There are a lot of changes to report this month. Many of you already know, we were able to get our bars reclassified as a fraternal organization, and away from the stigma of a night club. Hard work happened behind the scenes to accomplish this task, allowing us to reopen again at 50% following CDC guidelines.

The Department of Business & Professional Regulation (DBPR) has now allowed all bars and night clubs to reopen to 50% following CDC guidelines. If you get a visit from the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco (ABT), and you are not following guidelines, they WILL suspend your license, without guaranteeing a time frame and possibly resulting in a permanent suspension. Please pay attention to all laws and guidelines.

We have begun virtual training through a series of webinars this past month, and there is more training on the horizon. It is important that you have your post’s officers attend these classes to assist them with their respective duties and roles. Thank you to all those who have and will be involved in these valuable classes. A special thank you to Jim Ramos, Bob Sussan, John Dollinger, Bruce Comer and Department Staff for getting the ball rolling.

We distributed a sample ballot for amendment number six (6), coming up for a vote. As veterans, we hope you will vote YES. This amendment would allow the Homestead Property Tax Discount to be transferred to the surviving spouse of the deceased veteran.

Great things have been going on around the state: a new roof was installed for a veteran in the 5th District; drive by wishes for our older veterans; rides throughout the state raising money for our youth and veterans; PROJECT: VetRelief tournament, with R.L. James and sponsors, raised $60,000 for the program; PROJECT: VetRelief has awarded more than $50,000 during the COVID crisis to Florida Veterans, through a partnership with the Florida Veterans Foundation, Legion family and numerous other sponsors and contributors.

In September, the panhandle was again hit with another devastating hurricane. We have been in constant contact with...
the leadership, available to help in any way they might need. Currently they are asking for tarps, water, Gatorade, and cleaning supplies. Please reach out to Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness Chair (disasterprep@legionmail.org), for more information and where you can drop off these items.

Unfortunately, we are still seeing some negative emails and social media posts regarding issues, founded and/or unfounded. I would truly love to see more positive thoughts instead of consistently negative comments from certain individuals. We welcome constructive criticism, and often times there are more factors that you may be or may not be aware of. Be a part of the solution, and not the problem would be the best example to lead by.

Please be vigilant in your travels and please be smart and follow CDC guidelines at any function that you might be attending. God bless us all and do the right things for the right reasons.

Service, Honor, Sacrifice, Tank Out

**Webinar Training**
Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice
1stvice@legionmail.org

We are slowly returning to normal, now we need to get back to the business of the American Legion. I was on a webcast with Bay Pine VA Hospital and I received the following take away,

1. Eligible Veterans can receive their flu vaccines at no cost from a VA community partner starting Sept 1. Veterans Service Organizations interested in hosting a flu vaccine clinic may contact BPVAHCS Public Affairs at VHA-BAYPublicAffairs@va.gov for more information.
2. VA working to ensure all Veterans have telehealth access through new Digital Divide Program. VA healthcare providers are identifying Veterans who do not have video-capable devices. Beginning Sept 15, healthcare providers can request video-capable devices to be loaned to eligible Veterans through the Federal Communications Commission’s Lifeline program.

Again, this was provided by the Bay Pine VA Hospital. However, if you are a Post that is having problems bringing in new members, reach out to your local VA hospital or clinic, to see if your Post can host a Flu Vaccine Clinic. The VA will contact all Veterans in the area to attend. This will get the Veterans in your doors, then it is up to you to sell the American Legion Programs.

As for Zone 3, as of September 10th, 4th District is leading the pack for the Traveling Membership Trophy. We need to keep looking for ways to increase our membership. Buddy Calls are one way to keep in touch with our fellow veterans. Many of our brothers and sisters are at home, afraid to get out due to this virus. Reach out to them and let them know you care, and are thinking of them.

I keep hearing that there is no

**Continued on page 3 >>**
communication coming out of Department, information is coming out. It comes out via The Legion Link, at District Meetings, Legion Websites, the same way information has been sent out for a number of years. Part of the problem everyone is experiencing is the missing Conventions and Fall Conferences, where a lot of our information comes from. Without our Convention and Fall Conference, we lost access to an avenue to receive needed information. We need to find other routes to get access to this information.

One way to get this needed information is that the Department is working on various training Web-ex’s, that came out in the middle of September. These are designed to assist local Post Officers in training that is desperately needed by our Posts. They are still available to view at any time, use them now to train your replacement.

Please review the series of Web-ex’s as they come out and use them at your Post. As always, keep safe, and let your chain of command know if something is needed.

Saving Our Posts

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org

Hope you and your families are doing well during these trying and uncertain times. Today I would like to talk to you about “saving American Legion Posts in the state of Florida”. The Department Commander and his team went to Tallahassee to fight, beg, and plead for our posts to be open in the state of Florida. The mission was accomplished. How do we keep our Posts open? “Department let our elected officials know that we would abide by the CDC rules and let us police our own posts and social quarters.”

We must always show that image on social media, press releases, and all other forms of communication that has to do with The American Legion. The Department of Florida commander has requested that all officers for the Florida American Legion please adhere to wearing a mask as specified by the CDC and be sure and have mask on when taking pictures representing The Florida American Legion. When not eating or drinking please put your mask back on. You never know who is taking pictures and will post them on social media. Even though you have beverages in front of you and are drinking, the picture comes out that you are not wearing a mask. This gives a false illusion that guidelines are not being followed. You never know when someone from Tallahassee or anyone else will follow you on Facebook, etc. This is not over yet. We are in a trial period and it is up to us to follow guidelines so that posts may stay open.

District Commanders, please share this information with each of your posts. The members can make you or break you. When this happens, it is usually but not necessarily the members who do not attend meetings. Please share this information with the SAL and Riders.

All About You

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvice@legionmail.org

Sometimes there’s just more questions than answers. If I wear a mask, do I have to social distance? If I social distance do I have to wear a mask? Which functions should I attend, and which should I stay away from? If a zoom meeting is an alternative should that be utilized? Should I wear pants? To answer any of these questions you must first ask, what is best for you?

As you all may know, restrictions have been loosened quite a bit in recent week but that does not relieve you of your duty to protect those around you. We have all received some guidance from Department on down the line to limit our exposure.

This can be taken several ways. Number one is to limit what is subject to public scrutiny and number two is for the health and safety of our membership and the public. I attended two District meetings this past weekend and although each meeting was professionally run and informative, one required the use of masks and the other did not. The meeting
I thought most of you might be interested in what is going on with the VA's National Cemetery Administration.

The VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is promoting pre-need eligibility determinations, to encourage Veterans and their eligible family members to plan to use VA burial benefits.

NCA receives applications and makes Pre-Need burial eligibility determinations on a first-in-first-out basis.

Due to the unprecedented number of applications received, they have temporarily shifted their focus to notifying each applicant that they have received their application and communicating with them about expected timelines for completion of our determination. They expect to have this notification out to each applicant shortly.

NCA provides eligibility and scheduling support to families with Time of Need requests for burial, meaning those circumstances where a death has occurred, and families need to schedule a burial at a national cemetery.

If that is your situation, you should contact your funeral service provider or the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 1-800-535-1117.

NCA is no longer accepting email submissions for VA Form 40-10007, “Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery.”

NCA hopes to resume this service in the future. It is continuing to process applications via the online application, mail, and fax.

Please mail VA Form 40-10007 to: National Cemetery Scheduling Office P.O. Box 510543 St. Louis, MO 63151 Or fax to: Fax (toll-free): 1-855-840-8299

I pray for you often and with all that's going on in our country I would like to remind you that God is in control! 2 Timothy 1:7 says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

The American Legion was designed and created to be on the forefront of identifying veterans and their family's needs and working towards solutions on how to serve them best. With that in mind, as part of our Challenge 22 efforts, I have been in contact with the American Association of Christian Counselors and we are being offered a faith-based Mental Health Life Coach Certificate through Legion Church. It is about 45 hours of online training and the $2400 tuition has been waived, so the only cost is a $54.00 administration fee. I already have several people from around the state enrolled in the program. If you would like to know more please email me at bwroberts@rocketmail.com or call me at 863-661-9999.

Let's be proactive together in preserving “For God and Country” and reaching out into our communities and serving our veterans and their families. Let’s be proactive together and go help somebody….

I am here for you, I encourage you to go to The American Legion Department of Florida Chaplains’ Facebook page, feel free to like and share. www.facebook.com/floridalegionchaplains

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13
Constitution and By-Laws Template
Clarence Hill, Judge Advocate
judgeadvocate@legionmail.org

The Constitutions and By-Laws (C-BL) backlog continues to be a problem. There is a template online at floridalegion.org for Posts to use when writing their C-BL. The template has largely been ignored - less than 10% adhere to it - and the remaining 90% are radically different than the template. With the approval of the Department Commander, the Judge Advocate will now do a quick read of each C-BL with the goal of processing those that have the least issues and returning those that most differ from the template for a rewrite. Article 9, Section 7 of the National Constitution states “Each Department may prescribe the Constitutions of its Posts.”

Please follow the template.
There are several Posts that have submitted C-BL’s that used language that implied that their Executive Committee runs their Post. It does not. The membership runs the Post and approves or disapproves of Executive Committee action at a regular meeting. Posts should also consider having Standing Rules for items such as: when the Post meets, what the dues are, what the hours of operation are, etc. Any item that may need to be changed routinely should be in the Standing Rules so a C-BL change is not needed.

A letter will be sent with the return of each C-BL with a promise of a 30-day review from when it is received by the Judge Advocate.

Our Department Commander and staff have successfully negotiated a change in Florida’s classification of our Posts. The requirement to have a 509 restaurant license to serve food has been removed as non-profit Fraternal Organizations are exempt by statute. Posts may now sell alcohol for on premises consumption whether they serve food or not. We still must follow CDC Guidelines on social distancing, wearing facemasks, 50% occupancy, the use of hand sanitizers and any additional guidelines imposed. Posts need to protect our Legion Family Members. Finally, Facebook is public-let’s put pictures on Facebook that show Legion Posts following the CDC guidelines and working their programs, instead of what has been posted to date.

Keep Up the Great Work
Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org

Congratulations to Post 259 for being the First Post in the Northern Area to reach 100%, and to Post 210 for being the First Post in the Fourth District to reach 100%. I would also like to congratulate all the Posts of the Northern Area that have reached or exceeded their 50% goal. Our next two membership goals are 55% before 08 Oct 2020 and 65% before 05 Nov 2020.

Please remember that the Fall Conference has been cancelled. Department is planning to conduct the Training Classes via ZOOM. Normally, class topics typically include, but are not limited to: Commander, Finance Officer, Sgt @ Arms, Historian, Chaplain, Adjutant, Judge Advocate, Membership, and Social Media. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

By the time you read this, you should have already visited the high schools to talk about several of our Programs; Oratorical, Boy’s State, School Medals, and ROTC.

As this is October, please remember the Halloween Safety Coloring Books and watch out for those who are trick-or-treating. October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Southern Area News
Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander
southernarea@legionmail.org

The Southern Area’s last three counties are finally in Phase 2 and I hope we can remain that way. Please remember we are not a bar; we are a veteran’s organization. Food, masks, and social distancing is mandatory. So have hamburgers, hotdogs, pizza, and other foods available. No food, no drink. What a great way to make money for the time you were closed. Those that complain about masks tell them to buy food. Can’t eat or drink with a mask on, just saying.

Let’s talk about membership in the 9th District Post 222 is at 85.71 percent. In the 14th District Post 145 is at 92 percent. In the 11th District Post 390 is at 101.59 and the first to hit 100 percent plus one in the Southern Area. Congratulations to Wellington Post 390, great job. We have 20 Posts that have hit the goal of 50 percent, great job. There are 34 Posts that need to meet that 50 percent goal. October 8th, we need to be at 55 percent. Let’s help your District Commanders hit that goal. Get on the phones and start calling your members who are carrying a 2020 card.

Remember October 31 is Halloween. The Department has great deals on coloring books, and free flyers. Get them now.

Lastly get out and VOTE
We Need to Stay on Top of Membership
Jim Ramos, Northern Membership
teamramos@legionmail.org

Thanks to 4th, 6th, 1st, and 2nd Districts for achieving 50% or higher; 17th, 5th, and 3rd Districts just need to catch up to make the next Goal of 55% by October 9, 2020. “We can do it together” call me if you need assistance, please do not wait until it is too late.

We need to stay on top of membership because we must meet the Goals from National and Department. The membership timetable is to help each Post make their new goal. Each Post can find their new goal for the year 2020-2021 on the weekly membership report under “QUOTA”. How you might say? We have Membership Chairmen in each District, Area and at Department to help you and your Post. Please just ASK. I will always be a phone call or email away and I will have some suggestions to help with membership, we can make it work.

First make a Membership Team at your Post for the following:
1. Reinstatements Team (3 Legionnaires who know membership at a minimum)
2. Renewal Team (3 Legionnaires who know membership at a minimum)
3. Prospect Team (3 Legionnaires who know membership at a minimum)
4. New Membership Team (3 Legionnaires who know membership at a minimum)

A Recruiter is a person whose job is to enlist or enroll people as employees, in the armed forces, or as members of an organization.

With that we have an active and passive recruiter, which one are you?

A passive recruiter is where the real magic happens:
• Inspire others through PRIDE in the organization, action, and General human character. I have a plan that appeals to those who you want to be members of The American Legion and your Post.
• Demonstrate consistent excellence and genuine benevolence in taking care of Veterans.

An active recruiter is one who goes out:
• Obtain names of veterans through any means.
• Contact veterans by telephone, area canvass, home visits.
• Have your speech ready for when approached or approaching others.

Setting the Goals: (specific dates, timetable, and some suggestions below)

Plan for October
1. Order your Halloween coloring books before Oct 16th deadline.
2. Oct 8, Department 55% Membership Goal
3. Oct 12, Columbus Day - Your Post can do something.
4. Oct 13, Navy Birthday - Do something for your Navy Veterans in your Post.
5. Have a membership drive for renewal, new members and reinstate members who for some reason left your Post try to get those members back to your Post.
6. Oct 27, Navy Day - Your Post can do something to thank the members who served in the
7. Oct 31, Halloween - Do something for the kids in your community or Post.
8. November a BIG month on Nov 5, is Department 65% goal are you ready (is your Post ready)

Plan for November (A BIG month)
10. Nov 5, Department 65% Membership Goal - Veterans Day, this month, turn out and come with a new member.
11. Nov 10, Marine Corps Birthday - Do a birthday celebration for your Marine Veterans in your Post.
12. Nov 11, Veterans Day - Plan for all Veterans in your Post and Veterans in your community.
13. Nov 16-22 American Education Week - Go to your local schools and volunteer.
14. Nov 22-28 is National Family week help your Post families
15. Nov 26 Thanksgiving Day - Plan a dinner for your members who do not have family.

For more suggestions call me or email

Time to Work Membership
Ray Perez, Southern Membership
teamperez@legionmail.org

As we begin to recover slowly, in my opinion our Posts need to focus on three things; a successful timetable in planning events revolving in obtaining new members in accordance with yearly American Legion important dates, working the DMS Transfer Program to maximum effect, and renewing membership the fastest way by informing them to renew online and using the QR Code.

First, the timetable which will be added as a change to our Membership Plan and Awards Manual for 2020-2021, soon to be published but already being handed out at meetings and training by PDC Ramos and myself. This timetable has a proven track record by which Post Commanders and Membership Teams can measure their success monthly and assists them obtaining their monthly goal.

Second, the DMS Transfer program which has three steps. By using MyLegion.org and downloading Post 400 members rosters in their area by distance or zip code, send your invitation to them by email. When they do not respond, send them the form letter or a letter created by your Membership Team. The last step is the remainder of these members that did not answer the email or mailout, call them by phone. Until then you have not worked this program to the full extent. Too many of us will do a mailout and

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Just quit, this program works if you are persistent. Keep in mind as of this date the Post 400 members are quick to renew and are over 60%.

Last, the renewing of our current members. Renewing online is the quickest way for our members but we must teach them. Many are skeptical of giving us their credit card number on the renewal notice. They are not aware that they can do this online themselves. We have recently published a QR or scan code to make this easier for them. With the new technology of their smart phones all they must is run the phones camera lens over the scan code and it will take them to the online renewal site. A member sitting at your Post enjoying lunch can walk over to a sign you provide on the wall with the QR Code and renew before he/she leaves the Post. Like I said we will have to help them along and show them how easy it is, but it works. If you will email me, I can send you the code. I could not get it to copy on this article.

It finally happened, the “Round Robin” trophy made it to District 15! Sorry I could not make it for the trophy exchange or celebration due to a family emergency. The emergency did not take away from how proud we are of the 15th District. Watching the numbers during that month, you could see the momentum shift from district to district. Again, congratulations Steve Tyler and the Chapters of District 15, well played! Sonny, I hope you remembered the way down to the 15th, from the looks of things they’ve got the “Mo” on there side and you might have to bring the “Children & Youth” trophy to them. Watch out, they are on a roll!

Our next event is the October “Merry Go Round” which is this month. We our going to run the event through the same program as the “Round Robin”. As this article is written in the middle of September, we are still putting all the pieces together and the information will be posted on our website. Good luck and watch out for the 15th District, they have a plan.

Make sure this year’s Children & Youth Picnic is on your calendar. It will be held at Post 1 on April 3, 2021 from 12p to 6PM. Hope to see you there, the kids really enjoy the bikes.

As you know by now the Fall Conference has been cancelled. Tom Voelz was scheduled to roll out a new approach to selecting Chapter or Chapters of the year at the Conference. We will post the new program on our website and schedule “online” training. We will ask Tom to explain the program and answer any questions. Over the last few years, we only have two or three Chapters putting in for the award. We really need to get more chapters involved.

Per last month’s article, we are considering a new venue for the Summit. We currently have it narrowed down to two hotels, both in Orlando. As I mentioned last month, it’s hard to find a place that will let us have all the same activities we enjoyed at the International Palms. Wish I could snap a picture when I ask for 6 fire pits, it is worth a thousand words. I will get this finalized as soon as all the numbers come together and get it posted on our website.

As I have mentioned before, Bev and I are looking for a little help. We are a little ahead of the schedule because we moved unused plans from last year to this, but we need more individuals to get involved and ready to step up as the needs of the program change.

Again, Thank You for all your Efforts! We already have our schedule put together for next year. More info coming. Here is our tentative schedule for next year for your review and comments:

- October – all month, Merry Go Round – For Children & Youth
- November 5-8, Fall Conference – Cancelled
- Summit - February 3, Wednesday - Meet & Greet 6P – 8P
- Summit - February 4, 5, & 6 – Classroom, we may add AM Sunday for Road Captain Training
- April – all month, Round Robin, PVR/SPI
- April 18th Meet & Greet at Marathon & Pensacola Fl.
- April 19th through 23rd North & South In-State Unity Rides
- April 24th In-State-Rally, Harley South Kissimmee Fl.
- June 16th – 19th, Department Convention

Beverly and I would like to thank each of you for the support we received this last year! Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such a great group!
Each year at the National Convention, students from across the nation are honored as the National Champions for several American Legion Americanism programs. We hear from the Boys Nation President, the Eagle Scout of the Year, the Law Enforcement, Firefighter and EMT of the Year, the Boys Baseball National Champion team, The National Oratorical Champion, Junior Shooting Sports Champions and so many more.

My first thought was “How impressive these Americans are!” My second thought was “Is there someone like this in my community that deserves to be standing on that stage next year, but was never given the chance because my Post didn’t find them?” What a shame if there is. They deserve the chance to shine and be recognized and it our job as Legionnaires to make sure that happens.

Imagine if your Post or District can reach out to your community to shine a bright light on these amazing Americans and then have them represent your hometown on the National stage next year. How cool would that be for everyone involved. So please step up and get involved in today. There is a young boy or girl who has amazing capabilities ready for you to call their name.

Happy Halloween To All,
As the Baseball Executive Board begins the preparation for the 2021-2022 season and the Jr. and Sr. State tournaments hosted in Jacksonville, I want to let you know the following:

• The service we provide to thousands of kids and families through our Americanism Baseball Program has been very much missed by our communities.
• My phone and messages never stop, we are wanted, we are needed, and we are so important to so many that we serve.
• I have attended two District Meetings over the last week and I am encouraged that we are heading back to some normality in what we all do.
• Please keep in mind that the baseball program needs your help to keep serving, improving, and growing.

Stay safe, stay positive and let’s keep on keeping on!
The Power of Blood Type Donations

Ray Perez, Blood Donor
temperez@legionmail.org

Thank you, Rhonda, for this month’s article!

What may you or may not know about being a blood donor and about your blood type:

O- donors with this powerful blood type are called the universal donor because their red blood cells can be transfused into any patient, regardless of the recipient’s blood type. Only 7% of the population has O- blood, yet it is the blood type in the highest demand. O- blood is also vital for premature babies and cancer patients.

O+ is the most common blood type and that is what makes it so powerful. 37% of the population has O+ blood. Since more people have O+ blood than any other blood type, it is transfused more often.

A- blood is rare and powerful. Only 6% of the population has A- blood. Every two seconds someone needs blood. The need is so constant that donated blood is often transfused within three days of your donation. The most powerful part of A- blood can be found in the red blood cells. A- donors are strongly encouraged to donate double red blood cells.

A+ is a powerful blood type because it is the second most common blood type. Since 36% of the population is A+ it is among the blood types transfused most often. The most powerful part of A+ blood can be found in the platelets. Platelets can be donated as often as every seven days and up to 24 times a year. Platelets are in high demand by hospitals and often help cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. Red blood cells from A+ donors also hold lifesaving power.

B- blood is rare and powerful. Only 2% of the population has B- blood. Every two seconds, someone needs blood. The need is so constant that donated blood is often transfused within three days of your donation. The most powerful part of B- blood can be found in the red blood cells. To maximize your true lifesaving power, all B- donors are strongly encouraged to donate double red blood cells.

B+ is a rare blood type that holds tremendous power. Only 8% of the population has B+ blood. B+ blood donors have two ways of targeting the power of their donation. The most preferred donation method is to donate platelets. Platelets can be donated as often as every seven days and up to 24 times a year. Platelets are in high demand by hospitals and often help cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

AB- is the rarest of all the blood types with only 1% of the population sharing this special power. Donors who are AB- are the universal platelet and plasma donor because these components can be transfused into any patient, regardless of the recipient’s blood type.

AB+ is one of the rarest of all the blood types with only 3% of the population sharing this power. Donors who are AB+ are called the universal plasma donor because this component can be transfused into any patient, regardless of the recipient’s blood type.

Junior Shooting Sports Coaches

Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC/JSSP
jrotc@legionmail.org

Newly implemented risk management mandates for The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Tournament

The Americanism Division wishes to make you aware that as a result of Public Law 115-126, Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017, The American Legion now mandates that anyone 18 years of age or older who is coaching, volunteering or otherwise participating in the Junior Shooting Sports program must annually pass a criminal background check and sexual abuse awareness training. Detailed information and guidance is provided in “The American Legion Risk Management Guidebook for the Junior Shooting Sports National Tournament” located at https://www.legion.org/publications/249993/jssp-risk-management-guide.

The American Legion national organization mandates that criminal background checks for national youth programs must be conducted by an exclusive commercial vendor engaged by the national organization. The use of a single provider for background checks ensures screening consistency and enhanced confidentiality. The mandated exclusive provider is “Protect Youth Sports.” The cost of a criminal background check with Protect Youth Sports is $20 for The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Tournament, which is two rounds of postal matches administered by the national organization. This amount is the cost for those who are needing a background check that reside in the United States or a United States territory. For those living outside the United States or its territories, the cost will be dependent on the country in which they reside. Cost could vary from $75 to $150. That Protect Youth Sports fee also includes the mandated sexual abuse awareness training. The national organization does not fund or collect any costs associated with the background checks or training. A link to Protect Youth Sports is provided in the during

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proof that each “designated individual” as defined in the risk management guidebook has successfully passed a criminal background check through Protect Youth Sports and a certificate of completion for sexual abuse awareness training, through either Protect Youth Sports or the U.S. Center for SafeSport, must accompany the affiliation form when it is presented to the affiliating American Legion post for verification and signatures.

Affiliating American Legion posts are unable to sign the affiliation form without verifying those two documents for each designated individual.

Any questions may be directed to The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports program manager at American Legion National Headquarters by sending an email to Americanism@legion.org or calling (317) 630-1203.

Children & Youth Cannisters
Les Martin, Children & Youth
rm@legionmail.org

Okay, now that most, if not all Posts are back up and running, (at least in a social distancing mode) it’s time to get back into the swing of Post operations.

Remember, one of your duties as an American Legion Post is to participate in our American Legion Programs. As a reminder, below is the section from the National CPR form with the activities that you can participate in for the Children & Youth.

As you can see, it asks for the number of Children & Youth activities you held during the year. I am asking that each Post, S.A.L. and Riders group hold at least one fundraising activity for the Department Children & Youth Committee.

It could be anything, like a breakfast or dinner with the proceeds going to the Department Children & Youth. The Riders could hold a poker run or the S.A.L. could collect items and have an auction, or raffle off a basket of cheer. These are just a few suggestions that you can do to support the Department Children & Youth Committee.

I know many Posts hold a Queen of Hearts Drawing, others have Feather Your Nest and yet others have Bar Poker or Horse Races. Make one of these for our Department Children & Youth for a month, especially during the month of April which is Children & Youth Month. These are activities that you are already doing.

Our Children & Youth Picnic is scheduled for April 3rd, at Post 1 in Titusville. Please make plans to have at least one member of your Post family in attendance. We were not able to hold this Picnic last year, so I am looking for a really big turnout this year.

Last month, I asked for the Posts that have not yet collected their Children & Youth canisters and submit their check to me to please collect them and send in their funds now. This was something that was very easy and didn’t cost the Post anything except for a little time. Again, only five Posts sent in their check for this program and they only totaled $940. We as a Department can’t help the Youth of Florida and the Children of our Veterans without your help.

I have attended a few District Meetings so far. I want to thank the District Commanders for allowing me time to speak for a few minutes. I will be selling our C&Y Pins and the new C&Y coins when I attend future meetings. I will also have applications for our Teacher of the Year Award and Best Children & Youth Post Program and Best Children & Youth Chairman with me. When I walk into your District Meeting and you don’t recognize me, it may be because I will be doing my part in Social Distancing and wearing my face covering.

Until Next Month, stay Safe and Healthy.

New Beginning
Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org

With all of us in phase 2 now, we should be able to get some of our programs going. The first one is Halloween. Have your squadron help in a Halloween party. There are ways to do it and maintain the social distancing and staying safe for yourselves and for the children. Halloween coloring books are available. Get bags and prepackage the coloring books with crayons and some candy to pass out. I am hopeful that we will all be back to a more normal life by the end of the year. Stay safe and get your squadrons involved to make your post a success.
The Power of Great Oratory

Meri West, Oratorical oratorical@legionmail.org

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” ~ The Preamble to the Constitution. May 25th – September 17th, 1787, Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

“Fourscore and seven years ago our Fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” ~ Abraham Lincoln, Nov. 19th, 1863 giving the Gettysburg Address at the dedication of the Soldier’s National Cemetery, Gettysburg, PA, four and a half months after the Union armies defeated the Confederacy at the Battle of Gettysburg.

“It was we the people; not we the white male citizens, nor yet we the male citizens; but we the whole people who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and half of our prosperity, but to the whole people—women as well as men.” ~ American Voting Rights Activist, Susan B. Anthony, November 18, 1872, upon being arrested for having voted in the Presidential election. Incidentally, she voted a straight Republican ticket, and for Ulysses S. Grant for President. Anthony was fined 100.00 for the offense which she refused to pay. Forty eight years later, on August 18, 1920, the Constitution was amended and women were granted the right to vote. Wyoming was the first territory to allow women to vote.

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.” ~ Winston Churchill, August 20th, 1940, referring to the ongoing efforts of the Royal Air Force crews who were at the time fighting the Battle of Britain.

“And so my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” ~ President John F. Kennedy giving his inaugural speech on Jan. 20, 1961

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of it’s creed—we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.” ~ American Civil Rights Activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., August 28, 1963 speaking at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” ~ American Astronaut Neil Armstrong upon landing on and being the first human to walk on the surface of the moon, July 20th, 1969

“I know it’s hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It’s all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It’s all part of taking a chance and expanding man’s horizons. The future doesn’t belong to the fainthearted: it belongs to the brave. The crew of the Challenger Space Shuttle honored us by the example in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God.” ~ President Ronald Reagan, Jan. 28th, 1986 speaking to the nation about the explosion of the Challenger Space Shuttle, killing Crista MacAuliffe, the first school teacher in orbit and six other courageous crew members whose shuttle mission lasted a mere 73 seconds. The speech was written by Peggy Noonan (who also penned the famous “read my lips, no new taxes” for President George H. W. Bush.) The last sentence is paraphrased from the poem “High Flight” by John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

More recently “I Can’t Breathe,” is an example of the linguistic staying power of a protest phrase coined in 2014 after the police killing of Eric Garner in a chokehold. This phrase was listed as the number one notable quotation in 2014, in the Yale Book of Quotations, by Fred Shapiro. Words matter and indeed they are often mightier than the sword.

Great speeches lift our hearts in times of darkness; they give us hope in times of despair. They inspire courageous feats, honor the dead, celebrate the living and very often change the course of history.

Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity. The simple choice of a word can make the difference between someone accepting or denying your message says Mohammed Qahtani, the 2015 World Champion of the Toastmasters. The words you choose influence how others perceive you, what decisions they make about you. They can build you up or in an instant, they can destroy you.

Consider the child who is eager to show his father that he has mastered the bike with no training wheels and the father says “Not now, son, I’m busy.” Or the mother who tells her daughter “You have a very pretty face” implying that all areas south of the neck are worth avoiding. Ever overhear your wife comparing you to a former lover? That can sting. Or stab. Or crush. Words can be cruel or kind but we can all agree they are powerful. Hence the adage, “The pen is mightier than the sword.”

In an age where words are spilling out of us onto Facebook, in presentations, in casual conversations, on blogs, in emails, in texts, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, to our neighbors and yes, even to our pets, are we giving our words enough thought? That, my friend, is a whole other conversation.

One reason I am passionate about the American Legion’s Oratorical Contest

Continued on page 12 >>
is that we are encouraging and giving students a forum to practice the art and craft of public speaking. Our contest has a strong focus on the Constitution and a citizen's duty to their government and country. It's a very relevant and meaningful topic to any citizen but certainly to Legionnaires, who fought in wars to protect our free speech and the right to dissent.

**Gary May was a Marine in Vietnam and lost both legs during the Tet Offensive.**

**He said it best:** *The freedom of expression, even when it hurts, is the truest test of our dedication to the belief that we have that right.*

Public speaking and oratory are skills that are essential to great leaders. We look to our leaders to effect change; to set the direction of our nation and build a vision for our future. The hardworking students who accept the challenge of the American Legion Oratorical Contest are likely to be leaders in the near future. They will become policy makers, lawyers, judges, doctors, great business leaders, educators and philanthropists.

**Sponsoring a contestant is one way to help the American Legion build and keep a meaningful legacy.**

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### The American Legion Square Knot Award

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org

I am honored to share the following story with our Department of Florida Scouting family. On Monday, September 14, 2020, the American Legion Department of Florida, Central Area, 15th District, Post 389 (Ruskin) Commander, Jay Allen, presented The American Legion Square Knot Award to both Robert (Bob) Lindsey Jr. and Robert (Rob) Lindsey III during a Cub Scout Pack 3891 Court of Honor.

The American Legion established this award to recognize members of the Legion family (TAL, SAL & ALA), who are also registered Scouters, and who have furthered Scouting and its relationship with the Legion. It is awarded to those Legion Scouters who have demonstrated their commitment for personal improvement and performance in the Legion Scouting program. The guidelines for this award can be found here: https://www.floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Guidelines-for-Applying-for-the-American-Legion-Square-Knot-Award.pdf

Father Bob (Eagle Scout Class of ‘66) and son Rob (Eagle Scout Class of ‘91) have made equally significant contributions to both the Scouting movement and The American Legion.

In addition to being founding members of Cub Scout Pack 3891, Bob is the Charter Organization Representative, and has served as the Pack Committee Chair. Additionally, Bob guided Timucua District (Greater Tampa Bay Area Council) as their District Chair and District Commissioner. Rob has provided unit level service to Scouting as a Den Leader, Cubmaster, and Pack Committee Chair, and supported Timucua District operations as the Vice Chair.

Bob currently serves as the Post 389 Finance Officer and Judge Advocate, while concurrently serving as the SAL Squadron 389 Adjutant. Rob furthers the mission of the Sons of the American Legion as the Squadron 389 Commander.

I have had the pleasure of meeting both of these outstanding Scouters and Legionnaires while serving In District and Council-level Scouting roles in the Gulf Ridge then Greater Tampa Bay Area Councils. Bob, in his role as AL 15th District Scouting Chair, provided valuable input to me when I assumed this role. Their service to God, Country, and Scouting is most noteworthy and deserving of this recognition.

I challenge the District Scouting Chairs to flood my Inbox with success stories like this, and of our Post Scouting units overcoming the challenges and uncertainty associated with conducting our program these past seven months.

As always, reach out to me with any questions, requests for clarification, or thoughts on best practices. I look forward to personally meeting all of the District Scouting Chairs at some point.
The 7th Annual PROJECT: VetRelief Golf Tournament was held on Monday, September 21st at the beautiful Bella Collina Golf Course in Monteverde, FL. At approximately 8:30AM, after attendees stood at attention for the Pledge of Allegiance, the shotgun went off sending approximately 120 golfers on their way.

PVR Board President, Bob James, hosted corporate partners, vendors and friends to a fun filled day of golf. At the end of the day, we were short approximately $5,000. Mr. James met with his RL James, Inc. partners and they all quickly decided they would kick in the extra funds in order to achieve their goal. Their total contribution to this event is over $25,000!!

He was able to meet his goal, and provide a total donation of $60,000 to PROJECT: VetRelief! This is a record setting donation, and is ALL net proceeds that directly benefits our mission.

We are so grateful for this group of people who are dedicated to impacting the veteran community. They truly are a blessing to our organization!

Our appreciation goes out to all of the sponsors, players, and volunteers for their continued support of Florida’s veterans!

Virtual Classes?
The PROJECT: VetRelief Advocate Training classes are normally held during the American Legion, Department of Florida’s Convention or Fall Conference. Since both events have been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, it will be a full year that we have not held a training course.

Would you be interested in attending a virtual training class if the PROJECT: VetRelief Team held one on Zoom?

We are still providing assistance to our veteran community at a higher rate than we ever have before. Additionally, our caseworkers, Michael Beaven and Cristina Rosario, are processing all of these cases on their own.

As the state of Florida opens back up, we will need to have our Advocates informed on our new COVID-19 application form for veterans who have experienced a loss of income due to the virus.

If you would like to be a part of a virtual class, please send an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org. If there are enough people interested, we will hold a training class in mid-October.

Challenge 22 Event Scheduled for November
On November 14, 2020, American Legion Post 63 is hosting the 4th Annual Challenge 22 Event to raise money and identify solutions to help end Veteran Suicide from Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS). This year’s event will take place at the Veteran’s Memorial Park in Winter Garden, Florida.

The Challenge 22 event is just one of the vehicles used for this important cause through the new Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI).

We need you! Everyone can help make the Central Florida Challenge 22 Event and Ruck Walk a success and help us beat last year’s total donation and work towards eliminating veteran suicide.

We invite you to get involved and support this very important cause and save lives by registering to join the Ruck Walk, becoming a sponsor, donating, being a community partner, or volunteering.

For more information or to become a sponsor, please visit www.WGAL63.org.

To register to walk, visit https://bit.ly/2GhziSt.
I have been asked by the Department Commander Rick Johnson to be the Northern Area VA&R Chairman from Hwy 50 North. I look forward to seeing you all at your District and Post meetings. With Convention and Conference being cancelled we have not had an opportunity to have any Service Officer Training, we are working on a virtual class. It is very vital that we continue doing buddy checks, with the pandemic and the holidays coming up some veterans may have suicidal thoughts and need counseling. Here are some phone numbers and address of Vet Centers in Florida that can provide counseling.

- Clearwater Vet Center
  29259 US Hwy 19 North
  Clearwater, FL 33761
  (727)549-3600

- Clermont Vet Center
  1655 E. Highway 50, Suite 102
  Clermont, FL 34711
  (352)356-6701

- Daytona Beach Vet Center
  1620 Mason Ave., Suite C
  Daytona Beach, FL 32117
  (386)366-6600

- Fort Lauderdale Vet Center
  3666 W. Oakland Park Blvd.
  Lauderdale Lakes, FL 33311
  (954)714-2381

- Fort Myers Vet Center
  4110 Center Pointe Drive,
  Unit 204 Fort Myers, FL 33916
  (239)652-1861

- Gainesville Vet Center
  105 NW 75th St, Suite 2
  Gainesville, FL 32607
  (352)331-1408

- Palm Beach Vet Center
  4996 10th Ave North, Suite 6
  Greenacres, FL 33463
  (561)442-1201

- Jacksonville Vet Center
  3728 Philips Highway, Suite 31
  Jacksonville, FL 32207
  (904)399-8351

- Jupiter Vet Center
  6650 W. Indiantown Rd., Suite 120
  Jupiter, FL 33458
  (561)422-1220

- Key Largo Vet Center
  105662 Overseas Highway
  Key Largo, FL 33037
  (305)451-0164

- Lakeland Vet Center
  1370 Ariana St.
  Lakeland, FL 33803
  (863)284-0841

- Melbourne Vet Center
  2098 Sarno Road
  Melbourne, FL 32935
  (321)254-3410

- Miami Vet Center
  8280 NW 27th Street, Suite 511
  Miami, FL 33122
  (305)718-3712

- Naples Vet Center
  2705 Horseshoe Dr. South, #204
  Naples, FL 34104
  (239)403-2377

- Pasco County Vet Center
  5139 Deer Park Drive New Port Richey, FL 34653
  (727)372-1854

- Ocala Vet Center
  3300 SW 34th Avenue, Suite 140
  Ocala, FL 34474
  (352)237-1947

- Orlando Vet Center
  5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Suite 30
  Orlando, FL 32822
  (407)857-2800

- Bay County Vet Center
  3109 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 101
  Panama City, FL 32405
  (850)522-6102

- Pensacola Vet Center
  4504 Twin Oaks Drive
  Pensacola, FL 32506
  (850)456-5886

- Pompano Beach Vet Center
  2300 West Sample Road, Suite 102
  Pompano Beach, FL 33073
  (954)984-1569

- Sarasota Vet Center
  4801 Swift Road, Suite A
  Sarasota, FL 34231
  (941)927-8285

- Okaloosa County Vet Center
  6 11th Avenue, Suite G-1
  Shalimar, FL 32579
  (850)651-1000

- St. Petersburg Vet Center
  6798 Crosswinds Drive North, Bldg. A
  St. Petersburg, FL 33710
  (727)549-3600

- Tallahassesee Vet Center
  2002 Old St. Augustine Road
  Tallahassee, FL 32301
  (850)942-8810

- Tampa Vet Center
  3637 W. Waters Avenue, Suite 600
  Tampa, FL 33614
  (813)228-2621


Law Enforcement of the Year Award
William Hiltgen
On 15 September 2020 Detective Jay Gow was presented The American Legion Department of Florida Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award. In addition Detective Gow also was presented the American Legion Post 24 Law Enforcement of the Year award.

Awards Presented to Detective Jay Gow
On 15 September 2020 Detective Jay Gow was presented two awards, one of which was The American Legion Department of Florida, Law Enforcement Officer of The Year Award. In addition, Detective Gow also received the Law Enforcement of the Year Award from American Legion Post 24 in Bradenton. The presentations were made in Bradenton at Post 24.
I continue to send my best wishes for everyone’s good health and safety as we work our way through this pandemic. I also join everyone in mourning the losses we’ve suffered during these past months.

As you may recall, last month I wrote about the VA’s Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program. This takes effect Oct 1 and the aim of this program is to make it possible for veterans to be in a home setting for as long as possible. There’s been some more good news in now that the VA is partnering with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to offer family caregivers access to no-cost, short term aid in caring for wounded, ill or injured veterans during these difficult times. Essentially, this will consist of up to 24 hours of respite care from a professional to ease the burden of everyday activities. Certain criteria must be met, and application can be made at www.hidden-heros.org.

As you no doubt are aware, our VAVS reps have been sidelined for several months now. The VA hospitals and CBOC’s are finally going to start phasing in some volunteers. This will be a slow, careful process while remaining mindful of all guidelines to ensure the well-being of all, including voluntary screening for COVID-19.

We’re moving forward with plans for our Post Service Officer School and this presents a unique opportunity. While registration will be required as always, the class will be condensed into a one-day webinar, thereby eliminating the obstacle of cost in sending someone to Orlando. Each Post, once registered, will be sent all the necessary materials and individuals can attend virtually. Let’s take advantage of this, Legionnaires. It would be my great wish for every Post in FL to have in their midst a Post Service Officer. Your fellow veterans need you. Be on the lookout for the exact date and time and I look forward to seeing you there!

"If they are remembered, they are not gone truly, they simply change duty assignments and are amongst the best."

POST EVERLASTING

Timothy “Tim” J. Tierney
It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past Eastern Area Commander, Timothy “Tim” J. Tierney, of The Villages, Florida on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at the age of 74. Tim is survived by his wife, Ellen.


Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers in their time of grief. If you would like to send your condolences you may do so through his wife, Ellen, at 3644 Vineland Ave., The Villages, FL 32163.

Charles “Louis” Lee Nicholson
It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past Southwestern Area Commander, Charles “Louis” Lee Nicholson, of Bonita Springs, Florida at the age of 77.

Louis was a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam War Era Veteran and a member of John F. Murphy American Legion Post 303, Bonita Springs, FL with 54 continuous years of membership. Louis serviced as 13th District Commander (2000-2002) and Southwestern Area Commander (2002-2003). Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers in their time of grief.
### September 24, 2020
55% Target Report (Currently 54.85%)

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**NEXT MEMBERSHIP GOAL**

55% 10/8/2020

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Newly Designed Halloween Coloring Books for posts.

These coloring books are great for kids of all ages. We’re please to offer this newly designed book with even more pages of fun!

The book contains Halloween Season safety tips for parents and children to consider. Also included is a message describing many facets of The American Legion, what we stand for and what we do. A membership application has been included on the back cover next to the space reserved for your individual post number and address. BE SURE TO PUT YOUR POST INFORMATION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED SO THE PARENTS ARE AWARE OF WHICH POST HAS THEIR CHILDREN'S SAFETY IN MIND.

We strongly urge your post to contact schools and daycare centers for their participation. We are asking that your order be received at Department Headquarters by October 15th. We will ship your coloring book orders as we receive them but payment must be included. We sincerely hope your Auxiliary will also participate in this program.

ORDER ONLINE WWW.FLORIDALEGIONSTORE.ORG

Post # ________________________  Attention To ________________________

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