Fran Ridgley present a check of \$3,000 to Sandra Placencia that will be used for three programs @ \$1,000 each; 1.The Homeless Vet Program; 2. Veterans Nursing Home (recreation therapy); and 3. Adopt a Vet Program.

Did you know that babies are delivered at the Jacksonville VA Outpatient Clinic? I visited there in October, and the Head Doctor that gave me the tour pointed out their wall of babies (pictures) that were delivered at the facility, very unique. Remember that Valentine’s Day Week is National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, Units can send Thinking of you cards, also give little Huggie Bears, and other acts of love for our Veterans.

Gerrie Bailey
Chairman VA&R
VeteransAffairs@alafl.org

Past Presidents Parley

Happy New Year!! I’m sure you’re all working hard on your Past Presidents Parley Program! You may not even know that you are, so be sure to review your Plan of Action and give your Unit credit where credit is deserved. When we hear Past Presidents Parley we immediately think of the obvious piece of this program. But don’t cut yourself short – there are 4 aspects – check out your plan of action. Please don’t forget that February 14th is a very special day – not just for the special people in your life but it is also National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Day. Let’s make a special effort for those hospitalized female veterans this year.

The VA is recognizing the impact of female veterans in the military with a new campaign called “Rethink Veterans”. A campaign to increase awareness of women veterans and their vital roles in our nation’s history. Unfortunately or fortunately they are also recognizing the need for appropriate treatment for the sexual abuse/harassment of our female military. It is up to us to continue the awareness by contacting our elected officials.

Dorothy Walsh, Chairman
Department of Florida
Past Presidents Parley



President's Special Project
HOMELESS VETERANS

The Ribbiting News is honored to brag about ...

Unit 84 in Havana

On December 18th, Unit 84 along with members of the whole American Legion Family of Havana 84, held its 2nd Annual Christmas Dinner for homeless veterans and their families. About 250 meals were served that day. The attendees are physically homeless or just getting into the subsidized housing program and were invited to this dinner by Denna who is the Homeless Veterans' Coordinator for the VA Clinic in Tallahassee. Department President Diane and her husband Chuck were there helping fill everyone's plates. And since President Diane was dressed somewhat like an Elf, she also filled in for the real Elf who didn't make it. Diane helped Santa distribute gifts to the children, posed for pictures with Santa, children, & families, and made the evening news on Channel 27, WTXL-ABC along with Commander Williams. Great job Havana 84!

Units in the 5th District

Unit 120, Holly Hill, received items from a business that was closing ... so they donated new shirts, sweat shirts, and hats totaling 65 pieces to the Homeless Veterans of Volusia County. By doing so, 21 veterans were supplied with new clothing ... and they were also put up in a hotel for two days during the Christmas Season.

Unit 270, Port Orange, received sheets, pillowcases and comforters donated by a local hotel chain ... so they donated them to Serenity House for Veterans.

In Jacksonville, at Atlantic Boulevard and Acme Street, a closed down nursing home has been refurbished as a homeless veterans shelter/home. Great opportunity here for Units to get involved! 😊

Liberty Manor

Liberty Manor is located in the 15th District – at 10015 North 9th Street, Tampa. Liberty Manor was organized in 2006

as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the objective of promoting the developmental and social needs of veterans who have served our country and fought for our independence, but have fallen victim to homelessness. Department President Diane, along with 15th District President Mary and other members of the District, had the opportunity to visit Liberty Manor during her recent visit. CEO Connie Blaney, who helped establish this great shelter for homeless veterans, along with the veterans who were there that day graciously welcomed the visit. Liberty Manor is supported by many Units in the 15th District ... and is always in need of assistance. You can find out more details about Liberty Manor on-line at www.libertymanor.org and/or contact them by email at libertyforvets@aol.com. There are a lot of great success stories for Liberty Manor. Please consider supporting them.

Stand Down House

Faith, Hope, Love, Charity, Inc. (FHLC) opened the doors of the Stand Down House in May 2000 to provide emergency/transitional housing and supportive services for veterans struggling with addictions, mental illness, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and physical limitation. It is located at 4309 Davis Road in Lake Worth. In 2011, Stand Down House provided 8,719 emergency housing nights for 94 male veterans. Since opening, over 2,000 veterans have received supportive services. Recently homeless female veterans with children have been added to those being helped at Stand Down House. Department President Diane, along with 11th District President JoAnn and other members of the District, had the opportunity to visit Stand Down House during her recent visit. Executive Director & Co-Founder Roy Foster told us all about Stand Down House and took us on a tour of the facility. Please visit the website at www.standdown.org ... and consider joining the Units of the 11th District in supporting this great place!



Units throughout the Department leaped into action over the Holidays hosting Christmas parties for the children. Naples Unit 135 helped host the annual Christmas party for "Special Children." These "children" range in age from nineteen to seventy-five.

Dania Unit 304 adopted 53 foster kids ranging in age from 3 months to 12 years. They purchased \$2000.00 worth of gift cards for them.

The 16th District Units adopted 14 National Guard families with a total of 29 children. They had fun shopping and filling the wish lists of the children.

Dunedin Unit 275 helped host the 31st annual Poker Run for foster kids in Pinellas and Pasco Counties. Funds raised enabled the purchase of 1800 bicycles for the kids.

LaBelle Unit 130 helped prepare and deliver 641 meals to needy families on Christmas Day.

Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards:

Sixteen applications along with the stories were distributed last fall. To date, only applications from Lake Worth Unit 47, Holly Hill Unit 120 and Lehigh Acres Unit 323 have been received by Department. Let's not let these heroes go unrecognized! Get those applications completed and sent to Department.

Read your local papers, listen to the news, if there is a story that qualifies, get the Youth Hero application so they can be recognized. What a great Public Relations news release for your Unit.

Comfort Bears for children of deployed parents:

15th District Units Tampa # 5, West Tampa # 248, Tampa # 139, and Spring Hill # 186 worked together and made 130 Comfort Bears, which were delivered to MacDill. Way to Go!!

Assemble Hero Packs for OMK: Have we done them?

Adopt a Military Kid: Lehigh Acres Unit 323 has adopted two girls and one boy. Remembering them on their Birthdays, Christmas etc. How about you?

Refer to the Plan of Action and How to Guide often. Keep in mind what awards are being offered. Know the plan so you can work the plan.

Remember our purpose, to protect, care for and support our children and youth so let's leap for all the children everyday.

When pigs fly they get their bellies full. Keep those pigs going to help your unit increase their donation to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

Please keep me informed on the leaps your unit is doing.

Lois McFall
Children & Youth Chairman

- Searching for a dedicated Auxiliary member to provide Leadership to our Junior Members.
- There is an opening for Department Junior Activities Chairman for the Auxiliary year 2012-2013. If you have worked with Juniors and would like the opportunity of working with enthusiastic young members, please e-mail me or give me a call.

Peggy Hearlson
1st Vice President
352-875-4454
phearlson@aol.com





2012- 2016 OFFICIAL PROGRAM DATES

Hotels/Dates chosen by the Time and Place Committee on 11/2/2010
Chairman: Phil Hearlson

Future Dates for Annual Department Convention

New Hotel: Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld.
6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando FL 32821
Toll Free # to Book Reservations: 1.800. 266.9432
Remember to mention the American Legion Rate!



OFFICIAL PROGRAM DATES:

- Thursday, June 7, 2012 - Sunday, June 10, 2012 (\$129)
- Thursday, June 6, 2013 – Sunday, June 9, 2013 (\$129)
- Thursday, June 12, 2014 – Sunday, June 15, 2014 (\$129)
(\$6 increase after 3 years)
- Thursday, June 25, 2015 – Sunday, June 28, 2015 (\$135)
- Thursday June 16, 2016 – Sunday, June 19, 2016 (\$135)

Future Dates for Annual Fall Conference

NEW HOTEL: Hilton Orlando, Walt Disney
1751 Hotel Plaza Boulevard
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830
Toll Free # to Book Reservations- TBD
Remember to mention the American Legion Rate!



OFFICIAL PROGRAM DATES:

- Friday, November 9, 2012 – Sunday, November 11, 2012 (\$109)
- Friday, November 15, 2013 – Sunday, November 17, 2013 (\$109)
- Friday, November 7, 2014 – Sunday, November 9, 2014 (\$109)
(\$5 increase after 3 years)
- Friday, November 13, 2015– Sunday, November 15, 2015 (\$114)
- Friday, November 18, 2016 – Sunday, November 20, 2016 (\$114)

A full list of official program dates, rates and hotel locations will be available at
www.floridalegion.org at the conclusion of this Fall Conference.



CALLING ALL POLLIWOGS (JUNIORS),

○ Honorary Department Junior President Jessica and I need you all to mark your calendars now for the April 27th and 28th year-end meeting and sleep over at Tampa Post 5. Friday night starting at 6:30/7 pm will be a time for fun and games, movies, popcorn, cupcake decorating, craft projects and blowing up the air mattresses. So much for sleeping on the floor. Last year all you could hear for about an hour was the roar of the air pumps followed by the giggles of everyone as we tried to find that perfect spot all the while sporting our favorite PJ's. Saturday will be breakfast followed by a full day of meetings, special guests, campaigning for office, elections and installation of the new 2012-2013 Honorary Junior officers. Anyone 8 to 17 may run for an office even if they haven't held an office before, of course they need parental permission along with a commitment to attend the future Department Junior meetings.

This meeting was so much fun last year, we had Juniors from as young as 5 up to Seniors as young as they wanted to be.

I need everyone to get this message out to the Juniors in their areas. Watch for a special mailing that goes out to the Units with all the final information and registration forms needed in order to attend.

Please help us to make this a huge success again this year. Coordinate with



Wow has the year rolled by!!!

Hopefully, everyone has helped in their community somehow-someway. If not maybe you helped in someone else's community. The point is that optimistically you helped.

First, let me start by saying thanks to all Units that participated in the fall conference food drive. It was a huge success. With your help we were able to donate 7 that is correct "7" full pallets of non perishable items and \$1190. As promised every Unit that participated will receive a certificate at convention. And make sure you are there to see who wins the plaques. Remember there were 6

other Units in your area to make arrangements to bring them to this very important year end meeting and come on by yourselves to see the Juniors at work.

Don't forget to look at all the Plan Of Actions for all the Department awards the Juniors may win this year. Are your Juniors working on the Patch program? There's still time to get started and there is no better way for them to learn about our organization then this program.

One other thing before I close, I thank all of you that assisted in making President Jessica's project for the year a great success. Under her guidance the Juniors with their cute frog bookmarks made over \$700 towards her project for Operation Military Kids. At Fall conference 50 OMK hero packs were filled to their capacity. They were given cameras, paper, pens, envelopes, notebooks, scrapbooks, stickers in order to stay in touch with their deployed family member. They also received other items, such as OMK dog tags, OMK wrist bands, stuffed animals, glow bracelets, small personal blankets and a personal handwritten note from a Junior thanking them for what they and their family were doing for our country.



Sherry Wingard
Junior Activities Chairman

FOOD DRIVE

Together we can give a H - A - N - D. **Help Another Neighbor Daily.**

total plaques to be awarded and 1 overall to a district, if all units in the district participated. Did your whole district participate??? I cannot say thanks enough for supporting the Department and feeding so many at a crucial time. But wait, my thank yous don't stop there, Thank You to everyone who helped load the truck. That was a big task and could not have been done without your help. Again, from the bottom of my heart thank you.

Kelli Becraft
Community Service Chairman





THE NEW AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY BROCHURE

**AMERICAN
LEGION AUXILIARY
MISSION:**

As the right of service, we will do the nation's work. The American Legion Auxiliary is to support the American Legion and to have the welfare of their members by assisting the lives of our members, widows, and their families, and to have and defend the peace and freedom of our country.

For God and Country we endeavor for action, service, peace, and justice, and for the betterment of our country and the world.

Help us realize our goals by becoming a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.



There are many opportunities for involvement in the American Legion Auxiliary. Help us get you connected!

I am interested in learning more about:

- ☐ New Legion Auxiliary
☐ Relationship to Veterans
☐ Historical Activities
☐ Youth Activities
- ☐ Economics
☐ Community Service
☐ Auxiliary Emergency Fund
☐ Auxiliary Unit Activities
- ☐ Citizenship
☐ Member Benefits and Services
☐ Auxiliary's Support for the American Legion and its Programs
☐ Other _____

Member Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			

JOIN THE LEGION FAMILY!

For nearly a century, The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion have worked steadfastly, side by side, promoting patriotism and national security while supporting youth and advocating for veterans and active-duty military. The Legion Family also includes American Legion Riders, a program of motorcycle enthusiasts. Members join through a Riders chapter at an American Legion post.

While members of The American Legion Family are individually unique, collectively we are a multi-million member powerhouse of caring advocates dedicated to service. You and your family can join us! You'll find that getting connected to The American Legion Family is one of the best decisions you'll ever make. Please use the enclosed applications and send to the proper authority as instructed.

For details on The American Legion Family, please visit us today at:

The American Legion:
www.legion.org

American Legion Auxiliary:
www.ALAforVeterans.org

Sons of The American Legion:
www.legion.org/sons

American Legion Riders:
www.legion.org/riders



**American Legion Auxiliary
National Headquarters**
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www.ALAforVeterans.org
www.ALAFoundation.org

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**American Legion
Auxiliary**

**Membership Applications for Joining
Your American Legion Family**

Your American Legion Family



**In the Spirit of Service Not Self for
Veterans, God and Country**

**THE AMERICAN LEGION - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			

Please check appropriate eligibility status and branch of service below:

☐ I am a U.S. citizen
☐ I am a U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien

I hereby declare that I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			

Please check appropriate eligibility status and branch of service below:

☐ I am a U.S. citizen
☐ I am a U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien

I hereby declare that I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			

Please check appropriate eligibility status and branch of service below:

☐ I am a U.S. citizen
☐ I am a U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen
☐ I am a foreign-born U.S. resident alien

I hereby declare that I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.



DUPLICATE RECEIPT
(Please Print)

Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			



DUPLICATE RECEIPT
(Please Print)

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Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			



DUPLICATE RECEIPT
(Please Print)

Name	_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle	_____ Suffix
Address	_____ _____ _____ City			
State	_____ Abbreviation	_____ Zip	_____ Country	
Phone	_____ Area Code			
E-mail	_____ Address			



HELP WANTED

WE NEED YOU!

The members of The American Legion Auxiliary give of their time and talent in so many ways to assist our Veterans and the children in our State and communities. One of the most rewarding volunteer positions in our organization is being a hospital or clinic representative. The patients and families of those they serve know that there is someone who cares about them.

We have several representatives' positions open. I encourage members to consider accepting one of these positions. The following is a list of Representatives needed, if you have an interest please contact me.

All Children's Hospital-St Petersburg Orlando VA Clinic West Palm Beach VA Clinic

Peggy Hearlson
1st Vice President
353-875-4454
phearlson@aol.com

HOSPITAL AND CLINIC REPRESENTATIVE'S NEEDED



Wow I can hardly believe our Auxiliary year is half over. We are winding down from the Holidays but the Americanism program is in full bloom.

In the Fall Conference Programs, it was announced that the Freedom Foundation asked the ALA Department of Florida to participate in their American Leaders Youth Summit. Invitations to participate in this worthwhile event went to the 300 2011 Girl State Participants.

The girls were required to submit an essay on "A Day in the Life of the American Flag" from the Flag's perspective. I received 31 essays and with a panel of six, we ranked them accordingly. I am proud to announce we will be sending the top five essay

winners. But Ladies, that could change if we receive more donations from Units, so make a pledge to donate to this worthwhile program and a BIG thank you to all Units who already have.

Our next Americanism project is the "American Essay Contest". I just received my first 12 entries and I am looking forward to receiving many more. All the information for this contest is in the plan of action but please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions.

Michele DeGennaro
Department Chairman
americanism@alafll.org

Hope you enjoy the Winning Essay's from the American Leaders Youth Summit Contest



A Day in the Life of an American Flag



By Anna Morgan

There she is! Old Glory up on the flagpole!" That I am, but these days, I feel more old than glorious. My red and white stripes flick lazily In-the direction of the two children down below, as if to say, "This old flag's seen quite a bit in her time." Oh yes, I wasn't always the tired old scrap they see every day, flying over the rooftops of Roosevelt Elementary. I remember the day I wa~ sewn by the ladies of the town, oh, back at the turn of the last century. They had carefully selected the noblest blue, the bravest red, and the purest white to stitch my stars and stripes. I'll never forget old Mrs. Carruthers, the indomitable matriarch of the village, booming out, "This flag will be the finest flown from coast to coast. Mr. Roosevelt will see it and know we're the truest Americans in the land." Roosevelt? I thought I saw your ears perk up at that. Yes, Teddy himself came to break ground for a new school to be named In his honor, and I can tell you, this old town's never seen such excitement before or since that distant summer day. The mayor and councilmen drafted fine, pompous speeches for the occasion; the schoolchildren wrote and recited poems; the town orchestra faithfully labored over "America the Beautiful," and as I was being sewn, I fervently prayed that the tuba player would get his part right. You can't imagine what an assault on the senses bad tuba playing is. Finally, the great day came. The whole town turned out to see the president, greeting him with cheers and shouts. I

myself was paraded through the streets by an honor guard carefully selected for the occasion. You should have seen how proud those boys were, especially Jim Haynes, the one who bore me on the flagpole. Those were the days when people knew how to respect the flag. After turning over the first spadeful of soil on the site of the new school, Mr. Roosevelt took me in his hands and said, "This flag stands for the love of God and country that unite all of us Americans. Whenever you see it, remember that it is the love of freedom, and the courage and loyalty to fight for it, which makes our country great. God bless America!" Sometimes, when I ~ftl very still and quiet, I remember how I felt that day: glorious and proud to stand for freedom. Nowadays, people don't always honor the flag the way they used to. I've seen flags like myself left out in the rain, trampled underfoot, or worse, burned and desecrated. It saddens my heart ... but wait! There's a man coming up the road. It's been many years, but yes, it's Jim Haynes~i' who led the honor guard all those years ago. He's much older now, but it gladdens my heart to see him. Jim watches two of the schoolchildren lower me from the flagpole as the sun sets, and I hear him whisper, *lilt's* good to see you, old friend. Even though time's passed, your glory hasn't faded one bit. You keep on flying for all to see, and remind them of the freedom we cherish, just like Mr. Roosevelt said on that summer day long ago."



Taylor Talucci

A Day in the Life of the American Flag

His name is Michael. Michael, the little nine year old boy whom I stand tall over every day. His father is a soldier and was deployed to Iraq nine months ago. I saw his father leave and I was there as he stood in the drive way with tears running down his little face. Michael is the man of the house now, and he is young, but he does all that he can to help out his mother through this emotional time. Each morning Michael raises me high into the sky for everyone to see. He wants to make sure that everyone knows that he is proud to be an American, just like his father taught him. I watch through the window in the front of the house some nights, and I see Michael at his desk, writing a heartfelt letter to his hero across the sea. I can tell that Michael cannot wait to see his father again. Michael knows what I stand for and he knows that I have become so famous because of people like his own father. Michael is proud of his dad and of me, and I am glad. I am the American Flag.

Her name is Jessica. Jessica, who lives in New York City and has finally landed herself the job of her dreams. Jessica seems like the girl who has it all, as she walks into her new office every day, clothed very prestigiously and accented with a beautiful smile that never seems to fade from her face. Jessica was married to her love only 5 months ago, and she is still can't believe that it is true. Jessica seems like she has it all together, but what I see each day is a different story. Every morning, Jessica looks out her window and stares up at me. She doesn't speak much during this time, but I can tell that something is wrong because of the tears falling from her beautiful face. As she says a prayer through the window, under my shadow in the morning sun, she wishes that her new husband has the strength to make it home from the war ok.

I see that she misses him, but I cannot be more thankful for what he does. Her husband is an American Soldier. Jessica knows that he has made it home safe before, and she prays that he will again. I am thankful for men like Jessica's husband, and I am thankful for the sacrifices that both her and her husband endure. I am the American Flag.

Her name is Alexa. Alexa, the popular teenage girl at Ridgeview High School. Every morning, after the tardy bell has rung, I see Alexa waltz into class with the rude smirk on her face. I see her give the teacher attitude and then I watch as she takes her seat in the very

back of the class. I really don't like the way that she acts most mornings, but I do find that when everyone in the class stands up to salute me with the pledge, I can see a different person. Alexa's brother just joined the Marines upon his graduation last spring and now, I can see that she really does care about me. For the minute that it takes to say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning, Alexa drops the "mean girl" attitude and finds herself paying attention to me, because I represent the reason that her brother is gone. I represent what her brother is now fighting for and Alexa respects that. I am proud to see Alexa say those heartfelt words, as I can tell that she truly means each word that she is saying. I am proud of Alexa during this time each morning, and I wish that more teenagers would have the respect for me as Alexa does. I am the American Flag.

His name was Andrew. Lieutenant Andrew Kirk. He was deployed to Afghanistan 6 years ago and being a soldier was something that he had always dreamed of and loved to be more than most. Lieutenant Kirk left behind a wife and two beautiful daughters the morning that he led his troop through a mine field. The day that the hidden bomb exploded as the young man stepped over it, was a day that changed his life forever. In efforts to save the young boy, Lieutenant Kirk lost his life. He was a hero that day to a young soldier and his name will live on forever. I was not physically there with Lieutenant Kirk that day, but I am now as his family and friends gather to say their last goodbyes to the soldier in Arlington Cemetery. I am draped over his resting place as I am the reason that this man's life was taken. He fought for me, and for everyone that lives in my country so that we could live in peace. I will be folded up soon and I will forever live on top of Lieutenant Kirk's fireplace, where his family will live on in his memory. I am proud to be a part of his home and I will forever show gratitude for what he has sacrificed for me. I am the American Flag. I am the American Flag. I live on in through the people that fight for what I represent. I am the American Flag and I will forever be proud of those who show gratitude towards the men and women who have fought for me. I am the American Flag, and I will forever be by the sides of those who gave up everything so that I may live on. I am the American Flag and I will forever be waving in the classrooms and the yards of the citizens of the United States. I am the American Flag and I am proud to represent our amazing country. I am the American Flag.



A Day in the Life of an American Flag

Claire Choate

I'm lowered from my post as the daily Reveille sounds. Despite the usual sounds of officers barking orders and personnel completing their daily PT, I know today is different. I will not fly free after today, watching over the army base where I've spent my life thus far. Instead, I will serve a family. Serve to remind them that one less table setting at dinner is a small price to pay for the freedom that I symbolize. Remind them that every American values the sacrifice their family has made for the sake of this country. I'm folded up slowly, each crease representing a colony, a colony filled with people determined to be free, no matter the cost. I'm packed into a base vehicle surrounded by reverent soldiers, speaking in hushed tones over the humming of the radio. We pull out of the safety of the base, security guards nodding at us, knowing our destination, but unaware of the feeling of forbidding in the pits of the stomachs of those around me.

We arrive with military precision at the funeral home, and I'm lowered onto the closed casket with intense concentration, blue field over the left shoulder. Sharp turns, quick steps. I see hands clutching the hands of beloveds, and can feel all eyes on the casket I cover as the pallbearers carry me into view of the funeral party. Tales of bravery and honor are relayed to the still crowd, stirring occasionally to shift their weight from one foot to the other or rub the worn rosary beads draped through their fingers. I listen intently to the priest reciting his eulogy, although I think I may be the only one truly listening. The guests seem to be lost in their own thoughts, reliving memories of Christmases and Birthdays past, with family and friends gathered around. Their own laughter echoes cruelly in their heads as I lay in front of them, a reminder that that laughter will be strangely hollow for many functions to come.

As Taps resonates in the background, I'm folded for the last time. With each tap the sound of sobbing muffled by tissues is replaced by an eerie quiet, until the only sound

in the cemetery is the footsteps of a lone soldier, delivering me to the widow. "This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation and the United States Army as a token of appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service. God bless you and this country, and God bless the United States of America." She grasps at me with shaking hands as she crumbles, well-meaning hands patting her shoulders and back as their owners slip away, back to the normalcy she has almost forgotten even exists. Her mother whispers that she'll take the kids home and soon she and I are the only ones left, staring down into that grave as the sun sets slowly above us.

Perched in the passenger seat, the ride home is eerily silent. The widow clutches the wheel with one hand, me in the other. The littlest things trigger more tears-the red poppy on her visor, driving by a park with frolicking families. We arrive at my new home and she removes her keys from the ignition with those same trembling fingers and trudges up the driveway, dreading unlocking the front door to the silence that has been haunting me all day. As we walk through this museum of her former life, her breathing becomes more ragged until we finally reach the bedroom. The sun shining through the window seems to mock us both and she draws the blinds and softly sets me on the pillow beside her as she collapses onto the bed. Tears flow steadily down her flushed cheeks and her shaking shoulders subside to sleep. I watch as the room fades to dark, slivers of moonlight and streaks of tears stripe the face of my bedside companion.





A Day in the Life of an American Flag

Jennifer Berrian



"I pledge allegiance, to the flag of the United States of America..."

The best part of my day comes in homeroom when all the students stand, turn toward me, and begin the pledge. As I proudly puff out my stars and stripes, I look out through my starry eyes at the classroom. As I survey the students, I can't help but see and hear those who don't take their pledge seriously. One student does not even stand up, but instead continues vigorously working on homework. Another student stares stony-eyed at my red and white stripes with indifference, refusing to recognize me. And yet another student, jokingly says "I pledge allegiance, to my pants..." leading to a roar of laughter that distracts every student in the class. And with great sadness, I watch as each student turns and stares at the spectacle in the back instead of at me. Once again ignored, I face my starry eyes inward and go back in time.

Shots ring out as the War of 1812 nears its end. I have come a long way and I am tattered, dirty, but still proudly red, white, and blue. I still am mounted on my pole on the hill and watch fearfully as the Battle of Fort McHenry rages on. Yet, as the battle goes on, I remain waving proudly in the wind, defying the British Empire with my every wave. With my 15 stars and my 15 stripes, my mere presence inspires Francis Scott Key in the brig of the HMS Tonnant to write the Star-Spangled Banner ...

The clang of the homeroom bell interrupts my flashback and as the students file out of the classroom, casually passing me, I silently sing the Star-Spangled Banner to myself. Where is the patriotism that inspired that song? Where is the respect? Where is the loyalty and love of the banner that represents your freedom? As I catch a breeze from the closing doorway, my

proud stars and stripes flap once more before I drift off to sleep for my afternoon nap ...

"Get the flag already James!"

I am awake, disoriented and scared, but wide awake. I strain my 50 starry eyes into the darkness to try and distinguish the faces of the person that attempts to dismount me from my post.

"Lights on please!" yells this "James" who roughly continues to tug and jerk on the pole that keeps me secured to the wall. As lights fill the room, I see three men and one woman, in some type of green uniform all staring intently at my proud colors. I frantically search my memory for a reason why I was being removed from my post and remembered the assembly is today. With a grimace, I allow myself to be taken down, roughly, from my post, and pray for the best.

"The flag is dragging James! Have some respect man," says the one woman as she walks over and jerks up my pole so that I don't touch the ground. With silent thanks, I relax, knowing that at least one of these people have some respect for my colors and cleanliness. As I observe the hallways flash by at an almost absurd pace, I try and think of anything else other than motion sickness for it has been a while since I was moved. Finally, after what seems like forever, we come to a stop in front of what I presume to be the auditorium doors. "Attention!" yells the woman. And with this one word, I am held straight up and the four people in green fall into some sort of formation. "Forward!" My stripes began to tremble as we walk through the auditorium doors. My 50 starry eyes see an auditorium packed with students of all shapes, sizes, colors, and

clothes staring directly at me! They all have their hands over their hearts and finally, in unison, began the Pledge of Allegiance. And as their many voices fill the auditorium, I once again swell with pride and confidence that I have been recognized by so many young people. Even the trouble maker from homeroom stares at my proud colors with admiration. Just as the pledge ended and I began to prepare for my trip back to my post, I hear the beginning of a song...

What? Can it be? My anthem! ! !

A chorus of men and women in red and blue lead the entire auditorium in the Star-Spangled Banner. As the sound of the many voices swells and ebbs over the lyrics of the song, I can't help but feel my 50 starry eyes fill. Wracked with emotion, I try and maintain my stately composure.

And with the last syllables of the song, the air conditioning finally catches my folds of fabric. My red and white stripes snap and wave proudly, my royal blue shines bright, and my starry eyes shine in their magnificence as I hear "and the home of the BRAVE!"

The audience erupts in applause, claps, and cheers that leave me overcome with emotion. And with the song over, I am led out of the auditorium to a standing ovation. This moment is what makes it all worth it. This moment when the students, teachers, staff, and the nation remember why they are free. Why they can speak without fear of censorship, and where they can practice their religion without "fear of persecution. And as I find myself once again being swept through the halls back to my post I flap in the wind proud to be the symbol of the United States of America.



"A Day in the Life of an American Flag"



Kaylie Male

Freedom. Bathed in the colors that have come to represent the American people, I stand ready to fight and defend. Based on a triangle, like the three houses of government, white stands for purity, red for hardiness and valour, and blue for vigilance, perseverance and justice. I have a specific role to play, and my presence declares a love for my country and a respect for its leaders. My permanent home flies atop of the most important building in the country, the White House. I have seen an abundance of world leaders, starry-eyed travelers and protesters alike. Regardless of race, gender, age or ability, my symbol is the universal tie that all Americans recognize. I am the ultimate form of assembly, thousands of children pledge their allegiance to me with their morning breakfast. I am a proud symbol that veterans salute after their unspeakable brushes with violence and death abroad. I am an American Flag.

The day begins where last night left off, for I am unique to my brothers and sisters. I remain representing the colors throughout the night. There are myths that I am only to be flown when the President is near, but we shall leave those duties to the Queen. The break of dawn lends an air of stillness; I am fortunate to awake to the smell of manicured grass and poached eggs. There is an insurmountable feeling of pride when overlooking the pristine streets of the nation's capitol. It leaves the onlooker breathless and overcome by the spirit of our Founding Fathers. Today is the last Wednesday in March, the weather remains chilly, and the remnants of heavy winter coats are beginning to be shed. A class of kindergarten students has just Kaylie Male arrived from a local elementary school; they have been given miniature American flags in order to celebrate their heritage. There is a small blond boy at the rear of the line, his tiny hands clasp around the ominous fence surrounding the establishment. He looks up in wonder, there are ideas that he does not yet understand, but he smiles as if he has discovered the secret to the universe. His third tooth from the front is missing. The other children follow suit and grab ahold of the large fence. There are now eighteen tiny faces looking up at me, but the blonde boy is not fazed, his smile remains wide. In thirty-two years, he will be the next President of the United States.

Noon breaks and the crowds quiet down, the smells of cherry blossoms add to the feeling of excitement. Twice a day, my figure is checked for tiny imperfections, but today will not be my last. I have a clear view to the Washington Monument, the Smithsonian, and other tourist delights. The history of America paints a clear picture all within my scope of vision. My hope is that the young people of this generation will learn to respect the history that has shaped their lives. A high-pitched giggle interrupts my train of thought as a young couple stops to take a photograph, she kisses the boy on the cheek, a moment that will be forever frozen within the brink of time. I am pictured in virtually every photograph taken in front of the White House. I am flown as a symbol of pride for our citizens and of power to our visitors.

The day winds on without incident, as the sun begins to set over the horizon.

There is a beautiful feeling about being atop of the world, which I suppose is why the roof is such an excellent place to think. Today I have had visitors from maids, to cooks, to Senators who crave the feeling of freedom from their own lives. From time to time, I will even hear the enraged whispers of a cabinet member who insists upon a particular policy. Up here, your words are forever lost to the wind, so speak them carefully. Though tonight is something special. When the door opens, a familiar face steps onto the platform. He is tall, with kind eyes and an understanding smile. His handshake will reassure you, his oratory skills will stun you. He is one of the most intelligent men on Earth. He is the President of the United States. But tonight, he just wants to be an ordinary man. Falling to his knees in a slow motion, he cradles his head in his hands like a small child. The graying hair and dark circles surrounding his eyes humanize him. You cannot help but want to comfort him, but for now, I keep his pride. He sinks to the ground and pulls his knees to his chest, takes a deep sigh of relief. He remains there for a while. But he realizes that time must not be wasted, so he jumps to his feet and stares. He stares at the colors that his great grandparents fought for with their own blood. He silently thanks all of our veterans for their services, and feels blessed that he was born an American. He is the symbol that I represent, people of all kinds being united by one source: freedom. With that, a nod of his head, and then he is gone. My day begins once more.



The third annual Florida Challenge was held from October 24th to the 30th and started in Jacksonville. There were six of our members, including our 2nd Vice President Gerrie Bailey, who volunteered with the registration. We even had an Auxiliary member from Unit 275 who actually participated as a cyclist. The first overnight stop was in St. Augustine where we were met by members and the public. Leaving St. Augustine we headed to Daytona Beach and there were many Auxiliary members, family and friends along the route cheering us on. Thanks to the efforts of our 17th District president a dinner was held at a local VFW for the injured veterans and other cyclist. From Daytona Beach we headed to Cape Canaveral and what a fantastic lunch was provided by the American Legion Family of Edgewater 285 at their new Post home, which by the way was not completed. The route took us thru Kennedy Space center and we are the first to have ever been invited to ride through this property. As we continued to the hotel we were met again by many members along the route and when we reached the hotel the 12th District had a fantastic welcoming committee which consisted of the American Legion Family, the local fire department and the Brevard County Sheriff's motorcycle officers. This welcome even had a bagpiper. Since we were running a bit late dinner was pushed back by 30 minutes so that the veterans could have enough time to shower and dress. But the wait was well worth it as we had a full police and legion riders escort to Titusville Post 1. Along the ride many people were out cheering and waving their American flags. When we reached the post for dinner we were met by over 100 veterans, auxiliary members and dignitaries. What an experience....

Cape Canaveral took us to Orlando with a lunch stop at St, Cloud Post 80, which was awesome. We reached the hotel in Orlando and again were welcomed by members. A dinner was held at Pine Castle Post 286 and what a buffet they provided. The challenge left Orlando on Saturday morning and headed south to Winter Haven...as we started to reach our hotel destination we again were welcomed and cheered on by many

of the American Legion family members. Dinner that night was held at Winter Haven Post 8. Thanks to the efforts of Winter Haven Unit 8 President Louise and many of the members we were able to coordinate this dinner with The Sons of the American Legion annual Halloween Party and this made the night so much more enjoyable. Our cyclist also donned costumes and one of the injured veterans won 1st prize for his costume....a mail-order bride.... Unit 8 you are all fantastic and I apologize for not mentioning what a great job you did when I gave a short report at Fall Conference...

Sunday morning had us traveling to Tampa and the end of the challenge. Again we had members along the route cheering and waving flags. As we rode into the hotel we were met by members of the 15th and 16th districts, who helped distribute water, energy drinks, pizza and Halloween goodie bags. Many of our Auxiliary members carried luggage to the hotel lobby as they could see the injured veterans were exhausted.

It was indeed sad for us to see this challenge end and we know that we did a fantastic job in welcoming these injured veterans to the Sunshine state for the third time; but this could not have happened without the participation of our members. I personally applaud the members of the 5th, 17th, 12th, 6th, 7th, 15th and 16th districts and to the district presidents who I drove crazy; to the Post homes who hosted lunches or dinners and to the injured veterans who took this journey to help them try to get back to a normal life.

This year there will not be a Florida Challenge in October....instead the R2R organization will be having a Gulf Coast Challenge starting in New Orleans, Louisiana and ending in Tallahassee, FL. I will be contacting the 1st and 2nd District Presidents for their assistance and asking for volunteers to help wherever they can.

Mary Kelly-Perkins
R2R Committee



Welcome to 2012....the year that Florida American Legion Auxiliary will "Leap to Success".

Over the past four months we have held seven ABC Schools and the turn out has been fantastic. There is still time to schedule an ABC school in your District...just have the District Leadership Chairman contact me via leadership@alafl.org or call me at 352-428-1649 to set a date.

Now here are some tips on ***How-To Become an Effective Leader*** Start by taking the National Leadership Course which is available online at www.alaforveterans.org and encourage others to do the same.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE – you do not have to be an expert on everything, but having the basic knowledge is essential. Be familiar with the documents that govern your Unit or committee; if you are faced with a difficult question know where to go and whom to ask... Follow the chain of command, Unit President first, she then goes to District President and District President then goes to Department President. Have a level of familiarity with all of the programs and be able to explain the general objectives of the program.

Having a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order can help leaders avoid much grief and avoid possible confrontational or embarrassing situations. Remember that minutes are important; if it is not in the minutes then it never happened. An effective leader will know the process for the spending and control of the Units finances. Bad financial practices not only hurt the unit but can also result in criminal charges.

BE WILLING TO LISTEN – be patient, understanding and respect other opinions

BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE - take an active part in your Unit. Attend training workshops, committee meetings, social and public events.

BE DECISIVE, ENTHUSIASTIC AND INSPIRATIONAL – motivate others by your enthusiasm. Follow up with your members to ensure that they are achieving the goals that have been established. Be a cheerleader and inspire others.

STAY OPEN – to new ideas and relationships...this means listening to common sense – the inner voice of reason and fairness. But you need to remember that success can keep us from staying open to new ideas. As a unit improves it is important to remember how people were able to accomplish their Shared Goals.

BIG PICTURE – It is important to keep a big picture perspective when your plan for organizational improvement is evolving. Without a vision, your efforts risk becoming fragmented and isolated. You need to have a lasting impact in a community. Look thru a new lens but seeking first to understand before being understood. The idea of of shifting from trying to make your argument or ideas heard to trying to understand another

members point of view is NOT easy but it does work. Changing your lens helps you to reframe your thinking.

ACTIONS, EVENTS and PEOPLE are interrelated – so ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS. It is not nearly as important to have the right answers as it is to ask the right questions. By this I mean that everyone needs to understand and buy into the ideas presented.

Telling members how to act or feel will not work nearly as well as finding the questions that will lead them one at a time to their own discoveries for example:

Who needs to be involved to make it work

How can we involve younger members

If we are successful, how will we know it

These questions start to frame a dialogue. Continue to question members until they understand the entire challenge. The more serious you are about being effective, the more precise our questions become.

It does not make a difference if you are a Unit of 10 or 2000 members... you need to avoid the "burnout" syndrome. Ask the members to buy into one concept; mentor one member, volunteer to be a greeter at one meeting, write an article for the Unit newsletter etc. By not overwhelming members with large projects, they will have the opportunity to adjust to learning and helping build their unit. If a member enjoys an experience they will most likely look forward to helping more.

As members are selected to chair committees, mentor them; offer help when needed; be prepared to support when asked; provide training sessions. Be positive and be sure to communicate with your committee members and stay open minded.

District: Schedule an ABC School in the district. If you have a large district, schedule two separate schools in different areas to increase attendance; include a nearby district in these plans and don't forget to invite Legionnaires and Sons of the American Legion.

Units: Must definitely encourage your members to attend any and all workshops. Explain to the members what the ABC is all about; to learn about our organization and its programs. Let members know that there is always something new to learn.

Conduct mini workshops at Unit meetings to introduce and/ or refresh information to the members. I am looking forward to seeing many more ABC schools before May 1, 2012....will your District be our next stop?

Mary Kelly-Perkins
Leadership Chairman



Membership Statistical
Membership Keyed as of 1/25/2012

DISTRICT 1					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
75	CRESTVIEW	167	128	76.65%	-11
78	MILTON	51	44	86.27%	-8
121	JAY	19	17	89.47%	-4
193	PENSACOLA	135	88	65.19%	7
221	NICEVILLE	62	61	98.39%	-18
235	FT.WALTON BCH	208	139	66.83%	7
240	PENSACOLA	308	211	68.51%	5
296	DESTIN	70	61	87.14%	-12
340	PENSACOLA	287	229	79.79%	-28
356	LYNN HAVEN	251	159	63.35%	17
375	SOUTHPORT	62	11	17.74%	32
378	GULF BREEZE	18	23	127.78%	-10
382	NAVARRE	117	98	83.76%	-16
392	PANAMA CITY	74	78	105.41%	-26
District		1829	1347	73.65%	-341

DISTRICT 4					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
16	GAINESVILLE	66	68	103.03%	-22
27	OCALA	33	27	81.82%	-4
56	STARKE	24	19	79.17%	-2
58	DUNNELLON	76	61	80.26%	-8
77	INVERNESS	50	46	92.00%	-11
91	TRENTON	27	8	29.63%	11
149	NEWBERRY	47	30	63.83%	3
155	CRYSTAL RIVER	239	278	116.32%	-111
210	OCALA	18	14	77.78%	-1
225	FLORAL CITY	30	26	86.67%	-5
230	HAWTHORNE	50	32	64.00%	3
236	WILLISTON	16	18	112.50%	-7
237	BEVERLY HILLS	60	62	103.33%	-20
284	BELLEVUE	204	157	76.96%	-14
314	STARKE	23	18	78.26%	-2
District		963	864	89.72%	128

DISTRICT 2					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
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	50	98.04%	-14
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	35	72.92%	-1
241	SNEADS	64	65	101.56%	-20
272	BLOUNTSTOWN	16	0	0.00%	11
District		485	382	78.76%	-115

DISTRICT 5					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
37	ST. AUGUSTINE	118	94	79.66%	-11
54	FERNANDINA BCH	232	193	83.19%	-31
88	JACKSONVILLE	98	83	84.69%	-14
129	JACKSONVILLE BCH	350	256	73.14%	-11
137	JACKSONVILLE	587	489	83.30%	-78
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	85	85.00%	-15
233	PONTE VEDRA BCH	146	122	83.56%	-20
244	SO. JACKSONVILLE	47	54	114.89%	-21
250	MIDDLEBURG	346	252	72.83%	-10
283	JACKSONVILLE	286	217	75.87%	-17
316	ATLANTIC BCH	470	331	70.43%	-2
373	ORANGE PARK	19	15	78.95%	-2
District		2904	2241	77.17%	-644

DISTRICT 3					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
49	MONTICELLO	24	17	70.83%	0
57	LAKE CITY	229	189	82.53%	-29
107	LIVE OAK	31	33	106.45%	-11
131	GREENVILLE	42	35	83.33%	-6
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	16	88.89%	-3
383	OLD TOWN	134	129	96.27%	-35
District		696	620	89.08%	-237

**All membership, new & renewal
received by January 25, 2012 has
been keyed!**



DISTRICT 6					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
10	KISSIMMEE	314	261	83.12%	-41
19	ORLANDO	253	160	63.24%	17
21	UMATILLA	45	28	62.22%	4
35	MOUNT DORA	132	72	54.55%	20
52	LEESBURG	16	1	6.25%	10
53	SANFORD	238	172	72.27%	-5
55	CLERMONT	144	98	68.06%	3
63	WINTER GARDEN	34	32	94.12%	-8
76	TAVARES	36	36	100.00%	-11
80	ST. CLOUD	257	208	80.93%	-28
101	BUSHNELL	134	112	83.58%	-18
109	OCOE	36	39	108.33%	-14
112	WINTER PARK	15	14	93.33%	-4
183	ALTAMONTE SPR	132	87	65.91%	5
219	FRUITLAND PARK	262	202	77.10%	-19
242	ORLANDO	177	153	86.44%	-29
286	PINE CASTLE	332	282	84.94%	-50
330	LEESBURG	48	44	91.67%	-10
331	ORLANDO	71	59	83.10%	-9
347	LADY LAKE	706	680	96.32%	-186
District		3382	2740	81.02%	-880

DISTRICT 7					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
3	BARTOW	76	58	76.32%	-5
4	LAKELAND	111	86	77.48%	-8
8	WINTER HAVEN	691	544	78.73%	-60
34	HAINES CITY	89	59	66.29%	3
72	MULBERRY	192	137	71.35%	-3
118	ZEPHYRHILLS	46	34	73.91%	-2
201	FLORENCE VILLA	46	35	76.09%	-3
339	CRESTHAVEN	72	55	76.39%	-5
District		1323	1008	76.19%	-280

DISTRICT 8					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
11	ARCADIA	53	29	54.72%	8
24	BRADENTON	483	339	70.19%	-1
25	LAKE PLACID	396	299	75.51%	-22
30	SARASOTA	58	37	63.79%	4
69	AVON PARK	279	205	73.48%	-10
74	SEBRING	86	76	88.37%	-16
113	ROTANDA WEST	419	326	77.80%	-33
159	VENICE	856	680	79.44%	-81
254	NORTH PORT	131	82	62.60%	10
266	FRUITVILLE	172	99	57.56%	21
309	PALMETTO	279	245	87.81%	-50
312	ONECO	254	226	88.98%	-48
325	ELLENTON		26		
District		3466	2640	76.17%	-734

Checkout the Friday report on the
Homepage!

DISTRICT 9					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
36	FT. LAUDERDALE	104	80	76.92%	-7
92	HOLLYWOOD	166	126	75.90%	-10
142	POMPANO BEACH	341	292	85.63%	-53
157	MARGATE	353	257	72.80%	-10
162	DEERFIELD BEACH	362	280	77.35%	-27
180	PLANTATION	127	111	87.40%	-22
209	DANIA	41	27	65.85%	2
222	FT. LAUDERDALE	92	70	76.09%	-6
287	DEERFIELD BEACH	35	14	40.00%	11
304	DANIA	272	231	84.93%	-41
310	HALLANDALE	52	30	57.69%	6
321	COOPER CITY	181	138	76.24%	-11
District		2126	1656	77.89%	-487

DISTRICT 11					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
12	PALM BEACH	42	10	23.81%	19
20	BELLE GLADE	66	58	87.88%	-12
47	LAKE WORTH	144	117	81.25%	-16
62	STUART	71	62	87.32%	-12
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	157	88.70%	-33
188	DELRAY BEACH	32	12	37.50%	10
199	WEST PALM BCH	66	40	60.61%	6
258	GREENACRES	29	19	65.52%	1
268	RIVIERA BEACH	166	110	66.27%	6
269	LANTANA	27	26	96.30%	-7
271	JUPITER	157	145	92.36%	-35
277	BOCA RATON	102	85	83.33%	-14
288	BOYNTON BEACH	80	73	91.25%	-17
367	ROYAL PALM BCH	53	48	90.57%	-11
District		1538	1207	78.48%	-361

DISTRICT 12					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
1	TITUSVILLE	288	241	83.68%	-39
22	COCOA	115	96	83.48%	-16
39	VERO BEACH	180	153	85.00%	-27
40	FORT PIERCE	246	175	71.14%	-3
81	MELBOURNE	138	125	90.58%	-28
117	PALM BAY	339	281	82.89%	-44
126	JENSEN BEACH	165	168	101.82%	-53
163	EAU GALLIE	379	340	89.71%	-75
171	FORT PIERCE	38	21	55.26%	6
189	SEBASTIAN	100	76	76.00%	-6
191	MELBOURNE	155	129	83.23%	-21
200	SATELLITE BEACH	87	70	80.46%	-9
318	PORT ST LUCIE	347	281	80.98%	-38
332	KENNEDY SPACE CT	34	28	82.35%	-4
348	CAPE CANAVERAL	206	163	79.13%	-19
355	W PORT ST LUCIE	110	89	80.91%	-12
358	FORT PIERCE	49	39	79.59%	-5
359	PORT ST JOHN	232	185	79.74%	-23
366	BAREFOOT BAY	80	73	91.25%	-17
394	PALM BAY	35	35	100.00%	-11
District		3323	2768	83.30%	-940



DISTRICT 13					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
38	FORT MYERS	120	92	76.67%	-8
90	CAPE CORAL	187	126	67.38%	5
103	PUNTA GORDA	327	264	80.73%	-35
110	PORT CHARLOTTE	511	405	79.26%	-47
123	SANIBEL	93	43	46.24%	22
130	LABELLE	177	157	88.70%	-33
135	NAPLES	445	337	75.73%	-26
136	PINE ISLAND	401	308	76.81%	-27
192	FORT MYERS	34	21	61.76%	3
274	FORT MYERS BCH	617	439	71.15%	-7
303	BONITA SPRINGS	371	291	78.44%	-31
323	LEHIGH ACRES	419	353	84.25%	-60
336	N. FORT MYERS	210	197	93.81%	-50
351	FT MYERS SHORES	102	79	77.45%	-8
388	BONITA SPRINGS	41	15	36.59%	14
District		4055	3127	77.11%	-897

DISTRICT 14					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
28	KEY WEST	82	66	80.49%	-9
29	MIAMI	28	10	35.71%	10
31	MIAMI	131	115	87.79%	-23
43	HOMESTEAD	67	41	61.19%	6
67	NORTH MIAMI	107	80	74.77%	-5
98	CORAL GABLES	51	39	76.47%	-3
133	PERRINE	104	82	78.85%	-9
154	MARATHON	171	142	83.04%	-22
168	KEY WEST	29	26	89.66%	-6
333	KEY LARGO	97	60	61.86%	8
346	MIAMI	34	33	97.06%	-9
374	KEY BISCAYNE	72	63	87.50%	-13
District		973	757	77.80%	-222

DISTRICT 15					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
5	TAMPA	41	37	90.24%	-8
26	PLANT CITY	39	31	79.49%	-4
99	BROOKSVILLE	45	34	75.56%	-3
111	TAMPA	72	47	65.28%	3
138	PORT TAMPA CITY	305	233	76.39%	-20
139	TAMPA	185	142	76.76%	-13
147	ODESSA	60	26	43.33%	16
148	RIVERVIEW	203	168	82.76%	-26
152	TAMPA	329	262	79.64%	-32
167	TAMPA	31	10	32.26%	12
186	SPRING HILL	417	311	74.58%	-19
248	WEST TAMPA	26	23	88.46%	-5
334	TAMPA	60	42	70.00%	0
389	RUSKIN	30	24	80.00%	-3
District		1843	1390	75.42%	-376

DISTRICT 16					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
7	CLEARWATER	489	330	67.48%	12
14	ST. PETERSBURG	159	117	73.58%	-6
79	NEW PORT RICHEY	327	220	67.28%	9
104	PINELLAS PARK	286	243	84.97%	-43
119	LARGO	372	302	81.18%	-42
125	GULFPORT	345	356	103.19%	-115
158	TREASURE ISLAND	107	115	107.48%	-40
173	HOLIDAY	307	239	77.85%	-24
238	SAFETY HARBOR	266	206	77.44%	-20
252	CROSS BAYOU	535	465	86.92%	-91
273	MADEIRA BEACH	2078	1,608	77.38%	-153
275	DUNNEDIN	297	235	79.12%	-27
305	ST. PETE BEACH	165	130	78.79%	-15
335	HUDSON	213	186	87.32%	-37
District		5946	4752	79.92%	-1482

DISTRICT 17					
UNIT	NAME	GOAL	NOW	CURRENT %	NEEDED 70%
6	DELAND	120	92	76.67%	-8
17	NEW SMYRNA BCH	230	214	93.04%	-53
45	PALATKA	41	28	68.29%	1
115	BUNNELL	101	87	86.14%	-16
120	HOLLY HILL	235	208	88.51%	-44
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	32	91.43%	-8
267	ORMOND BEACH	182	140	76.92%	-13
270	PORT ORANGE	162	128	79.01%	-15
285	EDGEWATER	309	250	80.91%	-34
293	INTERLACHEN	167	129	77.25%	-12
361	SOUTH DAYTONA	170	144	84.71%	-25
District		1873	1547	82.59%	-517

All Membership received by 01/25/2012 has been keyed.



**DISTRICT ORDER
RENEWALS ONLY KEYED AS OF 1/25/2012**

District 4	89.72%
District 3	89.08%
District 12	83.30%
District 17	82.59%
District 6	81.02%
District 16	79.92%
District 2	78.76%
District 11	78.48%
District 9	77.89%
District 14	77.80%
District 5	77.17%
District 13	77.11%
District 7	76.19%
District 8	76.17%
District 15	75.42%
District 1	73.65%

The 2012 Department Membership Goal is 37,242.

As of 1/25/2012, **29,265** membership have been processed.

We are currently at 78.58%