

# VIRGINIA LEGIONNAIRE

Official E- Newsletter For The Virginia Department (.pdf version)

April 2009

## *Table of Contents*

<b><u>• <i>Upcoming Events!</i></u></b>	<b><u>• <i>Supreme Court Concurs With The American Legion!</i></u></b>
<b><u>• <i>Fluvanna Post 2003 Hosts Benefit Golf Tournament!</i></u></b>	<b><u>• <i>Settlement of Identity Theft Claims Lauded!</i></u></b>
<b><u>• <i>Spare Change Adds Up for Wounded Warriors!</i></u></b>	<b><u>• <i>Budget Success For Veterans and Mental Health!</i></u></b>
<b><u>• <i>Post 53 Supports The Nation and Region!</i></u></b>	<b><u>• <i>The Curious Cow</i></u></b>

## **Upcoming Events!**

2009 State Convention July 9-12 - Sheraton Richmond West, Richmond  
\$94

-----  
2009 Fall Conference October 30-November 1 - Holiday Inn, Hampton  
\$71.00

-----  
2010 State Convention July 8-11 - Sheraton Richmond West, Richmond  
\$99

-----  
2010 Fall Conference October 29-31 Holiday Inn, Hampton  
\$74

-----  
2011 State Convention July 14-17 Roanoke Plaza Hotel & Holiday Inn, Roanoke  
\$109

Ω



**Fluvanna County**  
**American Legion Post 2003**  
 4321 James Madison Highway Suite 10  
 Fork Union, VA 23055  
 434.842.6618

## 4<sup>th</sup> BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT

**When:** Sunday, June 7, 2009

**Time:** 1:30 P.M. Shotgun Start, field limited to first 28 teams  
**Food and drink will be available following event.**

**Where:** Lake Monticello Golf Course  
 51 Bunker Blvd. Palmyra, VA. 22963

**Entry Fee:** \$55.00 per person; \$220.00 per team  
 Proceeds to benefit Post 2003's outreach programs for veterans and community.

**Contests:** 4 Person Captain's Choice format. Prizes for closest to the hole and longest drive. Number of top finishers awards will be determined by total entries. Golfers may purchase 2 mulligans for \$5 each. (One mulligan per nine holes of play.)

**Cut Off:** Registrations by May 30, 2009 or ASAP.  
 Make check payable to "American Legion Post 2003" and mail with following registration to:  
 Robert Ullenbruch - 90 Honeysuckle Ct. - Palmyra, VA 22963

---

For additional information contact Robert Ullenbruch at 434-589-3940 or [rullenbruch@yahoo.com](mailto:rullenbruch@yahoo.com)

---

### REGISTRATION

**Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other members of the team:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**HOLE SPONSORS WELCOMED: \$25 -- \$50 -- \$100 *THANK YOU***

***Name*** \_\_\_\_\_ ***Amount*** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Despite Tight Economy, Spare Change Adds Up To A Significant Contribution For Wounded Warriors***

Using yellow “Soldier at Your Table” bags, students at Robinson Secondary School in Fairfax, Virginia collected nearly \$1,200 in spare change for the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program. The students, members of Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), wanted a high profile project that would affect a lot of people. As a result, they decided to help military service personnel returning home from deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“For our project, we surveyed about 220 students and 74 percent of them had a close relative overseas,” said Lauren Goetzinger, a sophomore at Robinson and one of the project directors. Goetzinger’s aunt and uncle both served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The experiences of U.S. troops overseas and the possible mental health consequences were the first ideas that came to mind according to Goetzinger. “We chose specifically PTSD because of the dramatic increase in soldiers returning home with this injury,” she explained. “What also seemed to motivate the students was the fact that these men and women are doing so much overseas to protect our freedom and safety that we should turn the tables and help serve them,” Goetzinger said.

The “Soldier at Your Table” bags were the students’ largest source of income. The yellow bags were distributed to the 435 members of the Robinson DECA Chapter. Students were asked to place the bag on their dinner table and have family members donate spare change. “The name reflects a soldier always being present at the table, so the family would never forget that soldiers are serving us,” said Goetzinger.

DECA students at Robinson learned about the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program through Goetzinger’s grandfather. After doing some research, they realized the program’s mission was a perfect fit with the goals of their project.

Virginia’s Wounded Warrior Program coordinates support services for veterans with stress related and traumatic brain injuries resulting from service in a combat area. The executive director and three regional directors ensure that these veterans and their families receive timely assessment, treatment, and support. The program supports Virginia veterans and members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents of the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service. The program also supports the family members of these veterans, Guard and Reserve members. Later this month, the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program will announce grant awards to community-based programs that will provide behavioral health, brain injury and other services to wounded warriors and their family members.

DECA is an international association of high school and college students studying marketing, management and entrepreneurship in business, finance, hospitality and marketing sales and service.

## **Giles B. Cook Post 53, American Legion Supports the Nation and the Region**

During the past year the Giles B. Cook Post 53, American Legion in Front Royal, has provided in excess of \$90,000 for Veterans and local community programs and charities. The Legion Post continues to be a patriotic, mutual help, war-time veterans' organization and remains committed, as in the past, to the community, state, and nation by continuing to support appropriate local and national programs. The local post has expanded the Legion motto, "Still Serving America," to include "and community."

Post 53 is here for Veterans. We provide an information center for Veteran affairs, support the Martinsburg Veterans Hospital and the Agency for Disabled American Veterans, and present Honors at Veteran's funerals. We also send CARE packages to troops overseas and provide temporary financial assistance to Veterans and their families.

Besides assistance to Veterans, the American Legion objective of making our communities a better place to live is achieved by providing broad and far-reaching Community service programs.

Post 53 supports many local programs and charities. To name some, they include the local Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, the American Legion Community band, Christmas gift baskets for needy families, donations to local charities, the Shenandoah Area Agency for the Aging, the 4-H Center, the House of Hope, and the Domestic Violence Shelter. The Post donates American flag, lends medical equipment, and gives temporary financial assistance to individuals and families in need. American flags that are placed around town on special holidays are put there by Post 53 Legion members who are out early in the mornings putting up the flags and late in the evening retrieving them, to ensure that our national emblem is flying proudly.

A principal pillar of the American Legion mission is supporting our youth by providing young people with programs to further a strong sense of patriotism and loyalty. Programs include competitions where students of Warren County and Skyline High Schools vie for college scholarships by demonstrating their knowledge of the United States Constitution. Programs also support many youth athletic activities designed to teach benefits of good sportsmanship and team play. Post 53 provides for Middle School Americanism essays, the Indigent Children's Fund, improvements to playgrounds, and youth air rifle competition with basic safety instruction in conjunction with the National Rifle Association. A Junior Law Cadet program in conjunction with local authorities is provided to selected students that introduce them to law enforcement. Post 53 also funds participation in the American Legion Boys State program that offers outstanding students the opportunity to attend a week-long instruction on citizenship and to experience first-hand how their State and Federal Governments function. A Boy Scout program has been initiated to foster wholesome development of America's youth.

The past 12 months has been a productive year for our American Legion Auxiliary Unit. Membership is close to 100% and the Unit has completed many monthly projects in support for our local community. In September, the Unit supported the Humane Society by collecting food and other items together with a \$100.00 donation. The Auxiliary raised almost \$3,000.00 for scholarships through a very successful dinner/dance, made 80 Halloween "tray favor" gift bags for a local nursing care facility, made donations to two shelters for Thanksgiving meals, and sang Christmas carols at Lynn Care. The Auxiliary supported special requests from members: assistance with school field trip expenses, coats for children, and a donation for wreaths to be placed on veterans graves. The A.S. Rhodes School has been identified as the Auxiliary's year-long project and the Unit has provided its first donation towards the cost of playground equipment. In the New Year the Auxiliary will be sending five delegates to Girls State. Ω

## Supreme Court Concurs With The American Legion's Stand on Public Monuments

WASHINGTON, DC (Feb. 26, 2009) – A ruling announced this week by the U.S. Supreme Court gives weight to an argument by The American Legion against the placing of public monuments that could threaten the sanctity of veterans memorials. Justices ruled unanimously that an obscure religious group cannot use a “free speech” argument to force a small Utah city to erect a granite marker in a local park that is home to a long-standing monument to the Ten Commandments.

“At first glance, this ruling may seem unrelated to us, but it actually sets a precedent that is very important to veterans groups,” said David K. Rehbein, National Commander of The American Legion. “The Justices have said, in effect, that a local government can choose what donated public displays it cares to exhibit on public land – and what displays it can reject. This reduces the chance that a monument to an enemy or dissenting group, for instance, could be erected in the same space as a monument to our fallen warriors.”

The ruling stems from a case precipitated by a small Salt Lake City, Utah-based religious group called Summum. Summum went to federal court after its effort to erect a marker in Pleasant Grove City, Utah was rejected by the city. Summum maintained that the city violated its right to free speech by refusing the donated monument. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver agreed with the religious group, but the Supreme Court ruling reverses that decision.

The American Legion played an active role in the oral argument phase of the case. Last year, Liberty Legal Institute in Plano, Texas filed an amicus brief on behalf of The Legion and several colleague veterans and military service organizations. The brief’s argument summary stated:

*“The precedent established by the Tenth Circuit lays the foundation for the destruction of all donated veterans memorials nationwide and chills the erection of any future memorials. From the United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, VA, to the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial on The Mall in Washington, DC, to the myriad Spirit of the American Doughboy WWI memorials like that in Ft. Smith, AR, this precedent will require all governments, from the smallest municipality to the Congress itself, to make an impossible decision: either fail to honor our veterans by any donated monument whatsoever, tear down those that currently exist, or allow a monument honoring our veterans and then, upon donation, erect on the same hallowed ground one that dishonors them.”*

In his favorable Supreme Court opinion, Justice Samuel Alito said that while efforts to suppress actual *speech* in public parks would ordinarily violate the First Amendment, erection of donated physical entities such as markers and monuments is a different matter. Justice Alito said "the display of a permanent monument in a public park" defines, in part, a community’s identity and, so, "cities and other jurisdictions take some care in accepting donated monuments."

Commander Rehbein notes that the Supreme Court has also agreed to hear a case later this year involving the suppression of a war memorial in the Mojave Desert. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco has ruled that the memorial to World War I veterans is unconstitutional because it is the shape of a cross, which might connote religious symbolism. A proposal to transfer the land upon which the now-cloaked monument rests to the VFW, which erected the cross in 1934, was also ruled unconstitutional by the court. “Obviously, we favor the full and free display of that monument,” said the Commander. “The Supreme Court ruling gives us hope for a good outcome in that matter, too,”

# **The American Legion Applauds VA Settlement of Identity Theft Claims**

*The Legion was an early and strong advocate for veterans in the 2006 identity theft incident.*

WASHINGTON, DC (FEBRUARY 24, 2009) – The American Legion is pleased to learn that veterans exposed to possible identity theft in 2006 are now the subjects of a \$20-million court settlement from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Legion was an early and strong advocate for veterans in the incident that prompted the VA's action.

“Though three years down the road, it is encouraging to note that the VA is doing the right thing,” said David K. Rehbein, National Commander of The American Legion.

In 2006, a VA data analyst admitted to taking home – without permission – a laptop computer and external data drive containing the names, birth dates and Social Security numbers of up to 26.5-million veterans and active duty members of the armed forces. The laptop and drive were then lost in a burglary of the analyst's home on May 3<sup>rd</sup> of that year. The VA employee reported the loss promptly and the computer and drive were subsequently recovered intact, but veterans were not notified of the incident until nearly three weeks after the fact.

Upon learning of the privacy breach, The American Legion set up a phone bank to answer queries from veterans who feared identity theft and urged members of Congress to seek redress for the wrongdoing.

Lawyers for the Department of Veterans Affairs and plaintiffs have now reached a settlement agreement. Under its terms, veterans who demonstrate that they have been harmed by the data theft will be entitled to payments ranging from \$75 to \$1,500 each from a \$20-million U.S. Treasury Department fund. After all settlement payments are made, any surplus funds will be donated to top veterans' charities.

“We fought hard on behalf of our vets and troops whose privacy could have been seriously compromised,” concluded Commander Rehbein, “and we are very pleased with this outcome.”

Ω

## **Cox Budget Success for Veterans & Mental Health**

-- Del. Cox's Major Budget Priorities Funded --

**Richmond, Saturday, 28 February 2009** – Delegate Cox's Budget Amendments for Virginia veterans and for citizens with intellectual disabilities were among major winners in this year's budget process. Cox was able to secure \$7 million for several top programs supported by the 250,000 Virginia Veterans represented by 23 veterans' services organizations on the Joint Leadership Council (JLC). Cox, a consistent advocate for people with intellectual disabilities, was also able to achieve a major objective securing funds for 400 MR waiver slots, at a cost of \$18.6 million.

Cox's reputation as the “go to legislator” for veterans was solidified this year with his successful efforts to ensure the most important programs for veterans and military families were funded. He not only was able to get the House and Senate to restore a \$50,000 cut from the budget by the Governor for a key

Virginia Department of Veterans Services program, but was able to get an additional \$100,000. The funds will be used to develop a new system to cut Veterans' claims backlog, and improve efficiency. "I was very pleased," Cox said, "that even in tough economic times, the members came together to fully support our veterans who have suffered wounds and injuries in the service of our nation. With our armed forces fighting in two wars and serving in other locations around the world, the veterans claim processing system cannot keep up with the growing number of disability claims."

Cox was also pleased to get \$200,000 restored to the Wounded Warrior Program to ensure adequate care for Virginians returning home with signature wounds from the War on Terror—traumatic brain injuries, combat stress and post-traumatic stress disorders. Funds will support a program to bridge gaps in federal medical treatment and provide services. "This is a very important initiative," Cox said, "that ensures Virginia's wounded sons and daughters returning home get first class care in a timely manner. Early identification of problems and treatment for brain and stress related injuries will protect service members from hurting themselves and others."

Cox also was able to complete action on a project he championed in 2008 --funding for the Virginia War Memorial's Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center and a Wall of Honor to recognize Virginians who lost their lives in the War on Terror. Tentative funding was approved last year pending the Foundation raising \$2 million in private funding. With the passage of this budget, an additional \$6.5 million in funding is available to fund this project. "The Education Center," Cox noted, "will ensure our citizens, especially our young, will know that freedom is not free. The Wall will remind us of the most recent sacrifices made by Virginians to keep us free and safe."

The final budget item was \$200,000 in funding for Del. Cole's (R-88<sup>th</sup>) legislation that establishes a compact to remove educational barriers for children of military families. Speaker Bill Howell, (R-28<sup>th</sup>) highlighted the importance of funding this legislation in a press release noting, "funding the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children removes barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents."

The Compact was an issue the Joint Leadership Council had championed for the last two years. Retired Army Colonel Don Kaiserman, a Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Representative on the JLC, attended numerous committee hearings to support this legislation. He stressed, "The Compact eliminates another stress factor upon active duty families, while addressing the potential loss of key military personnel caused by a life-style unlike that of non-military families. The Commonwealth, with the nation's largest number of active duty children, now joins 11 other states as a member of the DOD Educational Opportunity Compact." MOAA has two chapters in the Tri-Cities area.

In the mental health area, Cox was able to obtain \$7.4 million in general funds to restore 200 MR Waiver slots cut by Governor Kaine that help families pay for home or community care for loved ones with mental disabilities and obtain an additional 200 waiver slots to address the growing urgent care waiting list. This funding will preserve critical care alternatives to confining people with severe mental disabilities in state hospitals. Family members will be able to keep their loved ones at home. In addition to funding provided by Virginia, another \$11.2 million in funds will be provided from non-general funds to support this program.

Jamie Trosclair, Executive Director, The Arc of Virginia, the capstone organization supporting this legislation, stated, "This funding and the legislation supporting it gives hope to the over 5,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Hope that there will soon be a day where these Virginians and their families will not need to wait in a line with no end in sight in order to receive community-based services." Virginia is ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in the country for its fiscal effort related to community-based services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Cox gave credit to his colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee for their efforts to support these programs. "I am grateful for the support of my colleagues who have been so instrumental in supporting this and other legislation to assist those who have served our country and for our citizens with disabilities. I am particularly appreciative of the key support provided by Del. Phil Hamilton (R-93<sup>rd</sup>) from Newport News, the Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman. Without his key support, we would not have been able to get the funding levels in this budget."

Delegate Kirk Cox, Republican from Colonial Heights, represent the people in the 66<sup>th</sup> District that includes Colonial Height, Southern and Western Chesterfield County. He has been in the General Assembly for 20 years, has served on the Appropriations Committee since 2000 and has been a House Budget Conferee for the last six years. He has introduced over 60 pieces of legislation in support of veterans, military members and their families. Kirk is a high school government teacher in Chesterfield County.

Ω

### **THE CURIOUS COW**

I read an interesting story the other day about a curious cow. She was a good milk cow and her farmer had rewarded her with a whole field of good pasture grass to graze in and a small clear stream from which to drink. He put out a block of salt for her to lick. There were nice spreading shade trees for her to lay under. Yet, she seem to think the best grazing grass lay on the other side of the fence. She was always trying to reach through the fence to get the elusive greener grass. What was she after? It would seem she had every thing she needed right there in easy reach, but she was not satisfied,

We might say, "Silly cow, what are you looking for ? You have everything already"

Yet we have seen some people just like that cow. They think the grass is always greener of the other side of the fence. They are constantly seeking to obtain what other have by a short cut method if they can. They are always envying what others have never satisfied to the point they become miserable and discontented never enjoying what God has already given them.

They don't realize God loves them and has provided for them in His plan

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."(Matthew 6:32)

Seeking, and following God's will brings God's provisions and blessings on our lives now and for eternity

Are you curious about what lies ahead for your life or are you content knowing God is you strength and future?

Can you say with the Apostle Paul

"...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

(Phil 4:11-13: NIV)