



AMERICAN LEGION POST 373 NEWSLETTER



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

**Chartered 1996
Volume 4 Issue 5
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COMMANDER'S CORNER

A special thank you to all of you who have already renewed your membership for 2015. All of you who have renewed received a personal letter from yours truly letting you know how much your membership means to me and this Post. I am only a figurehead, and I don't even get to vote on matters that pertain to this Post unless there is a tie. I also stated in that renewal letter that we need as many of you as possible to submit a copy of your DD214 in order to be in compliance with the IRS requirements. If you are an officer of this Post, we must have a copy of your DD214 in our Post files.

At the September and October regularly scheduled meetings, we will be finalizing our plans for the November 16th District 5 meeting which will be held at the Lions Club, 423 McIntosh Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073. Sign in is at 12:30 PM, with our scheduled meeting to start at 2:00 PM. Note: This is a Sunday afternoon. Our Post received our original charter in 1996, and we revitalized this Post October 1, 2008. For several years of this Post's lifetime, they met at members' homes, the VFW located behind VyStar off Blanding Blvd., different restaurants, and such. In 2008, I was District 5 Commander, and they were turning their charter in and giving up. I took it upon myself to transfer in with a few friends, and, in fact, we met at the Crackers Bar. With the help of several members, we recruited more members, some of whom dropped out of this Post and other Legion members who belonged to National's holding Post. We have come a long way. This Post has never had the opportunity to host a District meeting before. In November, we will be able to show the other 19 Posts in District 5 just how good we are and the quality of our membership. We do a lot of good for the veterans in this area and the community. You are all welcome to attend this event. We also would like you to attend the September and October meetings to let us know if you would be able to help us out at this event. In case you can't make the meetings and want to help, please contact me at 904-272-1619.

I wish to thank Frank Gianino, our Post Adjutant, and all those officers and members who helped him run last month's meeting that I could not attend. My wife and I were at The American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, NC, where I was representing our Post OP 373, District 5, and the Department of Florida.

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

1ST VICE COMMANDER REPORT

Post 373 has met the September 3rd membership goal of 60%. 210 cards are into Department. Our next goals are 65% on October 1st, 75% on November 5th and 100% on December 19th.

Please help us reach these goals by renewing your membership as soon as possible, by getting a friend, neighbor, or family member to join. This is your Post, and we are all in this together. We need membership to get our voices heard in Tallahassee and in DC.

**For God and Country,
Al Jonte**

MEMBERSHIP

When we revitalized this Post in 2008/2009, we started out with 73 members, of which 6 quit immediately. We were able to recruit enough members that year, which was the 2009 calendar year, to have an all-time high in membership. Every year since including 2014, we have had an all-time high. We ended the 2014 membership year with 343 members, not counting the Auxiliary. We need to maintain this growth pattern for several more years. WHY? Answer: There is strength in numbers, and with more members paying yearly dues, we are able to pay our bills and save money for our building fund. You do not have to attend meetings at our Post to belong. However, we would like to see you come to a meeting once or twice a year so you can see for yourself what good we are doing for veterans and the community. Our meetings are smoke free and alcohol free, and we conduct the meetings by the Rules of The American Legion. After the meetings we have a social time, where we get to know each other and discuss ideas about what our Post should do in the future. We have never had a single person raise their voice in anger. We are adults and act accordingly.

The National office, working with the Department of Florida, sets monthly membership renewal dates and the number of memberships required at that time. If a Post hits or exceeds these membership goals, they receive awards. We also get tickets in our Post name to go into a hopper for drawings at the Fall Conference and at the June Convention. The more tickets we acquire, the better chance of winning one of these cash prizes. If we should win, this money would go directly into our building fund. First prize at the June Convention will be a check for \$3,500. There are numerous other prizes scaling down to the minimum of \$100. We haven't won anything yet, and we will have no chance of winning if we don't reach our goals. If you are unable to renew for whatever reason, or you are discouraged by what we are doing, contact me at 904-272-1619 and let's talk about it. This is not just about money, this is about the number of members we have. We have a full time team of members who talk to Congress about veterans and their needs. The American Legion, with 2.4 million members, is the largest and strongest voice that Congress hears from about veterans' issues. Right from the front, we were the first veteran organization to let Congress know about the VA problem. Remember,

MEMBERSHIP (continued)

we are the only veteran organization that has an office in the Capitol Building and in the Pentagon.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2015, please do so asap, and let me explain what happens to your \$35.00 yearly dues. \$21.00 immediately goes out to the Department of Florida and National headquarters. We operate on the remaining \$14.00. The \$14.00 covers our monthly rental of the Lions Club, the publishing of our bi-monthly newsletter, postage, paper, ink, and other supplies. In addition, we make donations to Children and Youth programs, school medals, ROTC, etc. At our monthly meetings, a complete finance report is given. No one in this Post is receiving any type of pay. We are all volunteers. In fact, some of our officers and members have reached into their own wallets to help vets in the local area.

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

AUXILIARY NEWS

- **MEMBERSHIP** – It's time to renew your membership for the upcoming year. **Thank You** to all the ladies who have already paid their 2015 membership dues. Dues are \$25.00 for senior members and \$5.00 for junior members. You can pay your dues at our next monthly meeting, which will be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, September 23, at the Orange Park Lions Club, 423 McIntosh Avenue, Orange Park, FL 32073. If you are unable to attend our meetings, you can mail your check to American Legion Auxiliary Unit 373, P. O. Box 2212, Orange Park, FL 32067-2212.
- **WISH LIST FOR W.E. CHERRY ELEMENTARY** – Ladies you continue to open your hearts to our community. The donations you brought to our last meeting were amazing! Some of you were unable to bring your items to our last meeting; however you can still bring them to our September meeting. Below is the wish list of items needed:

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|-------------------|------------------------|
| Kleenex | Paper Towels |
| Hand Sanitizer | Ziploc Bags (any size) |
| Dry Erase Markers | Colored Copy Paper |
| Notebook Paper | Stickers |
| Wrapped Candy | Composition Books |
| Glue Sticks | Pencils |

**For God and Country,
Barbara Jonte, Secretary/Treasurer**

FUND RAISERS

We have been utilizing 3 types of fund raisers to raise money so that when the right situation arises, we will be able to move into our own Post home. We operate our Post on the Dues & Reserves money. Any money that is raised for the purpose of the Building Fund, goes into that Fund and will not be used for any other purpose. We do a monthly 50-50, with half of the proceeds going into the Building Fund. We issue Promissory Notes in the amount of \$50.00

and up. This money also goes directly into the Building Fund. We also raffled off a hunting rifle, with all proceeds going into the Building Fund. Our members had voted, and it is in our minutes and records, that the Building Fund can be used only for the purpose of moving our Post into a Post home. We will be doing a new weapon raffle starting at our October meeting. As for the Promissory Notes . it is a simple program. We issue a legal Promissory Note in the amount \$50.00 or more, and for the first 2 years, the Post pays no interest on these funds. At the end of the 3rd year, we will pay interest of 2% higher than what VyStar pays on their savings account. No one knows who is participating in this program or the amount, only the Finance Officer, the Post Commander, and the member who is issued the Note has this information. The member who has the Note can cash it in at any time for any reason whatsoever. Again, this is a private matter. At our monthly meeting, we do disclose a full financial report. If you cannot come to a meeting, and you would like to know how we are doing financially, please call me at 904-272-1619.

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

*****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.*****

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 **September** meeting is scheduled for **September 23, 2014** at **7:00 PM**

Our **October** meeting is scheduled for **October 28, 2014** at **7:00 PM**

Sunday, **September 14, 2014** at **2:00 PM**, **5th District Legion & Auxiliary** meetings, will be held at **Post 401**, 554084 U.S. Hwy 1, Hilliard, FL 32046.

Sunday, **October 12, 2014** at **2:00 PM**, **5th District Legion & Auxiliary** meetings, will be held at **Post 283**, 9459 Fort Caroline Road, Jacksonville, FL 32225-4354.

Please e-mail your articles for Post 373's November/December newsletter to either Bob Brewster at brewsterrobert@bellsouth.net or Barb Jonte at bjonte49@att.net by **October 25, 2014**.