

AMERICAN LEGION POST 373 NEWSLETTER



**P.O. Box 2212
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**Commander
Robert "Bob" Brewster**

**Chartered 1996
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COMMANDER'S CORNER

In my column in the last newsletter, I wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. At this time, I want to repeat a Happy New Year to all!

Our membership is coming in pretty good, but we still have a ways to go. If you have not paid for or received your 2016 membership card, please contact me at 904-272-1619 and get your check in the mail as soon as possible. It is still \$35.00. However, as of January 15, 2016, our dues are being raised to \$45.00. This is not what any of us at Post 373 wanted. This was caused because National and Department raised their dues to us. Our Post 373 dues are still lower than most any other organization around here.

The American Legion does a lot of good things to help all of our veterans young and old. We are the only vet organization who has their own fully staffed office in both the Pentagon and in the Capitol. We led the fight to have the VA Secretary replaced. We were the only veteran organization to pursue this. Because of our size and determination, this was accomplished. Shortly after, we got a change in the Vice-Secretary as well. The VA is still a mess, and we will continue to monitor and keep pressure on Congress to do the same. If we as a country have money for foreign aid, illegal aliens, and a lot of other pet projects, we must take care of our veterans. Realize that part of your dues is paying for this fight. No one at this Post is receiving any money for their own benefit from your dues. As some of you know for the last several years, I have held offices in the District, Area, and last year, Vice Commander of the Department of Florida. I can tell you from my own experience that even the Department of Florida Commander and the National Commander do not receive any salary.

Why am I telling you this? I received some phone calls and notes in the mail from members who are not going to renew this year. The main reason was a ~~60-~~called+huge increase in our Post dues of \$10.00. As I have explained in previous newsletters, at our Post meetings, and in emails that this is the first dues increase in 8 years. I am sure we won't have another one in the next 6 to 8 years. I did not want an increase and our Post members did not want an increase. Most Posts throughout the nation did not want an increase. However, facts are facts. The cost of running the Department of Florida state offices and National offices has gone up just like at your home - electricity, insurance, cost of office equipment, postage, taxes, and general overhead. We, at this Post, keep our cost of operation at a minimum. We utilize the office equipment that I have in my home from when I was working for a

COMMANDER'S CORNER (continued)

living. We also have a few other members who do work on their own personal computers to help us. The Post officers and members attend and represent our Post at District meetings, Area meetings, and Department of Florida meetings, at the Fall Conference and Summer Convention, and at the National Convention. At this time, we feel that we do not have the money to help pay their expenses and will not for the foreseeable future.

Our Post, without a bar or our own building, has continued to grow in membership for the last 8 years since we revitalized this Post. Not a week goes by that I am not contacted by a veteran or a spouse of a veteran or a son or daughter looking for information or help. Myself and numerous other members have helped a lot of veterans in this area in furnishing transportation to and from clinics, running errands of all kinds, and again, this is paid out of our own pockets, not out of Post funds. We would be missed in this local area if our Post had to close down for lack of funds.

SO PLEASE, WE NEED YOU TO DO TWO THINGS . HELP US SIGN UP NEW MEMBERS FOR THE LEGION, THE AUXILIARY, AND THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION. AND, ALSO IF YOU OR YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO RIDE MOTORCYCLES, PLEASE GET THEM TO JOIN OUR POST. THE RIDERS HAVE TO BELONG TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: THE LEGION, THE AUXILIARY, OR THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION TO QUALIFY FOR THE RIDERS. ALSO, GET YOUR DUES IN BEFORE JANUARY 16, 2016, TO AVOID THE INCREASE IN DUES.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PAY YOUR DUES FOR WHATEVER REASON, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT: 904-272-1619.

**For God and Country,
Bob Brewster, Commander**

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Well another year has passed us by and I don't know where the time has gone. The older we get, the faster time goes. No matter our age though, God's faithfulness to us always stays the same.

As we start the new year of 2016, we have a new chapter of joys and challenges ahead of us. We all love the times of joy, but quite often are not ready for the challenges we might face.

We must remember life is sometimes hard. It always amazes me the number of people I meet or hear about who think life for them should be easy, the bowl of cherries we used to hear about. Our own experience tells us life is anything but easy. The pain and suffering of our lives encompass almost endless possibilities: Cancer, Calamity, Conflict, Sadness, Sickness, Death. These are all normal parts of our existence here on earth. We should not be surprised when we do experience pain and suffering.

God is good. The Holy Bible reminds us that God is good and "He causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose+.

I think the point here is, regardless of our circumstances, no matter what God in his wisdom allows us to go through, it does not change the fact He is good. We suffer. We cry out to God and ask the hard questions. The answers often do not come as we want them, but that is okay because we have our hope, and our hope is in God, and He is a good God with nothing but our best in mind.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER (continued)

Life is not a concept to be understood but rather a mystery to be lived. To this end, we should be joyful in our happiness, and not worry about what the next day will bring because "Each day has enough trouble of its own+.

I have no idea what suffering you might have experienced so far on your travel through life or are experiencing right now. I can only testify to my own experiences and God's faithfulness to me. This much I do know - life is sometimes hard but God is good, and it is okay to ask %why+? But understand life is a mystery and we may not always understand the reasons why.

So in this new year, do not try to go it alone - invite God to come alongside you for the journey. His companionship will benefit you in both good times and bad.

**For God and Country,
Joe Wright, Chaplain**

AUXILIARY NEWS

Thank you to all the members who have already renewed your membership. As of the December 24, 2015 Friday Report, our membership stands at 91.67%. Way to go ladies!!! If you have not yet renewed, please do so as soon as possible.

A huge %**THANK YOU**+to all Auxiliary members and Legionnaires who generously donated toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Toys For Tots Community Program. We were able to fill over two boxes with toys which were distributed to children in our community.



We also participated in the Clay County Library Annual Christmas Tree Benefit. We submitted two trees and our theme was %Veterans Matter+.



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AUXILIARY NEWS (continued)

The trees were auctioned off at the Fleming Island Public Library and the event brought in approximately \$500 for the library. We have been invited to participate again in 2016.

**For God and Country,
Ramona Horn, President**

IMPORTANT MEETING DATES TO REMEMBER

Post/Unit 373 meetings are held the **4th Tuesday** of each month (**except December**) at the Orange Park Lions Club, 423 McIntosh Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073.

Our **January** meeting is scheduled for **January 26, 2016** at **7:00 PM**

Our **February** meeting is scheduled for **February 23, 2016** at **7:00 PM**

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Sunday, **January 10, 2016** at **2:00 PM**, **5th District Legion & Auxiliary** meetings, will be held at **Post 250**, 3939 County Road 218, Middleburg, FL 32068.

Sunday, **February 14, 2016** at **2:00 PM**, **5th District Legion & Auxiliary** meetings, will be held at **Post 233**, 560 N Wilderness Trail, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

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Please e-mail your articles for Post 373's March/April newsletter to either Bob Brewster at brewsterrobert@bellsouth.net or Barb Jonte at bjonte49@att.net by **February 24, 2016**.

American Legion Post 373 Legion Officers 2015-2016

Commander	Bob Brewster	904-272-1619
1 st Vice Commander	Al Jonte	904-213-1073
2 nd Vice Commander	Elmer Wine	904-705-4095
3 rd Vice Commander	Godson Obiagwu	904-343-5770
Finance Officer	Charlie Leister	904-272-8410
Adjutant	Frank W. Gianino	904-276-5921
Sgt. at Arms	Matt Ruxton	904-272-4179
Historian	Joanie Haff	904-444-0760
Chaplain	Joe Wright	904-269-7676
Executive Committee	Wanda Ruxton	904-272-4179
Executive Committee	Bob Forsythe	904-272-5204
Executive Committee	John Roberson	904-688-1387

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 373 Officers 2015-2016

President	Ramona Horn	904-318-0313
Vice President	Collette Brewster	904-272-1619
Secretary-Treasurer	Barbara Jonte	904-213-1073
Sgt. at Arms	Joyce Forsythe	904-272-5204
Chaplain	Shirley Wright	904-269-7676
Historian	Ramonita Silva	904-276-2378
Executive Committee	Elsie Fifer	904-272-2008
Executive Committee	Glenna Roberson	904-688-1387
Executive Committee	Sarah Davis	904-272-9046

*****If you are receiving this newsletter by snail mail and have an e-mail address, please provide your e-mail address to Bob Brewster at brewsterrobert@bellsouth.net.*****