

## Danville Youth Wins California's Constitutional Speech Contest

by Anthony "Tony" Dias  
Oratorical Commission Chairman

The State Finals of The American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest was held on Sunday, February 28, at Modesto, CA in the Modesto City Hall, Council Chambers. All the Oratorical Commission Chairman were present, Area 1, Bill Davis; Area 2, Robert Biby; Area 4, William V. Miller; Area 5, Phillip H. Heller, Vice Chairman; Area 6, Thomas J. Urich; and State Chairman Anthony Dias.

The contest started promptly at 1:00 p.m., with 6 contestants participating; **Area 1:** Sarika Ramakrishnan from Carmichael, CA, sponsored by Sacramento Legislative Action Post 861; **Area 2:** Sam Stone from Danville, CA, sponsored — **CONTEST, continued on page 2**



*The American Legion, State of CA, Department Oratorical contest participants with Tony Dias, Oratorical Commission Chairman. L-R: Michael Shayan (Area 6); Mary York (Area 5); Sam Stone, Department Winner (Area 2); Chairman Tony Dias; Jasmyne Sermenon (Area 3); Eric Brewster, 1st Runner-Up (Area 4); Sarika Ramakrishnan (Area 1).*

## New Army Recruit Could Not Wait to Join The American Legion

David Haggard of Woodland went off to Army basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky on March 2nd. But before he left for the east, he took care of something that was very important to him. Private Haggard wanted to become a member of The American Legion at the very first opportunity he had. He already knew about the good work done by the Legion over decades, including for those currently in uniform. Now was his opportunity to become a part of The American Legion team. Two weeks before flying off to Fort Knox, Private Haggard came by the Post 77 hall and signed up as a proposed Legion member.



*Army Private David Haggard is looking forward to basic training and his new American Legion membership.*

Post 77 is very proud of our newest member. He loves America and wants to serve his country. Haggard chose tank operator as his MOS. We know he will be successful.

Private Haggard and his wife, Kimberly, have already decided where the welcome home party will be after his training is completed. Where else? At his American Legion Post!

## Meet Your Headquarters Staff Kathy Tinitali



*Kathy Tinitali*

Kathy Tinitali is a Membership & Awards Coordinator for The American Legion Headquarters, Department of California. She joined the HQ staff as an intern from L. E. N. Business and Lan-

guage Institute in June of 2007. She worked at the HQ Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays while attending school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While in school she was learning Excel, Word and brushing up on her office skills. She was hired full time in August 2007 as an Office Assistant. She was a fast learner and very detail oriented. When Sheila Fitzgerald announced her retirement in June 2008, Kathy was promoted to Membership Coordinator. Before joining American Legion Headquarters, Kathy was a manager at a beauty salon for 11 years. She also worked for Levi Strauss for 5 years in customer service. Kathy has 1 year of experience working in payroll at See's Candies.

Among some of Kathy's job duties are: Post 1000 transfers, proofread for any errors in the membership reports before sending to National, assisting Posts' requests, working on special projects, new Post kits, Paid Up for Life

Memberships, delegate strength report, membership goals, cleaning database by merging members' duplicate numbers and answering questions from Post members. Additionally, she is also responsible for Membership awards; Early bird 75%, 100%, 110% ribbons, recruiter of the year, Gold & Silver Brigade, National Commander Awards and many more.

Kathy is a native of San Francisco, she went to a public school up to 7th grade in the city, she then moved to Santa Clara where she attended Jefferson Jr. High and graduated from Wilcox High School. Later she moved back to San Francisco, got married and raised her 2 sons. Kathy has been happily living with her common-law husband Louie Cinti for 19 years. In her off time, she enjoys her 7 grandkids (not always at the same time). Loves to read and enjoys bowling. She also would like to take more cruises in the future.

## Youth Environmental Conference The Premier Youth Program!

by Barbara Ross

That is how the Youth Environmental Conference is referred to – YET, as I attend some District, Area and Department events, not one word is said about this program that is struggling for participation is unique to the Department of California.

The Legion Web site has reports, photos and student "reflections" which gives an overview of the program from year to year. Does your Agriculture or Children and Youth chairman know what this program is all about and do they promote it

————— *YEC, continued on page 4*

## OPT OUT!

Opt-out of the home mailing of the *California Legionnaire*. We need at least 10% of our members to join the opt-out program to be cost effective.

We have just under 2,000 enrolled and need at least 10,000 members to elect the opt-out option. We have all the back issues in PDF format online at the Department Web site going back to 1998.

Please visit [www.calegion.org/html/opt-out.html](http://www.calegion.org/html/opt-out.html) and have the next issue delivered directly to your e-mail inbox. Or you can send an e-mail to [calegion@pacific.net](mailto:calegion@pacific.net) with OPT-OUT in the subject line with your name, 9-digit Legion ID #, Post #, and e-mail address in the body of the e-mail.

## e-Edition

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We'll send you an e-mail to confirm that you really want to stop the hard copy delivery to your home.

With your help we can implement the program with the June issue. Thanks to all who have chosen the online edition over the printed copy.

## This Summer in Europe WWII Veterans to be Honored

Small villages and large cities in Europe are busy planning festivities for this summer, as the 65th anniversary of Victory in Europe will be celebrated. On May 8th, a huge celebration will take place in Reims, France where the Peace Treaty was signed in General Eisenhower's headquarters 65 years ago.

Any visiting WWII veterans will be

————— *WWII, continued on page 4*



## American Legion Area 5 High School Oratorical Contest

Sunday, February 14, 2010 the Fifth Area competition of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, "A Constitutional Speech Contest," was held at the Perris American Legion Post 595. Four of the five Districts that make up the 5th Area competed. Imperial County did not participate.

Each of the four contestants spoke on some phase of the Constitution of the United States in a prepared speech limited to a time period of between eight and ten minutes. If their time is less than 8 or more than 10 minutes, there is a

### Letter to Editor

William M. Connell  
Post 49, Santa Barbara, CA

The State will not tell us; but our State of California has a lot of money to be returned to the Veteran Street Vendors under Business and Professions Code 16100, 16100.5 and 16102. The updated Senate Bill 809 signed into law January 1, 2010 will go a long way to clarify existing statute. The entire Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, chaired by Senator Jeff Denham, co-authored SB809. The law passed all floor votes, both Assembly and Senate. All committee votes were by a margin of 188 to 0.

The Veteran Vendor must request a refund from the State Board of Equalization. The money is out there, but you must request the refund. Address it to: Todd Gillman, Taxpayers Rights Advocate Office, 450 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. "Request for refund under Business & Professions Code 16102." A copy of DD214 is required.

penalty of one point for each minute or fraction thereof.

In the second phase, called the Assigned Oration, each student spoke on the 5th Amendment. This part of the oration is very impromptu – each is given the topic and allowed 5 minutes to ascertain what they will say on the subject within a timeframe of three to five minutes. Again they are penalized if under the 3 or over the 5 minute period.

The four contestants in the order of final placement (4, 3, 2, 1) were John Paul Frehner, District 25 (San Bernardino County), Chase Cunningham, District 29 (Orange County), Robert Morgan, District 21 (Riverside County), and Mary York, District 22, San Diego County.

Judges for the contest included Daniel Palm, PhD from Azusa Pacific University; Alice Chandler, Veterans Advisory Committee, Riverside County; Bill Emmerson, Assemblyman, 65th District and candidate for California Senate; Hugh Crooks, Vice Commander, Department of California American Legion 4th Area (Los Angeles County); and Robert Denham PhD, Dean, University of Redlands.

Fifth Area Vice Commander Diana Drake presented checks of \$100, \$200, \$400 and \$600 to the contestants. Mary York represented the 5th Area of California at the Department finals in Modesto at the City Hall on Sunday, February 28, 2010.

### Whittier Post 51 Oratorical

by Gil Soto

American Legion Whittier Post 51 held The American Legion 72nd Annual High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest last Thursday at offices of the Whittier Union High School District. Thanks to Jeanie McHatton, Director of Curriculum and Instructional Materials, we had 4 students participate.

From Cal High: Kimberly Barreto, senior; Acelia Larios, sophomore; Santa Fe: Isaac Remijio, senior; and from Whittier: Samantha Vega, senior.

The oratorical contest consists of a two part presentation, one is an eight- to ten-minute oration on the U.S. Constitution as it pertains to citizenship and the second part, a three- to five-minute oration on one of four pre-determined topics selected during the contest. This year the

topics were: Amendment 5, Amendment 6, Article 4 Section 3 Paragraph 1 and Article 5.

The winner was Samantha Vega, second place Kimberly Barreto, third Isaac Remijio and fourth Acelia Larios.

Samantha now advances to the District contest January 24 at American Legion Paramount Post 134. Samantha will compete against other American Legion posts, with a possibility to advance to area contest on January 31 in Lakewood and the state contest in February in Modesto, CA.

With each advancement, the student receives scholarship money and the winner of the national oratorical contest receives \$18,000.00. To date, The American legion has awarded over \$3 million.

Our judges for this year were: Mrs. Ilene Gonzales, history teacher at West Covina High School; Ms. Christine Sullivan, school board member East Whittier City School District; and Mr. Greg Nordbak, Mayor Pro Tem City of Whittier.

### CONTEST, continued from page 1

by Mt. Diablo Post 246; **Area 3:** Jarmyne Sermenio from Tracy, CA, sponsored by James McDermott Post 172; **Area 4:** Eric Brewster from Long Beach, CA sponsored by Lakewood Post 496; **Area 5:** Mary York, a senior home schooled student from National City, CA, sponsored by Chula Vista Post 255; **Area 6:** Michael Shayan, sponsored by Pacific Palisades Post 283.

On our judging panel, we had Superior Court Judge (retired) Al Girolami; Superior Court Judge (retired) Glenn Richey; Superior Court Judge Linda McFadden; Tom Van Groningen (retired Chancellor M.J.C. and Chairman of the M.I.D. board); and Dick Montieth, County Board of Supervisors and retired State Senator.

Refreshments were served after the contest, and after the tabulation was complete, the State winner and runners-up were announced with Sam Stone from Danville, CA, sponsored by Mt. Diablo Post 246 taking top honors; and Eric Brewster from Long Beach, CA, sponsored by Lakewood Post 496 taking 2nd place. The other four finalists finished equally as runners-up. The attendance was very good; over 150 heard these students speak, and the winner will go to Indianapolis, IN in April to compete in the National Scholarship Finals for one of the top three awards of \$18,000.00; \$16,000.00; \$14,000.00.



Published bimonthly by:

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#### PUBLICATION POLICY

California Legionnaire is the official publication of The American Legion Department of California. The six Publishing issue months are August, October, December, February, April and June with occasional special editions published as needed.

**NOTICE:** Submissions to the California Legionnaire must be submitted no later than 26th of each prior month to be included in the upcoming bimonthly issue.

**To submit articles and/or photos:** Please e-mail article and any photos attached at a minimum 200 DPI (1600 x 1200) to calegion@pacific.net or mail prints, negatives, or slides to Editor David L. Eby, 9804 Diane Lane, Upper Lake, CA 95485. All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework, and omission. We are not responsible for lost items or misplaced material.

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The American Legion, Department of California, 401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 117, San Francisco, CA 94102-4587

#### Do not direct them to the Editor

#### All Advertising:

Please contact Mary Long at Department HQ for pricing.

#### PUBLISHING OFFICE:

American Graphics & Design  
Greenfield, WI 53227  
www.agad.com  
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### Do you know someone who may appreciate Membership in The American Legion?

Mail completed form and dues to:

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Don't forget, women are Veterans too!!!

#### THE AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

_____	_____
(NAME)	(PHONE)
_____	_____
(MAILING ADDRESS)	(DATE)
_____	<b>\$35.00</b>
(CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE)	(DUES)

(PLEASE CHECK ONE)  LOCAL MEMBERSHIP POST# \_\_\_\_\_  
 POST 1000 MEMBERSHIP (HEADQUARTERS)

\*\*PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE ELIGIBILITY DATES AND BRANCH OF SERVICE BELOW\*\*

<input type="checkbox"/> August 2, 1990 - cessation of hostilities as determined by U.S. Government	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army
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I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.

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(NAME ON CARD)	(CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE)





## FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK



Dennis Fercho  
State Commander

Greetings to all of California's American Legion Family members,

Some veterans dreaded receiving a letter that started out with greetings because that usually contained their Draft Notice; however in this case, it is with genuine pride and recognition of our special patriotic organization. Your devotion and service to our Veterans, their Families and to your Community is seen throughout this State. Thank You.

On the 30th of January, Linda and I had the opportunity to attend the 11th District Karl Ross Post 16 Dinner which congratulated Roger Brautigian on his recent appointment as Secretary for California Department of Veterans Affairs. While Secretary Brautigian spoke on several key projects that are ongoing. One project that would greatly benefit from our entire California American Legion Family's support is "The Gold Star License Plates."

With the passage of Senate Bill 1455 the license "Gold Star Family" plate will be available for a family who wants to honor their loved one that made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The plates are free to those families; however the set-up charge is \$300,000.00 of which they have received nearly \$100,000 in donations to date. I would like to see if The California American Legion Family can match that or more. You can send your check to the attention of Bill Siler iii and made out to The American Legion Department of California

and in the memo section put "Gold Star License Plates." I will have the Department add a line item to track the donations.

I will be in Washington, D.C. February 28th through March 3rd attending the National Washington Conference. The California Delegation will represent you during meetings with our state Senators and Representatives. As I have said before, IT IS OUR NUMBERS that get their attention. That's where Membership again comes into play.

March is going to be very busy with District, Area meetings and the DEC in Santa Maria March 12th-14th, 2010.

I said in my last article that National Commander Clarence Hill will be visiting again. His schedule is as follows:

Saturday, March 27: Dinner at Fresno Post 509; Sunday, March 28: Lunch at Dixon Post 208, National President Rita Navaratte will be at this same luncheon; Monday, March 29: Sacramento Capital Building to hopefully meet with the Governor and Roger Brautigian, then dinner at Sonoma Jack London Post 489; Tuesday, March 30: Lunch at Department Headquarters with Staff, then dinner at Carmel Post 512; Wednesday, March 31: Dinner at Santa Clara Post 419; Thursday, April 1: fly home from SFO.

I do hope that you will be able to join us at one of the above mentioned locations. If you have any questions please contact the Post's that are listed or myself. Commander Hill is a fantastic speaker and I know that you will enjoy having lunch or dinner with him. Thank you again for continuing to serve.



## ADJUTANT'S CORNER



Bill Siler iii  
Adjutant

To All Legion Members: Department Staff has Convention items that are a must. We are asking all Posts to have their 2010-2011 Certification of Officers into Department Headquarters no later than June 7, 2010,

along with your Consolidated Post Reports. As soon as we receive your Certification of Officers for 2010-2011, we will send to your Post the "Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies," "Service Officers Guide" and the "Post Adjutants Manual."

Starting this year, if we don't receive a certification from your Post, it won't be mailed any information. So PLEASE make sure we get your certification form.

Department Bylaws - Article VI, Section 3, reads as follows: "It is the responsibility of the District Commander to obtain properly Executed Certification of Post Officer Reports from the Posts within their District and to submit said report to the Department of California prior to the opening of the Fall Department Executive Committee Meeting. The Department Executive Committee may place on probation any Post that does not submit a properly executed Certification of Post Officer Report prior to the opening of the Fall Department Executive Committee Meeting."

It is also the responsibility of the Post Adjutant to make sure that the "Certification of Post Officers" is in to Department Headquarters after their election of officers.

There are Posts that still haven't submitted a "Certification of Post Officers for 2009-2010, and this is seven months after the deadline date for having them in to Department. These Posts have been operating without the benefit of the fidelity bond that insures against the mishandling of Post funds.

Any Post who wants to get ALPOP & AIM can't get it from National Headquarters unless they have turned in a current copy of their "Certification of Officers Report."

CPR, "CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS" are supposed to be into Department Headquarters by June 7, 2010. If your Post hasn't done anything that you want to report or brag about, then just sign the form and send it to Department Headquarters. If you have ALPOP & AIM you should receive the CPR Form from National electronically. Remember, you need to submit your CPR as part of your Post clearance for the Department Convention.

IRS and the POSTS: If your Post has made less than \$25,000.00 for the year you still need to report it! The IRS expects you to go online and fill out a "990 N" Form and submit it electronically. If your Post has no members with a computer that can assist in doing this, telephone the IRS and they will help you fill out the form.



## DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER



Scott McKee  
Department Service Officer

As I wrote in my last article, I told you I would be using the next series of articles to unveil the mystification in filing either a service connected claim or a non-service connected claim better known as a Pension. In all reality it should

actually be renamed veteran welfare or assistance, as that generally is what its purpose is. In order to file for this claim the veteran must be disabled (but not necessarily service connected) hence the name non-service connected pension.

Part of the mystery in filing for a Non-service Connected Pension is the qualification factor. Non-service Connected Pension is available for wartime veterans who are permanently and totally disabled from disabilities not related to service. This benefits is also available for their surviving spouse and/or children (Also called death pension). Wartime service means the veteran must have served at least: "90 days or more wartime service; or 90 days or more consecutive service which began or ended during a wartime period; or 90 days or more combined service in two or more wartime periods; or if less than 90 days, discharged for a disability in line of duty if they entered service prior to September 7, 1980, or entered service after September 7, 1980. And has completed a continuous period of active duty of at least 24 months, or the full period for which a person was called or ordered to active duty (this includes travel time from place of discharge to home by the most direct route)."

One may ask, ok, I understand wartime service but what are those dates? We will start with WWII, as all but one of our beloved WWI veterans are gone. The

service dates for WW II: December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946; Korean Conflict: June 27, 1950 to February January 31, 1955; Vietnam Era: The period beginning on February 28, 1961 and ending on May 7, 1975, in the case of a veteran who served in Vietnam during that period. The period beginning on August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975, inclusive, in all other cases; Persian Gulf: August 2, 1990 to be determined. This includes landlocked nations such as Afghanistan.

This is the 1st hurdle a veteran must jump over in order to begin to qualify for a pension. The second, which is the age and/or P & T (permanent and total), as well as the income requirement. Unlike service-connected compensation (refer to February 2010 Legionnaire Article) non-service connected pension is directly connected to income level. The veterans must be low income who are permanently and totally disabled, or are age 65 and older, may be eligible for monetary support if they meet the active duty requirements I mentioned above. If the veteran is under the age of 65 he must be (1) a patient in a nursing home for long term care because of the disability, or (2) a Veteran determined to be disabled by social security decision.

One thing, which need to be said of this, as well as any other claim, a veteran must have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and the veteran's disabilities must be for reasons other than willful misconduct. Most of us know what dishonorable means but is there a fine line when it comes to willful misconduct? Willful misconduct can relate to anything a veteran knowingly caused by himself. Some examples are unauthorized drug use, driving under the influence, getting into bar room fights, and acquiring sexually transmitted diseases through non-accidental means, to

———— SERVICE, continued on page 4



## LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION

Help!! Help!! Help!!



Gary Ross  
Legislative Commission Chairman

Information is a two way system - I mailed out forms requesting that each Post advise me who their Senator/Assembly member is - and I received one response!!

Legislative Day is Tuesday, April 13, and it's sometimes difficult for rural districts to get to Sacramento, but every legislator has district offices. So, if you can't get to the capitol, make contact with your Senator and/or assembly member in your District. Let them know that you're part of the Legion, that we'll have a strong

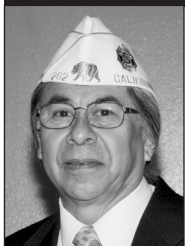
presence at the capitol on April 13 and that you're watching their votes on legislation affecting Veterans' issues.

For those who will be at the capitol, please make appointments now to see your legislators. Their calendars are usually pretty full, and dropping in without an appointment usually isn't appreciated by the legislator or their staff. Make your name known to the office. That way when you contact them to ask for their support on a bill, they will know that you're a Veteran, a Legionnaire and a constituent.

The Legion's support of bills is updated on the Legislative Rep's report on the Department Web site: [www.calegion.org](http://www.calegion.org)



## DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN



Joseph A. Garcia  
Department Chaplain

Do you remember someone you could have helped but didn't? There are times when we feel that we do not have the time, the patience, or the same feelings to go out of our way to help. When this happens to you again, take a step

back and remember the time when you needed someone's help. It could have been for someone to volunteer for a program you are involved with but not enough members would volunteer, it could have been for a dinner you are having but you could not get the response you wanted, or it could have been for a fundraiser and you could only get a few members to help and you few are doing all the work.

We are an American Legion family that needs to work together, we need to enjoy each other, we need to have fun, and we need to help one another. With cooperation, working together we get much more accomplished than by working alone. By

enjoying one another, memories are made that can last a lifetime and bring a smile that just can't be stopped. Having fun together makes the time fly by, wishing the day would never end. While helping out one another you know that nothing can stop us.

There are different types of people; those who make it happen, those who watch it happen, and those who wonder what happened.

God gave us the ability, the strength, the determination and the compassion to make up our minds on which type of person we will and want to be. Let's try to be remembered as the ones who made it happen!

I want to relay a few words I have heard before about friends, relations and family. You can relate this to anyone of them that means so much to me and I hope to you: "I'll always be beside you until the very end, wiping all your tears away, being your best friend. I'll smile when you smile and feel pain when you do, and if you cry a single tear, I promise I'll cry one, too."

We can make this a reality. We can do this - it is up to you.



**SERVICE, continued from page 3**

name a few. You may have not received non-judicial punishment for these but may have medical documentation and/or administrative evidence to show the conduct. To all our active duty, reserve, guard veterans be aware of this as you continue through your military career.

The income level is the final hurdle and that can be adjusted by different means. Some of these are unreimbursed medical expenses and the Standard Medicare deduction of 5.8%.

The latest income limit, which took effect December 21, 2009 are as follows: *Veteran ONLY: \$11,830 or less*; To be deducted, medical expenses must exceed 5% of MAPR or \$591; With one Dependent: \$15,493 or less; To be deducted, medical expenses must exceed 5% of MAPR, or \$744; Housebound without dependents: \$14,457; *Housebound with one dependent: \$18,120*; *A & A without dependents: \$19,736*; *A&A with one dependent: \$23,396*; *Two Veterans Married to Each Other: \$15,493*; Add Additional Child to Any Category above: \$2,020; *Special A/A Allowance when Income exceeds \$13,456: \$13,959 or less*; 38 CFR 3.552 Rates this rate is based on hospitalization on January 1, 2007 or later: \$13,956.

Disability Pension Spouse Income Exclusion under 38 CFR 3.262 (b) effective 12/01/2008 = \$4,295

Disability Pension Veteran with Dependents 5.8% Cost-of-Living Increase effective 12/01/2008

*Veteran with Dependents: \$18,087 or less*

*Special A/A Allowance when income exceeds \$18,087: \$18,587 or less*

*38 CFR 3.552 Rates (Hospital Reduction) for special A/A Allowance: \$18,587 or less*

Death Pension 5.8% Cost-of-Living Increase effective 12/01/2008

*Surviving Spouse (Only): \$13,456 or less*

*Surviving Spouse and Child(ren): \$18,087 or less*

*Child(ren) Only: \$11,001 or less*

Note the pension rates for VA monetary cost-of-living increases are based on social security increases from December of 2008. This past year there was no increase in cost of living for social security, which the VA bases their increase with. Therefore there was no cost-of-living increase in 2009. However the VA did increase the VA income limits to offset that lack of increase. Also be aware the income limit for a surviving spouse is equated as the same with the veteran. Remember if you are a surviving spouse your income limit is based upon you alone and will not include your former dual income limits.

Let me define how the VA for pension purposes defines income. The VA will compute all income all income brought into a veterans home, which includes, spouse, children, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), as well as rental property, retirement income being drawn on to name a few. Please see the VA Web site at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for

greater detail. A veteran and family cannot have more than \$80,000 in assets, excluding home and auto. Sometimes a veteran will call our offices in hopes of filing for a *pension claim* just to be turned down due to the income limit. What normally causes this are the veteran's Social Security, SSI, SSDI, and/or the inclusion of the spouse's income. More often then not, one can either accept the *VA Pension* or Social Security, but not both. The question arises, "but I can't live off of this, especially in California?" This is true but law, which was enacted by Congress and approved by the President, mandates the income limits and until that changes we are required to go by those limitations.

Now that we have addressed the requirements we will address how much monetary payments a veteran, spouse or child(ren) will receive monthly. Since this type of benefit varies we will show the way it is calculated and give a contact number for greater detail.

The VA Payment Rates: VA pays you the difference between your countable family income and the yearly income limit, which describes your situation (see chart above). This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar. Call the toll-free number 1-800-827-1000. Example: Joe (a single veteran) has an annual income of \$5,000. His annual income limit is \$11,830. To determine Joe's Pension subtract his annual income of \$5,000 from the \$11,181 income limit, which gives him an annual pension rate of \$6,830. This translates into a monthly pension check of approximately \$570.

The only requirement after this is to file the *Pension Claim*, which can be handled at any of the VA Regional Offices for The American Legion. Los Angeles 1-310-473-6534; Oakland 1-510-834-0430; San Diego 1-619-400-5301. If you happen to be at one of the VA hospitals, we have representatives located in the Veteran Service Officer Offices. Don't forget our County Service Offices are readily available and willing to assist you in filing this paperwork. You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation or Pension. If available, attach copies of dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates) and current medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports).

I know much of this seems daunting but we're to help you out and, as a team, we will get you through it. All of our VSO's are trained and accredited through the VA and can readily answer any questions you may have. Remember you don't have to be alone when you file a claim with the VA. Please call the nearest American Legion office to you in regards to your earned benefits with the VA.

In my next series, as Memorial Day approaches, I will address what many of us don't like to talk, think or even discuss: "Death and Burial Benefits." Whether we like it or not, this is one of the most important benefits you need to plan with your family and your Post. The ol' adage is: "We aren't getting out of here alive."

protecting it.

It's too late for this year, but when your new Legion year begins, please consider introducing this program to your schools, along with the Oratorical Scholarship contest and Boys State. Youth interviewed for those programs are also good candidates for YEC. We've had Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award members, Girls State, Alternates and Boys State delegates attend past conferences. PLEASE let's get the word out! NOW!!!



**Marilyn Rideaux**  
Department  
Sergeant-at-Arms

June 26, 2010. The Competition will be held at the Convention Center, but the exact location has not been determined yet. You may download and print a copy of the application from the Department's Web site <http://www.calegion.org/html/forms.html#ritual> along with the general guidelines and rules of the competition. If you do not have access to a computer or the Internet, ask a member of your Post who does to obtain the application and information for you. You may also contact Department and request that the information be sent to you. See your Area representative to the Ritual Commission or give me a call and I will get the information to you.

There are four (4) categories or options which are open for competing: Advancing/Retiring Colors Class, Open Class, Military Class and Military Open Class; however, the Military Class is open to Legionnaires only. Applications should be forwarded to Department Headquarters. Feel free to mail or fax your application but it must reach headquarters by Thursday, June 10, 2010. Once your application

## ★ ★ ★ DEPARTMENT SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Greetings California Legion Family,

With only three months away from the 92nd Department Convention in Fresno, we are now accepting applications for the Convention Color Guard Competition to be held on Saturday,

has been received, it will be date stamped and forwarded to me for review. I will contact you to confirm your entry's eligibility.

We intend to make every effort to announce the category winners on the day of the competition, June 26. Should any disputes or protests arise as stated in the general guidelines, it may be necessary to delay announcement of any winners. Be advised that the official Department Championship Color Guard for the year will be determined by the unit composed of bonafide members of The American Legion with the highest total number of points from either the Military Class or the Military Open Class only. If you should have any questions or need assistance, feel free to contact me or your Area representative to the Ritual Commission.

Good news! For those of you planning to attend the National Convention in Milwaukee, WI this year in August, there will be a Color Guard clinic conducted on Friday, August 27, 2010 from 12 Noon to 2:00 p.m. at the convention center. This will be a good opportunity for you to pick up on some valuable information and tips to share with your Color Guard unit. I look forward to seeing you in Fresno in June and if I can be of any assistance, please let me know.

**Marilyn E. Rideaux**  
Department Sgt.-at-Arms  
(310) 293-1246  
[mrlizsimon@yahoo.com](mailto:mrlizsimon@yahoo.com)

## Three Federal Departments Collaborate on National Resource Directory

*Web Site Offers Single Access Point for Wounded Warriors*

WASHINGTON (Feb. 25, 2010) – The federal departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor and Defense unveiled today an improved Web site for wounded warriors. "VA is committed to tapping into the full powers of the Internet to provide accurate, timely, easy to find and easy to understand information that improves the lives of Veterans, service members, their families and all who care for them," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The National Resource Directory is a comprehensive, free, online tool for wounded, ill and injured service members, Veterans and their families. Visitors to the site can find an extensive range of information about Veterans' benefits, including disability and pension benefits, VA health care and educational opportunities. The site also provides information for those who care for Veterans, such as access to emotional, financial and community assistance.

The Web site has been enhanced to provide a single point of access to a

wealth of information from more than 10,000 sites by federal, state and local governments and organizations offering services for wounded warriors.

"This online directory is an invaluable resource for those involved in helping service members and Veterans," Shinseki said. "Reliable information about government and private-sector programs can be a priceless tool."

A recent addition to the Web site is a specialized section where users can find help for homeless Veterans. These resources will help end Veteran homelessness over the next five years.

The new design will help visitors find needed resources easily. Other enhancements include a fast, accurate search engine; a "bookmark and share" capability that allows users to share valuable resources on Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites; and a news feature with updates on relevant information and events. Resources are added daily.

Visit the site at [www.nationalresource.directory.gov](http://www.nationalresource.directory.gov)

**WWII, continued from page 1**

transported in horse-drawn carriages through the huge parade route and then honored with a wonderful reception at the City Hall. On June 6th, the usual D-Day services will be held at the American Cemetery on Omaha Beach honoring our veterans.

Dr. & Mrs. Brooks Ranney of Yank-

ton, SD will again be taking groups over, which visit Paris, the Beaches of Normandy, Reims, Patton's Grave, the Battle of the Bulge area, Germany with the Remagen Bridge and a Rhine River cruise, the Dachau Memorial Camp and Hitler's Eagles Nest. If you wish to travel with the Ranneys, please call their home 605-665-3596 today for a colorful brochure.

**YEC, continued from page 1**

at your meetings? If your Post doesn't have funds to sponsor a student, have you talked to your Unit, 40/8, PCC, or SAL unit – or even service / fraternal clubs for assistance with funding?

Without more Posts sponsoring students, this program will have to be discontinued – after over 40 years of exposing students to the environment and teaching them how to get involved in





## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN



**Fred Walton**  
National Executive Committeeman

Three top National American Legion Officials will visit California within the next three months: Jimmie Foster from Alaska, the leading candidate for National Commander 2010-2011, will attend the DEC in Santa Maria March 12-14, 2010; National Commander Clarence Hill will visit Northern California March 27-April 1; and National Vice Commander Western Region Morris M. Bentley will visit California at the State Convention in Fresno, June 24-27, 2010.

The California American Legion is fortunate to have a Life Member (Hollywood Post 43) as the State of California Secretary of Veterans Affairs Roger Braudigan. Maj. Gen. Braudigan (Ret.) is a true friend of California's Veterans and is serving Veterans with outstanding results.

The concept of all four elements of The American Legion Family: Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the Legion and Legion Riders working together for the betterment of each element can be very productive and will strengthen each element. A joint meeting once or twice each year will prove very beneficial in setting goals and planning important projects.

The Department of Veterans Affairs VA Health Care System has undergone a major transformation in an attempt to accommodate the Nation's Veterans; to include increasing outpatient and preventive care in its growing network of outpatient clinics. Currently there are

approximately 23.4 million Veterans in the United States; of that total, 7.8 million are enrolled in VA Health Care System. VA treats 5.8 million Veterans at more than 150 hospitals and 800+ clinics. The American Legion believes the administration of the VA Health System plays a key role in helping Veterans transition back into civilian life. Some of the most severe problems needing treatments include: Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Mood Disorders and Traumatic Brain Injuries, Spinal Cord Injuries and Blind Eye Injuries.

Nurse scholarship applications are available February 1, 2010. The American Legion's Americanism and Children and Youth Division recently announced that starting February 1st, applications will be available for the \$3,000 Eight and Forty Lung and Respiratory Disease Nursing Scholarships.

The American Legion's National Commander Hill praised the White House for the military family budget hike. Commander Hill stated the increase funding for military families planned increase will be a record \$8.8 billion in 2011. The American Legion played a key role in this decision.

A Legion baseball e-newsletter, "The Dugout" makes its debut. The American Legion has launched its first issue of *The Dugout* - a complimentary e-mail newsletter delivered to e-mail inboxes.

Contracts have been signed with construction teams to build two new Veterans Homes in California beginning in Spring 2010. They include homes in Fresno and Redding.

Good Health and God Bless.



## LEADERSHIP COMMISSION



**Benny Kepaa**  
Leadership Commission

Hello California Legionnaires! Now that the holidays have passed, to include Valentine's Day, allow me to send a brief LEADERSHIP message. There's much to prepare for our upcoming 91st Department Convention in Fresno, CA.

The month of March is Community Service month and the month of April is Children & Youth month (according to The American Legion Manual of Ceremonies) - two topics that will serve your Post well on your Consolidated Post Report (CPR).

By the time you read this article, every Post Adjutant should be in receipt of our Department's MARCH MAJOR MAILING (reports/forms). It is essential to pay particular attention to the Department's "deadline" dates, as well as your respective

Area and District "deadline" dates (provided by your Area/District Commissioners). Most importantly, follow the instructions for processing Delegate cards as well as the 2010 Convention Post Report.

It would be most gratifying that Commanders at all levels encourage support on both LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR and LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD programs. Check out the criteria on the Department's online Web site under LEADERSHIP.

Oh, one more thing - as a reminder, it's been said that our 91st Convention in Fresno will be somewhat of a Hawaiian theme. So, don't forget to pack your "Aloha" shirts (for the men) and "Muumuus" ("throw-over" dresses for the Ladies).

Well, Legionnaires, that's it for now - this is a wrap! Your Department Leadership Commission wishes you well. See you in Fresno and be safe in all your American Legion duties and endeavors.

Aloha and Mahalo (thank you)!



## SONS OF TAL - COMMANDER DETACHMENT OF CALIFORNIA



**Paul Mesmer**  
SAL Detachment Commander

February 6th, on what was forecasted to be a cold rainy day in San Francisco, my wife Bibi Anna and I joined The American Legion Family to attend the 45th anniversary observance of the Four Chaplains Day. St. Mary's Cathedral rises above the cityscape, and as the sun shined through the faceted windows, it served as a fitting background to the four empty chairs

placed upon the altar.

As I looked around the cathedral and witnessed the tradition that has been maintained by The American Legion Family, I was proud to be a part of the memorial services.

It reminded me that all those present gave time from their daily lives to remember those who gave up their lives for us. It's through our volunteer services that we do so much good for those who protect our freedom.

Somehow, the chill we felt upon arrival was a distant memory.



## LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE



**Pete Conaty**  
Legislative Representative to the California Legislature

**Save the Date:**  
Tuesday, April 13, 2010 - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
American Legion, Dept of CA Annual Legislative Day  
State Capitol, Sacramento

The Department will hold its Annual Legislative Day on April 13 this year. This is a very important event and all Legionnaires are encouraged to attend. This is your chance to meet your legislators and their staffs and educate them on veteran's issues. Beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Conference Room (1020 11th Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814, 1 block north of the State Capitol); attendees will have a Continental Breakfast, catered buffet lunch and hear from key legislative speakers. After lunch, Legionnaires will walk one block to the Capitol to attend key hearings of the veterans committees and also to visit their local legislators.

The Department will also award its 2009 Legislator of the Year awards at the Legislative Day event. This year's recipients are Senator Lou Correa (D-Santa Ana) and Assemblyman Ted Lieu (D-Torrance).

Over 1,300 new bills were introduced prior to the February 19th deadline. Over one fourth of these bills were introduced on the 19th alone. So far we have found 49 military and veteran related bills. Some bills are "spot bills," which are vehicles that can be amended later with actual language. Most spot bills have a brief paragraph stating some general aim within a general section of the California Code. An example is SB 1385, authored by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs:

*THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS: SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that will revise and modernize various provisions of the Military and Veterans Code.*

Once bills are in "print" (available for public review, which nowadays means they are up on the Legislature's Web site: [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov)), they cannot be amended or acted upon for 30 days. This is to give the public time to review the bills. Most bills will not be heard in committee until early April after the Spring / Easter Recess. We are working with the Legislative Committee through Gary Ross to develop the Department's positions on bills. We continuously update the

listing of bills as new ones are discovered, spot bills reveal themselves to be veteran related, or bills are amended in such a way as to require a different level of involvement from the Department.

2010 will be an interesting year. All bills must be through the entire legislative process by August 31. The Governor must sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature before September 1. However, within this time frame, there is also an epic budget battle, a primary election, and a November election run-up which will be sure to distract everyone's attention from June to November. A few key bills are:

**AB 1829-Cook, Stolen Valor:** This bill is sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America. AB 1829 is the latest of a series of bills which seek to curb abuses by veteran and military impersonators, many of whom seek to defraud the public by misrepresenting themselves. AB 1829 will provide that any person, who orally, in writing, or by wearing any military decoration, falsely represents himself or herself to have been awarded any military decoration with the intent to defraud, is guilty of an infraction.

**Position: Support**

**AB 1644-Nielsen, Veterans Remains:** Allows mortuaries in possession of the cremated remains of a veteran to release the remains to a veterans' service organization. Requires the veterans' service organization to take steps to inter those remains.

**Position: Watch**

**AB 1925-Salas, Vet Courts, Diversion:** This bill is sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans of America. AB 1925 would authorize superior courts to develop and implement veterans courts for eligible veterans of the United States military. The objective is to create a dedicated calendar or a locally developed collaborative court-supervised veterans mental health program, which will lead to the placement of as many mentally ill offenders who are veterans into community treatment. This will include those who have PTSD, TBI, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, or any mental health problem stemming from military service. AB 1925 would also authorize the veterans courts to operate as a pre-guilty plea program, deferred entry of judgment program, or a post-guilty plea program.

**Position: Watch**

**Save the Date:**

Also, on Wednesday, June 23rd, the 3rd Annual Veterans Recognition Luncheon will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center from 12 Noon to 2:30 p.m. Pete Conaty and Associates has been the organizer and coordinator of this event since its inception.

## Agriculture, National Resources and Energy Commission

*Dick Hiser, Chairman*

With all the weird weather lately, the state is still in the midst of coming out of a drought. The need to conserve is still relevant as we move into spring and then summer. I don't get any feedback from the other areas, but I do know of the latest storms and their effect on the 6th Area. The fires of last summer have caused the hillsides to not have any measurable vegetation to prevent mudslides and damage to homes and the surrounding forests. Water supplies continue to haunt the central valleys. Canals and levees are still affected as not enough water is being provided to the farmers who grow our food; we must continue our efforts in this area.

Energy supplies are still in high demand and any conservative efforts that are

accomplished lead to better conservation. By reducing the need for more power by turning off lights in rooms we are not occupying and changing light fixtures to the fluorescent style, rather than the old incandescent types, will help to reduce the drain and heavy use of electricity. Atomic power sources may just be the wave of the future.

For those Legionnaires with students involved with the Youth Environmental Leadership Conference (Y.E.C.) I hope by the time this issue comes out - ALL Posts, Districts and Areas have taken measures to get students for this program and met the required deadlines for this DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA'S PREMIER YOUTH PROGRAM. My thanks to Barbara Ross for her fine efforts in the administration and co-ordination of this program held each year.



## 29th District invited to IRR muster Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base "JFTB"

Michael Gorsuch  
Commander Post 783, Stanton, CA  
29th District Executive Committee

The readiness muster is intended for Soldiers who have been assigned to the IRR for more than 12 months. It is a one-day event, conducted at a specified Army base, consisting of readiness and personnel accountability tasks such as a Reserve Component orientation brief, records review, security clearance updates, medical and dental screening, identification card issue, presentation of training and unit opportunities, and exit surveys.

There are several benefits that make an event such as this important for The American Legion to attend: Those staffing these events were both active duty and civilians and have an increased likelihood of being qualifying members of The American Legion Family. They have also chosen careers that put them into direct contact with the veteran community, thus: when they do join our organization they will make excellent recruiters and will enrich our knowledge base. Those called to the IRR muster meet membership requirements and just need to learn who The American Legion is and why they should belong. At our most recent event we started the initial conversation with personnel that either have never heard of the Legion or have never been invited to join. As always, due diligence is a must but the incredible density of possible members is worth the follow up. The event was free to attend.

Our membership team was gathered from several Posts in the 29th District and included representation from every aspect of The American Legion Family. This was an excellent opportunity for membership training because of the opportunity for everyone to hear what other members said to the prospective new members. When it came time for them to talk they were able to be

more effective. This was an event where several members shined and one membership Tiger, Marianne Chote, 29th District Assistant Sgt.-at-Arms of Post 266, got five paid members, so now she can apply for the National Commander's membership pin. At the end of the event we collected 79 membership application follow-ups and 8 on the spot paid new members. These follow ups will be passed onto Area membership officers to be passed out to their prospective Districts and so on. We were also fortunate to have the sponsorship of a local pro-military shirt company that gave us gift certificates for free shirts via the Internet.

For improvements we could have used Internet access in the form of an "air card." An air card would have made finding Posts much easier and seeing that some of our Posts do have the ability to take credit cards, it would make sense to invest in a membership point of sale set up. In the past we have been able to cobble together such a point of sale set up, but it greatly depends on the ability to have all the components donated for use at the times we need them and this is not always the case. Also it would make finding Posts in our, and other Departments, easier. Mind you, we do have a Department roster which made us made good use of, but at times it was a bit cumbersome to use with the time restraints that we had. The including of a couple of service officers would have been an excellent addition to our team, but none were available for this deployment.

The cadre was impressed by our eagerness to sit down with those in attendance and the OIC "Officer in Charge" was recruited at this event. Any other events such as this need to be pursued with zeal and as our teams become more refined in their delivery, we will see the increase in membership that our organization needs to continue to be a source of "God and Country" as it was intended to be from the start.

### Department Calendar – Schedule of Events

#### Spring Department Executive Committee Meeting

March 12-14, 2010 – Cpl Marshall Braden Post 56  
501 N. Pine, Santa Maria, CA 93456 phone: 805-925-2257

#### National Commander Clarence Hill's California Visit (North)

(Please see the Department Web site for more details and invitation flyers)

Saturday, March 27: Dinner at Fresno Post 509;

Sunday, March 28: Lunch at Dixon Post 208, National President Rita Navaratte's official visit

Monday, March 29: Sacramento Capital Building and dinner at Sonoma Jack London Post 489

Tuesday, March 30: Lunch at Department Headquarters with Staff, then dinner at Carmel Post 512

Wednesday, March 31: Dinner at Santa Clara Post 419

Thursday, April 1: Fly home from SFO

#### American Legion, Dept of CA Annual Legislative Day

Tuesday, April 13, 2010 – 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – view details on April Calendar  
State Capitol, Sacramento – California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Conference Room  
1020 11th Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814

#### Homecoming Dinner for Vice Commander Representing Area 5

Area 5 Vice Commander Diana Drake  
Saturday, May 1, 2010 – view details on May Calendar  
Perris Post 595, 600 South D St., Perris, CA 92570

#### Department Commander's Homecoming

Department Commander Dennis "Can Do" Fercho  
Saturday, May 22, 2010 – view details on May Calendar  
Camarillo American Legion Post 741

#### Department Annual Convention

June 24-27, 2010 – Fresno, CA

#### National Annual Convention

August 27 through September 2, 2010 – Milwaukee, WI

### Schedule of Area Meetings

#### Area 1 Meetings

May 1-2, 2010 Dixon Post 208 – District 5

#### Area 2 Meetings

March 6, 2010 Salinas Post 31, 14 W. Laurel, Salinas, CA 93906

#### Area 3 Meetings

April 10, 2010 Terra Bella Post 779, 23941 Avenue 95, Terra Bella

#### Area 4 Meetings

May 8, 2010 LAPD Academy, 1880 N. Academy Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90012

#### Area 5 Meetings

March 20-21, 2010 Post 442, Rialto  
June 12-13, 2010 Post 149, Escondido

#### Area 6 Meetings

March 27-28, 2010 Lompoc Post 125

## Top Officials Visit Travis AFB

American Legion Auxiliary President Norma Duvall, and American Legion Commander Dennis Fercho visited Travis AFB on January 19, 2010. The day's events included visits to the Travis USO, Travis Fisher House, David Grant USAF Medical Center and the Fairfield VA clinic at Travis. Accompanying President Duvall and Commander Fercho were Peter Douglas, District 18 executive committee member and Linda Fercho, American Legion Auxiliary Department VA & R Chairman, and Kelli Germeraad who serves as the Deputy, American Legion Auxiliary and coordinator of the tour.

Colonel James Vechery, Commander 60th Air Mobility Wing was on hand to greet the Commander and President at the Travis Fisher House, 60th Medical Group Commander Colonel Brian Hayes was on, along with Colonel Billy Pruitt to lead the tour of David Grant USAF Medical Center.

Maria Miller-Carelock, Site Manager for the VA Clinic at Travis was on hand to welcome tour members at the VA. Norma and Dennis had the opportunity to visit the agencies providing care to our veterans and our military, to visit the Aero medical Staging Flight Ward (where returning wounded come home through) and to be briefed on the many services being provided between the joint ventures partnerships from both the Air Force and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs-VA Northern California Health Care System (VANCHCS) Some of those key services include: hemodialysis, radiation oncology, and neurosurgery.

A special thank you to all the members of team Travis and VA Northern California Healthcare System who made the tour possible. The Tour was coordinated by Kelli Germeraad, Deputy, American Legion Auxiliary with the U.S. Air Force/Department of Veterans Affairs.



American Legion Auxiliary President Norma Duvall and American Legion Commander Dennis Fercho greeting Staff Sergeant Ben Dellarocca of the 60th Aero Medical Flight-DGMC. Courtesy photo USAF/James Spellman



Colonel Brian Hayes, Commander 60th Medical Group, Travis AFB and tour members in front of the missing man table, which is permanently displayed in the cafeteria at David Grant USAF Medical Center, Travis. Courtesy photo USAF/James Spellman



Tour members with Fairfield VA OPC site manager Maria Miller-Carelock during their tour of the VA clinic at Travis. Courtesy photo USAF/James Spellman



## Post 755 Forms Car Club

The Elegant Eighteenth District is now looking to classic car enthusiasts to enhance membership in The American Legion. The Charter Cove Cruisers have established themselves at the Department of California's first organized car club. The charter of this club is to promote classic cars among veterans and supporters of veterans. The club has plans to raise money to support projects like Wounded Warriors and the Department President's special project, "Project Mend," through car shows and car rallies.

Founder and Club President Ray Bradshaw saw the need for this kind of club when he was attending a car show at Loma Linda VA Hospital where he was proudly displaying his own classic 1956 Ford Ranchero. He and 3 others from Charter Cove Post 755

wanted to be together at the show, but were denied because they were not a "true" car club. Since that time his little group has swollen to almost 50 members.

Based on the idea similar to The American Legion Riders, this is a gathering of American Legion members who share a common interest to benefit not only themselves, but also the community. To become a member, you don't even have to own a classic car. All you have to do is have an appreciation and share in the love of when cars were really made of steel and the designs were truly unique.

Anyone interested in joining Charter Cove Post 755's car club is invited to contact Ray Bradshaw at (626) 848-8740. He also has information about how you can start your own car club at your own Post.



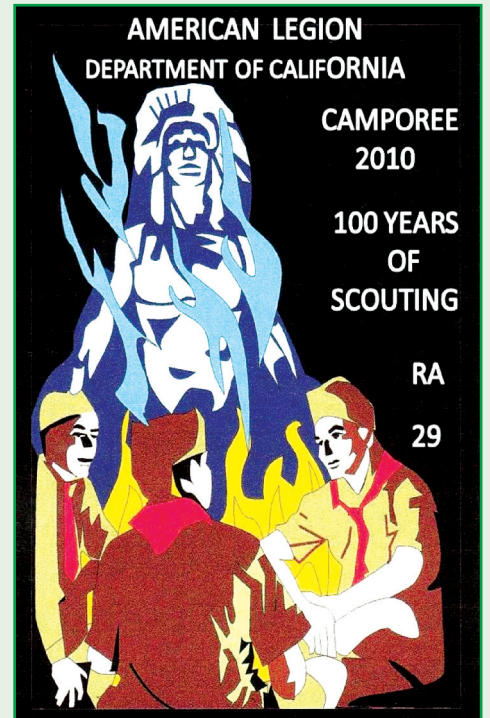
Members of Post 755's new car club, the Charter Cove Cruisers, show off their classic cars in front of the Post Home. Nearly 50 car enthusiasts are now also proud members of Post 755, Unit 755 or Squadron 755.

## The American Legion Department of California 2010 BSA Camporee July 30-August 1, 2010

This year's Camporee will be held at the Rancho Alegre Scout Camp located in the Los Padres Scout Council near Santa Barbara, California. The Camporee will include skilled events in Archery, Shooting and other scouting skills that will require Patrol and Troop participation. The 2010 camping fee will be \$6.00 per camper which will include a special patch to celebrate 100 Years of Scouting. This event is open to all American Legion-Sponsored Scout Troops.

Scout Leaders can register their unit online by going to The American Legion Department of California Web site (Select PROGRAM SECTION and scroll down to SCOUTING and go to the bottom of the SCOUTING page.) You will find an online information form. Complete the form and you will be e-mailed a Camporee Booklet and a registration form.

Contact: Ashley White by e-mail at [awhite805@charter.net](mailto:awhite805@charter.net)



## First Bank Offers Tips to Fight E-Mail Fraud

*Bank recommends steps to help protect customers against 'phishing'*

Phishing refers to a scam involving the use of fraudulent e-mail messages that appear to originate from legitimate businesses. Banks and their customers have become popular targets. Phishing begins when an e-mail message is received urging the account holder to "update" or "validate" his/her account information or possibly face some drastic consequence.

The fraudulent message then directs you to an official-looking Web site or form that will try to trick you into divulging sensitive information, such as your account number, social security number, user IDs or passwords. If confidential information is

provided, identity theft is likely to occur and your accounts and identity are in jeopardy.

First Bank recommends taking steps to avoid becoming a victim of a phishing scam:

1. If in doubt, call first. Contact your financial institution via telephone to verify the legitimacy of items you receive by e-mail or other methods.

2. If you receive a suspicious e-mail, do not click on any links that could provide or confirm sensitive information that might jeopardize your personal, financial or identity information. Even if the message warns of a dire outcome such as freezing or closing an account, do not

reply. You should forward the suspicious item to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [uce@ftc.gov](mailto:uce@ftc.gov)

3. Never send sensitive information via e-mail.

4. Always manually type in a Web address. Do not click on a link contained in an e-mail or copy and paste from an e-mail into your browser.

5. Be cautious about opening attachments or downloading files from e-mails you receive.

6. Many banks are in the process of rolling out Web technology commonly referred to as "multifactor authentication." Multifactor authentication allows the user to authenticate himself/herself

with a user ID or password, but the Web site also authenticates itself by visually presenting something that can be seen whenever the user visits the Web site, such as a picture, graphic or password. This further secures the user's experience and lets him/her know the site is legitimate.

For more information on how to detect, stop and avoid fraudulent activity, please visit [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).

First Bank is one of the largest privately owned banks in the country with \$10.3 billion in assets and 209 locations in Illinois, Missouri, California and Florida.

## Perris Valley Regional Chili Cook Off

American Legion Post 595

600 South "D" Street, Perris, CA 92570

(951) 657-6275

9th Annual

ICS Sanctioned Chili Cook-Off

Saturday, April 10, 2010

10:00 am - 5:00 pm

MUSIC

FOOD

VENDORS

CONTESTS

CAR SHOW

ADMISSION: \$3.00

Come and taste all the Chili

You get to vote for the one you like best!!!

Proceeds to benefit the various charities of The American Legion

## Commander's Homecoming

Department Commander Dennis "Can Do" Fercho

Saturday - May 22, 2010

Camarillo American Legion Post 741

Old Town Camarillo - 1 block North of the Metro Link Station

\$10.00 per person

5:00pm - No Host Cocktails 6:00pm - Dinner 7:00pm - Karaoke & Dancing

Menu: Lasagna by Bill Clark - Salad - Garlic Bread - Dessert

RSVP - NO LATER THAN - May 17, 2010

R.T. & Madeline Lee

1720 Marco Dr., Camarillo, CA 93010

Make checks payable to: ALA Camarillo Unit 741

If you have any questions contact:  
Madeline & R.T. Lee (805) 482-5402





# American Legion Auxiliary

## Department of California

See us on the Web at [www.calegionaux.org](http://www.calegionaux.org)



“Cherish the Past, Nurture the Present, Envision the Future”



### DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT



**Norma DuVall**  
Auxiliary  
President

In my travels throughout the state I have had the pleasure of embracing the flavors, flowers, food, music, dance, traditions and other reminders of the islands. My dance lessons are coming along fine and my Polynesian lei collection is growing in leaps and bounds!

I have seen as many similarities as there are differences in the 20 District visits I have completed. Although each District's membership is unique, the dedication to our organization and its programs has been shown in the outstanding accomplishments that have been made. The National President's Award of Excellence represents the "best of the best" and is only available to 5 units in the national organization. California won one award last year and we can do it again. Decide on which 3 programs you have had outstanding success in, follow the format and forms in the National Plan of Action and

submit to national by 6/1/10. Be sure to contact someone with any questions.

The DEC in January was very well attended and enjoyed by all. We had the pleasure of entertaining the Western Division Vice President Peggy Brown. March brings the National President to our great state. Please join us in giving her a warm (dry) California welcome.

Most of you know the Membership Challenge made between Commander Fercho and me. (Grass skirts singing "Tiny Bubbles" vs Bikinis singing "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Pokka Dot Bikini".) The Auxiliary membership team and I need your help. We continue to lag behind The American Legion and would like to be on the receiving end of the challenge at Convention. If your card does not say 2010, *please renew today!*

We have a few short months to complete this amazing year. Program emphasis in March is Community Service, April is Children & Youth, May is Poppy, June is Junior Activities and July is Girls State. Continue to have fun, remember to "Cherish the Past, Nurture the Present, Envision the Future" and always "Accentuate the Positive."



### NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOMAN



**LuAnn Capazzi**  
NEC Woman

Our 90th year as The American Legion Auxiliary! What an accomplishment! As the NEC women from all of the Departments gathered in Washington, D.C. at the end of February and beginning of March for our

annual meetings, President Rita asked us to Reconnect and Energize for our organization. We need to reconnect with our own reasons for joining this outstanding organization so that we can inspire others to join us in service to our veterans and their families, our children and youth and involvement in our communities.

We need to be energized in every aspect of our organization's programs. When we talk to perspective members we should be knowledgeable about our

organization, its history and the work we do in the various programs. At the Awareness Assembly that weekend we also walked the halls of Congress with our Legion family members to visit with our Representatives and Senators and their aides to present the Legion Point paper, which outlined the bills that affect our veterans and their families. The trip to Arlington National Cemetery and National President Rita's laying of the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was very beautiful and memorable.

President Rita will be in California on the 27th and 28th of March for her official visit to our Department. She will be in the south first at the Pacific Palisades Post and then up north at the new Dixon Veterans Memorial Building. I hope many of you will be able to meet President Rita – a lady who truly believes in "service, not self".

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

**Danielle White, Chairman**  
(Beach Comber/Surfer)

In Keeping with President Norma's Theme: "Cherish the Past, Nurture the Present, Envision the Future." The Children and Youth Department Chairman is the Beachcomber/Surfer assisted by the Units and District Chairmen. The Beachcomber/Lifeguards nurturing our most precious natural resources...Our Children.

Our mission is to raise money for the child Welfare Foundation. This program is one that National is promoting in its Plan of Works. This is a Legion Program, but the American Legion Auxiliary and others that donate \$600.00 or more will be receiving credit for their donations. Because this is a Legion program, it is administered by 100% of every dollar donated going toward grants.

There was over \$900,000.00 given in grants to nonprofit children's organizations this past year. If you know of a nonprofit children's organization here in California, please make them aware that these grants are available and encourage them to apply for a grant. I want to urge every Unit to donate to this worthwhile program.

Please send your check into the Department of California and earmark them "Child Welfare Foundation." You may want to participate in the 100% per Capita Banner. Unit must donate one dollar per member based upon its official membership total as of June 1, 2009. The Unit has from June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010 to complete its donation to Child Welfare Foundation. Please mail me a copy of your check, plus membership status, and I will do the paperwork for you to receive your banner.

Halloween was a very special event for

our Auxiliary Members, highlighted with fun and entertaining activities.

Family week was respected with baskets of goodies for needy families.

Juniors were involved with the VA Clinics in Los Angeles presenting them with clothing and treats. Girl Scouts with The American Legion Auxiliary Juniors were working closely doing things together like buying pocket Flags and sending 400+ letters to our troops. "Working Together Works" Districts participated in "Operation Military Kids" games, toys, bears, school supplies, cameras and a \$5.00 gift card was inserted in the backpack. A total of 363 backpacks were given to deployed military parent's children.

April is National Children and Youth month, as well as the military child. Several of you shared your planned activities to salute our military children and the ones in your Post home and communities. What a wonderful opportunity to meet my challenge to: "Make this the Happiest place on Earth for a child."

It was a delight to read the reports from the different chairmen as I compiled together my report to send to our National Children and Youth Chairman that our Units are working hand in hand with Post family members and are achieving remarkable results.

We are now coming to the end of the year and our end of year reports will be due shortly. Please report ALL the wonderful things that you have accomplished, so I can let National know that the Department of California continues to be heads above other Departments providing for its most precious natural resources...OUR CHILDREN!

### AMERICANISM

**Gloria J. Williams, Chairman**

Congratulations, Americanism Chairmen (Pacific Coast Beachcombers).

The promotion of the Americanism program is being conveyed up and down the coast of California. I hope you are having fun while spreading the word about our program goals. Almost every District in California is involved with the Americanism school essay contest – BRAVO!

The primary goals of the Americanism Program consist of five points. Here are some suggestions to promote these points:

Unit – Engage in study classes, flag etiquette and constitutional studies are just a few ways in which we can increase our awareness.

Youth Groups – Present pocket flags to schools, have juniors conduct Pledge of Allegiance at meetings and events. Encourage youth to enter the National Essay Contest.

Adult Groups – Auxiliary, along with the Legion family – host a reception for new citizens.

Community – Invite local officials and

community to participate in patriotic holidays. Utilize the pocket flags for presentations. Avail yourself of the electronic and printed information to promote the program.

Cooperative Effort – Concentrating our efforts with the Legion family will effectively convey our dedication to make patriotism a personal matter.

FEBRUARY WAS AMERICANISM MONTH – There were many options in which you and your Legion family supported ideals and the solidarity of our country's principles. I look forward to hearing about your accomplishments in our year-end report.

We are committed to providing our members, youth and community with opportunities that encourage the admiration of the U.S. history and our American ethics. Please continue to support our military children through Operation Military Kids (OMK).

"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."  
–Theodore Roosevelt

### RESOLUTIONS

**Phyllis Holmberg, Chairman**

Resolutions are a very important business to the American Legion Auxiliary. They are a way of recommending for a change in our Department Code, Policies and Constitution and Bylaws. A Resolution should deal with only one subject. There are two parts of a Resolution, the Preamble, consisting of the "Whereas" clause which states the reason and factual background to support whatever policy or action is to be taken. The "Resolve" clause sets forth the intent. There is no set rule on the number of Whereas clauses your resolution should have, but remember the fewer the better.

Per our Department Constitution, Article IV, Section A which states: Resolutions that change the constitution and Bylaws must be into the Department Office 75 days before the start of Convention which would be April 9, 2010. Resolutions that effect

Finance must be into the Department Office 60 Days before the start of Convention, which would be April 24, 2010. All other Resolutions must be into the Department Office 45 Days before the start of Convention which would be May 9, 2010. Exception to this may be emergency resolutions which are those that may arise during the Convention or after the date established for admitting them.

Remember, the Resolution must be typed, in triplicate, double spaced and signed prior to sending it to the Department office. There are Official Resolution Forms that you will need to get from the Department Office.

**Phyllis Holmberg**  
Department Resolution Chairman  
858-675-1155

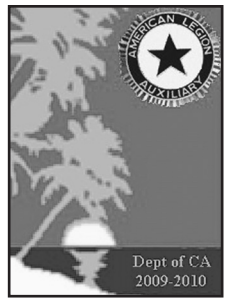




# American Legion Auxiliary

## Empowering Women – Inspiring Communities

“The Tropics” Your “Island Connection”



### DEPARTMENT VICE PRESIDENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN



**Pilar S. Reyes**  
Auxiliary  
Vice President  
Membership  
Chairman

My Dear Station Masters and dedicated members of the Auxiliary!

**Congratulations** for a great job on promoting the Membership Program. As of February 8, 2010 you have recruited 1,574 new members, Jrs. and Srs. I can feel the great energy emanating from everyone. Keep the momentum in full steam. Fill up those Area Membership Trains to catch up with the Legion. February 1, 2010 Report shows we reached 77.9% of our Department Membership Goal. Good show! Now, try to make that **85%** and strive harder to reach National Goal of 85%.

I know you are all working hard, but try to double up the efforts on recruitment and retention. Alert members who have not transmitted their renewals – to do so. They may just have forgotten and they need to be reminded. If they cannot afford to pay for their current dues, **help them**. Your unit can hold a fundraising event to pay for their dues and give them IOU's. Do everything you can do to retain valuable long time members. We have to keep our Membership active and growing.

Important information: National had moved the **deadline for 85%**

**Goal** from April 7 to March 24, 2010 because March 31st is the planned cut-off date for membership to be submitted to the Data Services Division of The American Legion. We still have a few weeks to get those transmittals in.

At the Membership Payoff Event at the DEC Meeting held in Ontario, Units and Districts that reached 55%, 65% and 75% of Membership goal and 17 Goal Units were entered in separate cash drawings. Winners were each awarded a check of \$25.00 by this Chief Engineer. Units that made Early Bird Goal were presented Early Bird Ribbons.

Lucky winners of \$25.00 each:

	Units	Districts
Target 55%:	City Service Unit 537, D22	District 9
Target 65%:	Leyte Unit 625, D22	District 24
Target 75%:	Santa Barbara Unit 49, D16	District 30
Goal Unit:	San Jacinto Unit 828, D21	

Thanks for the great enthusiasm shown by our members in supporting our Membership Program!

### POPPY

Anita Biggs, Chairman

#### May is Poppy Month

The month of May includes holidays that honor our country's veterans, such as Armed Forces Day and of course, Memorial Day. We also have the opportunity to honor the many hospitalized veterans that have spent countless hours tediously making our memorial flower, the Poppy.

Members of The American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion and Sons of the American Legion make it possible to honor these veterans by distributing poppies for donations to the public, family and friends during National Poppy Week which occurs May 9-15, 2010 this year. Just a crepe paper flower some may say, but the symbolism of the Poppy is from the many who have made the ultimate sacrifice and provides us with the memory that we should never forget.

The poem "In Flanders Fields" written by John McCrea explains some of the

symbolism of the Poppy. We must "take up the quarrel with the foe" and remember the fallen whose blood was shed for our freedom. During the month of May remember our hospitalized veterans, active duty military and our Legionnaires through your support of the Poppy Program.

As we distribute our Poppies during Poppy Week, look for ways to let the public know the importance of the Poppy Program, explain that Poppy funds directly aid disabled veterans and their families. By working with your Public Relations Chairman you can submit articles, contact your local media, give Poppies to your elected officials and promote the Poppy Poster and Window Display contests.

Thank you Auxiliary members for your financial support of the Poppy program. We know May is Poppy Month, but with our veterans in mind, we make every day Poppy Day!



### CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Diane DeLashmit, Chairman and Parliamentarian

April is fast approaching and it's time to begin the election process for the 2010-2011 Auxiliary year. Every member is entitled to a copy of her Unit Bylaws and should be familiar with the contents.

This is a good time to review which officers need to be elected and which officers are appointed, (Article IV, Section 2 and Section 3). The duties of each officer should also be reviewed, (Article IV, Section 5-16). Does your Unit have a Nominating Committee? (Article VII Section 1 b) If yes, they MUST be elected and the current president CANNOT serve on this committee (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 10th Edition, page 419).

Nominations and elections of officers can neither begin before April 1st nor later than June 19th. Your District President needs to be notified of the date set for your elections. (Article IV Section 2)

Nominations and elections of delegates and alternates to Convention can neither be before April 1st nor later than 15 days prior to your District Pre-Convention

Caucus. (Article IV Section 2 d) District Pre-convention Caucus MUST be held between May 10th and June 9th. (Department C&B Article XII, Section 2) All obligations to the District and Department must be satisfied in order to be seated at Convention or District Pre-Convention Caucus. (Department C&B Article IV Section 2) The following obligations must be paid: fidelity bond, District per capita tax, (Department C&B Article XII Section 6 C) delegate fees, (Department C&B Article XII Section 3A) all monies owed to Department. In addition, an approved copy of Unit Constitution & Bylaws within the last 10 years and a current poppy order and report must be on file. (Department C&B Code #5a and Poppy Code #3)

Officers MUST be installed prior to September 1st and an audit MUST be conducted before the installation (Article IV Section 4 and Article VII Section 1a). By following these rules your Unit will have a more successful election and have a good start for your 2010-2011 year.

#### "SAL-YOUTH LTD"

### Leadership Training & Development Camp

Sons of The American Legion Squadrons and American Legion Posts are invited to sponsor "Delegates" for participation in our 3rd Annual Youth Leadership Training & Development Camp program. Designed to provide advanced knowledge and practical information to active and enthusiastic members of squadrons, delegates will return and serve as trainers and mentors to help develop leadership skills which will enhance Legion Family programs and activities participation in their local Squadrons and Communities.

In addition, special Guest Presenters will provide interesting segments about various professional, public service and educational and career opportunities for students in the final years of their high

school experience.

When: Friday-Saturday-Sunday, April 9th, 10th & 11th, 2010

Where: Temescal Gateway Park, Pacific Palisades, CA (West Los Angeles near beach)

Qualifications: Delegates must be a Member in Good Standing in their Squadron, Between 8th thru 12th grade at the time of the camp and interested in developing the skills and knowledge to help lead their Squadron's membership onward toward more precise, active and successful participation in The Sons of the American Legion.

For information, contact: Rodney B. Perkins, Chairman; 2707 Leatherwood Ct., Riverside, CA 92504-1108; Phone: (951) 532-1230; E-mail: [teampizza@aol.com](mailto:teampizza@aol.com)

Third Annual

# SAL-YOUTH LTD

*Detachment of California*

Friday-Saturday-Sunday  
April 9th, 10th & 11th, 2010

TEMESCAL GATEWAY PARK  
Pacific Palisades, California

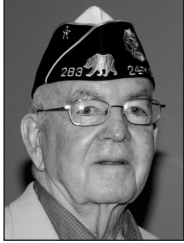
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT  
Rodney B. Perkins, Chairman  
2707 Leatherwood Court  
Riverside, CA 92504-1108  
Phone: (951) 532-1230  
E-mail: [teampizza@aol.com](mailto:teampizza@aol.com)

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## DISTRICT 24 COMMANDER



Bob Ryan  
District 24  
Commander

The District Commander's position is coming to a close very fast. It was only at the last Department Convention held June 2009 in Riverside that I was capped by Joan Matsukuma of the Department (who recently retired and is greatly missed) and I joined Commander Dennis Fercho's team. Now here it is March 2010 already, with June right around the corner. What a truly gratifying experience in being able to work with the highest caliber of Legionnaires.

The 24th District has been, and is, deeply involved in the Four Pillars of The American Legion, below illustrates a few examples of what has taken place on a daily and monthly basis within the 24th.

### Veterans – Serving – Veterans

A Salute to Veterans Day at the GLAHC – both the District and Post 283 Auxiliary along with Legionnaires served lunch for 200+ Veterans on Los Angeles Veterans campus.

Post 283, Lou Cozolino, continued to provide monthly luncheons for families staying at the Fisher House, while their love ones are undergoing treatment at the Hospital. Ladies Auxiliary and Legion members held monthly Bingo games and prizes for those Veterans confined both at the Hospital and domiciliary care units.

Post 283 Service Officer Jerry Jones distributed much needed clothing for both male/female residents at the Haven House under rehabilitation at building 212 on the VA grounds. Many thanks to Jerry Jones in contacting several cleaning establishments in providing these needed clothes. Post 283 generous donations of a new refrigerator and freezer for the Haven House building 212, which has a resident population of just fewer than 200 veterans undergoing rehabilitation which involves preparation of three meals per day.

Memorial Services were held at both the Hollywood Post 43 and Palisades Post 283 for members that have joined Post everlasting. The number of Post everlasting each year is beginning to get longer.

### Youth Involvement

The American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contests involving local high school students has proven successful with a Palisades high school student Michael Shayan advancing through the Post, District and Area Levels to the Department. Scheduled to be held February 28, 2010 in Modesto, CA in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1:00 p.m.

Boys' State program is off and running with fifteen high schools competing with outstanding students all very much interested in further study of our U.S. Government and Constitution.

The American Legion Baseball program is very much alive with 12 to 14 teams within the District have just completed winter Legion baseball and looking forward to summer Legion games.

The Junior ROTC, under the direction

of Major David Gibson and the Sea Cadet under the direction of Commander Ernie Cowell have continued to make these two programs year around successful with many field trips and with weekend cruises aboard naval ships especially for the Sea cadets an enjoyable learning experience for these young men/women. The Scouting programs both under the direction of Bob Miller of the Hollywood Post 43 and Kevin Niles of the Palisades Post 283 are all recognized throughout the local communities and carry over into adjacent districts a wonderful mentoring to our youths.

The District and Post 283 have sponsored the ROTC programs at both the UCLA and USC campuses by hosting Dine-outs, Graduation Ceremonies along with continued stipends to the individual cadets who very soon will be active Officers. Thank You Kurt Hiete, Hal Vieau, Ernie Cowell, Richard Littlestone Past Commandant ROTC for continuing to make the ROTC program the success it is.

### Community Activities

Post 283 Annual Community Blood Drive recently held at Post 283 resulted in 56 pints donated through the Red Cross.

The American Legion Palisades Post founded the community 4th of July parade and is presently working on the formation of the parade for this year involving the U.S. Marine marching band, Marine mounted guard, Bagpipers marching band and open house immediately following at Post 283 for all community and spectators. The Department Commander, District Commanders and Post Commanders are again invited to ride in the parade.

Hosting recognition events for Community Chamber of Commerce and Community Council members throughout the year at Palisades Post 283 is recognized by the Community leaders.

### Government

We are very fortunate to have two very strong members within the District: James Creacy of the Hollywood Post 43 and Eric Measles of Palisades Post 283, who not only attend Post and District meetings but are appointed members of our National Legislative committees and have kept members well informed of all Veteran issues.

### Membership

Membership has been a challenge in that we seem to be losing active Posts and gaining paper Posts. While the District will achieve 90% of its goal, we are still losing members in the inactive paper Posts. To help bring back the paper Post members back in the fold, the District has invited the paper Posts to attend the regular meetings, special events and festivities of an active Post nearby. This can, and is, happening through phone calls and mailers. On the bright side, the Alfred Spahrman Post 322 was suspended last year. This year they now meet twice a month at the West Los Angeles VA Hospital and will have a permanent location at the California Veterans Home, Los Angeles when it officially opens this summer. Their membership has grown from 10 members to 23 members and have plans to double that before the fiscal year ends.

## Blood Donor Committee

T.D. Hetherington, Chairman (20-15)  
R.V. Poston, Vice-Chair (266-29)  
Robert P. Alves (594-14)

Reports are slow in coming in and many thanks to those who have remembered. As chairman, I feel it is my job to remind you that the reports are now due.

As we all know, blood saves lives. Please get to your Blood Bank and donate. There seems to be a constant shortage of blood available when needed. Thanks again to those who do donate. Remember you can do it 5 times a year. Only donations made this past year are to be listed on the Blood Donor Report.

## Public Relations Commission

Joanne Evans, Chairman

Newspaper coverage for The American Legion – How can we do public relations programs when the news media will not print our stories or events? It seems like the only time they will cover you is when there is a mishap at the Post.

I know cities are experiencing the same thing. The only time the press seems to want to cover an event happening in the city is if it is negative, like the city is going broke or someone broke some rules of office.

You can get better coverage if you can access your newspaper reporter and personally talk to them and let them know you need to reach out to the public and the veterans in the community through their newspaper, radio station, local TV channel, etc. Invite them to the Post, offer them a dinner at the Post and introduce them to the officers of the Post and Auxiliary Unit, and the Squadron and Riders if you have them at your Post. Explain to them that it is important that you make everyone aware why you are there as a group of wartime veterans serving our veterans, who are now serving overseas and at home, as well as their families.

Those of you who attend State and

National Conventions may have noticed that the media coverage is not that good, that is unless the Governor, President or some other government official speaks at the Convention. Once in a while they will cover the "blue cap" Legionnaire in the convention hall.

Do not feel frustrated about not being able to get coverage. After a while your local reporter will come and visit, and perhaps cover one of your functions. You need to give them plenty of time, plenty of information and why you are putting on a specific function. You need to assign someone from your Post to handle public relations. This way they can dedicate their energies to the one program and perhaps accomplish miracles.

There is a lot of public relation material available for the Post to use. It is available from National. I believe there is still a list of PR tapes, CDs, booklets, etc. that is available from the National Organization. I have not looked online lately on the National Web site, but I am sure if you cannot find it, you can call the PR section at National and they will let you know what is available. Please remember that the cost of this information allows only a limited amount of information to be sent out. You can copy or reproduce at your local Post.

## California: Leading the Nation in the Next Generation of Youth Leadership

Matthew Shea, CALS Chairman

California American Legion Soccer (CALS) is making headway. Thanks to the efforts of Past Department Commander Dave Eby, [calegion.org](http://calegion.org) will be posting a page detailing The California Legion's partnership with AYSO in the near future. This Web page will most importantly translate AYSO language into Legion language. Other topics that will be covered will be how to scholarship under-privileged children, refereeing games, coaching, securing

fields, supporting teams, and making contact with your local AYSO leadership.

CALS is leading the nation for the next generation youth sports and National is looking closely at what we are doing. We have a proud legacy of youth programs; however, we must remember the society has changed since 1919. We must remain vigilant to what veterans, their families and the community wants to remain relevant. What we do today through Youth Leadership will resonate in the early years of thousands of future Legionnaires.

## A Veterans perspective on technology, outreach and face to face

by William Hyde, Jr.  
Jr. Past Legion Post 911 Commander  
Iraq Combat Veteran

One of the lessons we've learned at Post 911 is that it is easy to be carried away by new technologies and the new ways they enable organizations to interact with members. There is a definite tendency to think that by creating a Facebook page, establishing a presence on Xbox Live, or even just creating a Web site, that it will automatically resolve many issues and problems. But the reality is that these technologies are fundamentally just tools that enable people to communicate in new ways, and communication still requires two parties who make an effort.

Just being on Facebook provides very little utility if there is not someone who is providing an active presence. But the temptation, and all too often the tendency is to say "We have a Web site and a Facebook page so anyone who wants to can reach us. Now new members, or current members and supporters, will contact us." And to a certain extent that is true. Maybe some

young veteran returning from Iraq will Google "American Legion, 94115" and discover the Web site and send an e-mail. But not enough people take that kind of initiative, and any organization who relies on that is destined to see a declining membership.

The real utility, and even beauty, of technology is that it enables us to be more effectively proactive. We can search for prospective members using these new tools, and interact with potential new members organically by participating in the activities that they are already doing. Communicating with members can be automated and done via multiple mediums, incorporating multimedia and having a much higher information density in a more cost-effective and relatively painless process.

Similarly, communicating with other organizations can be streamlined to enhance effectiveness while reducing costs and labor. It is important that we do not allow technology to enable a passive mindset. All of these tools are just ways to enhance the efforts we have already been making and cannot be seen as a replacement for "boots on the ground."



## American Legion Riders

# Annual Dos Palos Easter Basket Run

Bill Roller "Bunker," Post 564

US Navy Retired

Acting President American Legion Riders District 13

Patriot Guard Riders Road Captain

On April 3rd, the Annual Dos Palos Easter Basket Run will start at Dos Palos Super Gas Station, 16150 Elgin Road, Dos Palos, California 93620 (Where Highway 152 intersects the top of Highway 33.) Staging Time is at 9:30 a.m. with KSU at 10:00 a.m. The event is Sponsored by American Legion Riders, Patriot Guard and Dos Palos PD.

The Details: Each person will bring at least one Easter Basket. We will stage at the gas station, and Dos Palos Police Department will arrive at 10 a.m. to escort us down Highway 33 to the event site. Cars are welcome to participate and to help haul baskets. The more people who participate, the more successful this mission will be to show some much needed support to the Central Valley Area. Come out and show the spirit of Americans helping others in need! All bikers are welcome to help. Call "Bunker" for more info at 510-205-2675.

History: Previously Dos Palos did this every year to just show support to the community. Later some local bikers had offered to help for a little publicity. Last year they backed out at the last minute, and since the water situation developed in the central valley, help was needed more than ever. They called The American Legion Riders to see if we could help them. I received a request on the Thursday before Easter, and by Saturday morning we had 21 American Legion Riders on bikes, more in cars, and passengers to assist. It was more successful than thought to be, especially with such short notice. The American Legion Riders were asked to take this event every year, so here we are with enough time to organize appropriately.

This year they need the help more than ever, as you all know, since the water was cut off to all of the farmers in the California Central Valley. Their livelihood was cut off, so that conservationists could save the "Delta Smelt" fish by letting them have all of the scarce water that would have been used for irrigation. The unemployed farmer's kids deserve a decent Easter! You can help!

## American Legion Honors Heroes El Cajon Post 303

By Robert L. Tade, Post Commander

It is going to be very difficult to improve on the beginning that we have had this year. Our February meeting had the largest attendance that we've ever had. Our guest speaker was Carlos Montoya. He is a member of the "Greatest Generation" and was a POW in World War II who survived the notorious Bataan Death March. It was an honor and a thrill for all of us to get to shake his hand and relive through his words the almost unimaginable hardships and his will to survive.

In attendance were: Mac's son, retired Admiral "Sonny" Masso, who will be a guest speaker at a future Post meeting; Eddie Gray, the former Marine who has taken on the task of walking through all the states on the perimeter of the United States to raise the visibility of Veteran's issues across America, as well as to honor those now serving, veterans of past wars and conflicts and those who will be asked to serve in the future to maintain our freedoms; high school oratorical contestant,

Emily McLaughlin, a senior at West Hills High School, who received an award by Congressman Duncan Hunter.

Ian Davies, a junior at Santana High School, will receive a similar award at our next Post meeting on March 3rd. Also present were Carlos Montoya with some of our own WWII Veterans: John Huffman, Bill Jackson, Keith Babcock, Charlie Barstow and William Brennan.

We are honored to have had so many that have given so much for our Country in our Post like Eddy Murphy and John Nielson (awarded the Bronze Star) who joined us for breakfast this morning. Thanks to all of you for what you have done for our Post, the Legion and our Country. If you can't make it to one of our "breakfast" meetings, please come to one of our Post meetings that take place at 1815 at the Bostonia Rec Center on the first Wednesday of each month. We have a great bunch of Veterans, and their wives, that attend our meetings. They represent all the branches of the service and all the wars and conflicts since WWI.

## Post 77 News

### District 6 Helps New Citizens To Learn All About The U.S. Flag

District Six First Vice Commander Tony Arca, District Six Commander Gary Leach and Fred Aquino of Magellan Post 604 are shown here in attendance at the Feb. 17 new citizen Naturalization Ceremony in Sacramento. On this day and at all Sacramento naturalization ceremonies in recent years, District 6 paid for and distributed to new United States citizens The American Legion's brochure, "Flag of the United States: the Living Symbol of our Great Republic, How to Display it, How to respect it."



### Post 77 is always ready to honor veterans at their funerals



The American Legion Post 77 Honor Guard takes part in funerals of veterans at cemeteries throughout Yolo County and at the U.S. Sacramento Valley VA Cemetery in Solano County, whether they are American Legion members or not. Here, Post 77 members (L to R) Vince Olvera, Dan Cameron and Gary Leach perform as a rifle squad in the funeral of a Navy veteran at Davis Cemetery. For the last few years, American Legion Post 77 is

the only veterans' service organization in Yolo County which performs military honors at funerals. This includes folding and presenting the United States flag to the veteran's family, the playing of Taps and firing of rifles in honor of the veteran.

### He loves the country he serves

Staff Sgt. Casey Fitzgerald, Post 77 Member

American Legion member Casey Fitzgerald has seen a lot during his nine years in the Army. There was Bosnia in 2002, Iraq during 2005-06, and various stops throughout the United States. Despite his driving in Iraq convoys commencing at midnight, as there are fewer IED strikes at night, one of his convoys was hit. Even so, Staff Sgt. Fitzgerald never considered a change of career. He, in fact, is dedicated to doing his part in the Army and for his country for many years to come.

"By serving in the Army, I believe I am doing something honorable. It is not just for me." Now in the Intelligence section of his unit, Fitzgerald thinks back on how the Army entrusted him to be an instructor of soldiers. "Having the opportunity to teach others and help them was rewarding to me."

As a staff sergeant, "The Army expects me to make sound decisions and take care of soldiers," sometimes assisting them with personal issues that impact their work. "I understand the expectation that by my setting the right example, I am mentoring soldiers."

It looks like SSgt. Fitzgerald's next stop will be Afghanistan. His current unit, at Fort Carson, Colorado, is preparing for its deployment to Afghanistan. "It is exciting for me to go overseas. In each assignment, I see new places, meet new people and have new experiences."

Staff Sergeant Fitzgerald and American Legion Post 77 have a close connection. His wedding reception was held at the Post hall in May 2003. American Legion member Casey Fitzgerald is a patriotic American. We thank him for his outstanding service, wish him well, and wait to hear of his future exploits.

## Gold Star License Plate Program

# Fundraising Moving Ahead Slowly

SACRAMENTO – The following is a statement from California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Secretary Roger Brautigan on the status of the fundraising efforts for the California Gold Star License Plate Program: "This is a program to honor the families of the fallen to make sure that their sacrifices will never be forgotten. In order to accomplish this mission before the end of this year, we need everyone to help by reaching out to others and making them aware of the opportunities to contribute to this most noble cause," said Brautigan.

"Project: Gold Star," the fundraising efforts that were established by CalVet to fund the creation of the Gold Star license plates, has raised \$85,694 of the \$300,000 needed to pay for the design, fabrication and programming of the new license plate system at the California

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

This program was established when Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 1455 (Cogdill) in 2008, which authorized the DMV to issue a license plate that would honor the families of service men and women who were killed in the line of duty. The legislation required that the program be funded through private donations so the families of the fallen service men and women wouldn't have to pay any extra fees for these special license plates. Under provisions of the law, any family member whose son or daughter (mother, father, husband, wife, or grandparent or grandchild) gave their life for our freedom may obtain one of these special recognition plates by simply paying the regular registration fees.

Donations to "Project: Gold Star" may be made online at the Department's Web site – [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

## 13 percent of eligible vets seek stop-loss pay

By Jim Tice – Military Times staff writer

Only 13 percent of the Army veterans believed to be eligible for retroactive stop-loss pay have applied for the special entitlement program funded by Congress with \$534 million last year. The retroactive pay is belated compensation to former and current service members who were involuntarily extended on active duty because of stop-loss from Sept. 11, 2001, through Sept. 30, 2008. The program pays eligible applicants \$500 for every month they were involuntarily retained beyond their contracted terms of service.

So far, payments have averaged \$4,500 per approved application. Personnel officials believe as many as 120,000 Army veterans are eligible, a figure that represents most of the 170,000 members of all services that Pentagon officials estimate may qualify.

The application window for the program opened Oct. 21, but as of early February only 16,000 former soldiers had applied, according to Maj. Ray Whitley, project manager for the Army's retroactive stop-loss pay task force.

Of the applications received, 5,000

have been processed by the Army and forwarded to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for review and payment. So far, 2,500 Army applicants have been paid, Whitley said.

Application processing, originally snarled by administrative problems, was further complicated in December when Congress passed a law that prohibits the special pay to applicants who received a retention bonus while they were in stop-loss status. At the time that measure took effect, about 2,000 Army applications were being processed by DFAS and were returned to the service to verify eligibility.

Whitley said 1,800 of those applications were cleared for payment, while the others were denied or are still being verified. Claims that were approved and paid before Dec. 19 are not subject to the bonus restrictions of the new law.

In authorizing the retroactive stop-loss pay program last June, Congress stipulated that all claims must be received by the services Oct. 1, 2010, even though the processing of many cases will continue well beyond that date. To apply for retroactive pay, access <http://www.stoplosspay.army.mil/default.asp>



## 13th District Supported Trees for Troops

By *Ralph Jacob*

On the first two weekends after Thanksgiving, members of the 13th District from Posts 217, 318, and 419, supported Trees for Troops at the Battaglia Tree Farm in San Martin, CA. They manned a booth talking to patrons and explaining the Trees for Troops program and The American Legion. During that time, they collected over \$1,000 in donations from pennies to \$20 bills from the many people who came to cut their own Christmas trees.

Not included in that amount were many whole trees purchased by individuals. Post 419 also collected \$150 extra from donations in their club room. 'Trees for Troops' is a program of the Christmas Spirit Foundation that provides trees for active duty military and their families. Tree growers from around the states grow special 6-7 ft. trees for this program. They are offered at special prices at the tree farms and all trees were shipped free around the states and world by Fed Ex.



*Ralph Jacob of Post 419 presenting check to Paul Battaglia. Paul is the owner of Battaglia Tree Farm in San Martin, CA.*

### PCC State Board Meeting April 17-18, 2010 - 10:00 a.m.

The State Past Commanders Club will meet at Redlands Post 106, 820 W. State St., Redlands, CA 92373. Phone: 909-792-4523  
**Accommodations:** Ayres Hotel - Redlands, 1015 W. Colton Ave., Redlands, CA 92374

Phone 909-335-9024 (Mention PCC/American Legion when making reservations) [www.ayresredlands.com](http://www.ayresredlands.com) Deadline - March 26, 2010; King or (2) Queen Beds - \$99.00

Dugout: Redlands Post 106 - 4 p.m. on Saturday

#### Directions to Hotel

From South: Take I-10 east past I-215 to Tennessee St., turn right, left at signal (W. Colton Ave.), on right  
 From North: Take I-5 South over Grapewine to I-210 east toward Pasadena; take CA-57 South toward Santa Ana, merging on to I-10 east toward San Bernardino, past I-215 to Tennessee St. Turn right on Tennessee, turn left onto W. Covina Ave., on right

#### Directions to Post

Turn right onto W. Colton Ave toward New York St. Turn right onto Texas St. Cross Redlands Bl. on to N. Center St. Post on right corner. (0.71 miles)  
 Questions? Contact Phil Heller at 909-792-9264



*Post 217 Commander Nick Martinez, presenting check to Paul Battaglia.*

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## The Last Bugle Call

Reporting Period: January 1, 2010 to February 28, 2010

*O Lord, You have showed us that death is but the gateway to a more glorious life and that we must not fear its coming; and we know, also, that neither life nor death can separate us from Your love. Assure us, yet again, that our departed comrades are not lost to us, but sharing new life with You in the kingdom of our Father, where we shall in your good time be reunited. We know them to be with You forever. ... Amen.*

During the reporting period there have been 553 transfers to Post Everlasting. The names of all our departed comrades may be seen on the department website. Just click on the highlighted "Post Everlasting" button on our homepage [www.calegion.org](http://www.calegion.org)

## Meet The New Membership Director

Member of The American Legion for 19 years. My home Post is Lakewood Post 496 in Long Beach, CA. I am retired Army, serving from 1963-1984. Served in the Republic of Vietnam from 1966-1971. I have served in various positions within The American Legion, primarily as Post Commander of Lakewood Post, and various offices within the "Noisy" 19th District, including 2nd Vice and 1st Vice Commander. Member of the Sons of The American Legion and have served as the 4th Area Constitution and By-Laws Commissioner for 8 years. I am married to Lilia and have one child Jennifer who now lives with her daughter and husband in Westwood, NJ. I look forward to serving as the Department of California Membership Director and working with all Legionnaires within the Department of California.



*Bill Clapp*

*Editor's note: Michael Gerold resigned at the recent D.E.C. in Santa Maria.*

## Help! Help! Help! Help!

*Bernard Foley, Southern membership chairman*

This is the first time for me to put something in the *California Legionnaire*. All I am asking all of our members to do is ask people to pay their dues. Any District that is less than 90% at this time, you are holding us back. So please help us do our job. We, the membership team, are here to help you in membership, so please, if we can help you, let us know. The North membership chairman Ron Galvin's phone is 1-510-483-1605. South is 1-951-377-2718. We are here to help YOU. JUST ASK!!!

	Area Number	2010 Goal	2010 Paid	P1000/DMS Transfers	PUFLs	2010 Members	Percent Goal	Goose Eggs	Area Rank
1	14,936	11,021	2,094	37	13,152	88.06%	1	3	
2	13,568	9,521	2,020	77	11,618	85.63%	1	5	
3	14,993	11,391	1,778	29	13,198	88.03%	0	4	
4	8,376	6,321	1,137	16	7,474	89.23%	0	1	
5	29,347	22,755	3,237	81	26,073	88.84%	1	2	
6	16,299	11,351	2,444	45	13,840	84.91%	0	6	
Totals	97,519	72,360	12,710	285	85,355	87.53%	3		

Above are the Area totals as of March 9, 2010. I would like to thank all Districts that are 90% or better. There are only five (D15, D17, D26, D28, D29) at this time. That is not really a very good showing. Please help us do our job and we will all look good. Our goal is 97,519 members. We have at this time 85,355 for 87.53%. I know we can reach 100% if everyone that hasn't - just renews their membership ASAP!