

And the winners are....

Membership

Hartline Award (Detach w/ most squadrons) - Pennsylvania

Houghton Award (greatest % increase in membership) -

Category 1 - North Dakota Category 2 - Alabama
Category 3 - Arizona Category 4 - California
Category 5 - Pennsylvania

Highest Renewal Percentage by Region

East - France (100%) South - Virginia (88.87%)
Central - Ohio (89.85%) Midwest - North Dakota (100%)
West - California (86.77%)

Largest Squadron - York, PA Squadron 791 (1,245)

First in Each Region to Reach 100%

East - Delaware South - Mississippi
Central - Wisconsin Midwest - South Dakota
West - Utah

Americanism

Atwood/Beyea/York Memorial Award

Detachment - New York
District - Seventh District, New York
Squadron - Dallas, TX Sq 453

National Emergency Fund

Largest Donations Per Capita in nation - Tennessee

East - Vermont Central - Michigan
Midwest - Colorado West - Washington

Child Welfare Foundation

Excellence Award - Wyoming
Nation's Largest Per Capita - Wyoming

Largest Per Capita by Region

East - France South - Alabama
Central - Ohio West - Arizona

Garland Murphy Award (largest donation) - Ohio

Largest Donations by Region

East - New York South - Virginia
Midwest - Colorado West - Arizona

"There will always be honor to guard, my boy; There will always be hills to climb, And tasks to do, and battles new From now till the end of time...."

*from "There Will Always Be Something To Do"
by Edgar A. Guest, 1919*

Children and Youth

East - Harve DeGrace, MD Sq 47

South - Norfolk, VA Sq 327

Central - Troy, MI Sq 14

Midwest - Torington, WY Sq 5

West - Mesa, AZ Sq 129

Detachment - Maryland

District - North Central, Maryland

Squadron - Cheyenne, WY Sq 6

Childrens Action Team Award (most new CAT's)

Washington

Community Service

Scrapbook Winners

Squadron - New Roads, LA Sq 248

Detachment - Louisiana

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Kirby Kepler Award (best squadron rehab report)

Norfolk, NE Sq 16

Allen I. O'Brian (best District rehab report)

North Central District, Maryland

Earl Webster Award (best Detach rehab report)

Georgia

Charles B. Rigsby Award (Volunteer of the Year)

Douglas Murphy, Sq 1 Atlanta, GA

Historian

History Book Award

Squadron - Duluth, GA Squadron 251

Detachment - Kansas

Legislative

Grassroots Veterans Advocate of the Year

David Lee, Detachment of New York



NATIONAL UPDATE

Official Newsletter of the Sons of The American Legion

Special Convention Edition - August 26, 2007



This one was for Woody

Nearly as soon as National Commander Earl Ruttkofsky dropped the opening gavel, a motion was made and swiftly adopted to dedicate the 36th annual National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion to Woodrow "Woody" Mudge, Past National Commander and Past National Adjutant who lost a long-running battle with cancer last fall. Woody's photo and a Distinguished Guest Badge remained on stage throughout the Sons' three day convention in Reno, NV. Commander Earl also noted that Woody's family will be receiving his full-sized National Commander's flag, along with 32 other Past National Commanders, three of whom are deceased.

The weekend was filled with words of thanks and encouragement delivered by more than a dozen special guests from within The Legion Family. Many year-end awards were announced and handed out. National Committees and Commissions provided their end-of-year reports.



National Assistant Adjutant Harold Thompson reported there were 800 delegates representing 48 Detachments registered for this National Convention, one of the highest totals on record. There were 67 registered guests, also a record. National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne said a new registration policy, now in its second year, made it easier for officials to be better prepared and organized for the convention.

There are now more than 315,000 Sons in more than 5,600 squadrons throughout 52 Detachments worldwide, another record. Sons have been putting that strength to good use. For example, The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation received just over \$622,000 this year. More than half of that amount was raised by members of the Sons. S.A.L. members also volunteered more than 20,000 hours to the CWF. Total support for Children and Youth programs this year exceeded \$1M and more than 100,000 volunteer hours.

A year full of Americanism

- 433 Boys State attendees sponsored at a cost of \$97,397
- 6,457 S.A.L. color guard appearances
- 83 AL baseball teams sponsored at cost of \$116,840
- 6,409 flags presented at schools at \$33,252
- 2,643 flag education programs at 2,539 hours
- 1,615 flag retirement ceremonies
- 542,606 flags presented at ceremonies/parades
- \$216,848 in scholarships
- \$36,046 in donations to NEF
- \$1,671,587 and 390,450 hours in support of Americanism programs

"When we hear, we forget. When we see, we remember. It's when we do, we understand!"

***Jake Comer
Past National Commander
The American Legion***

New S.A.L. Commander wants to make a difference

The S.A.L. is under new leadership. Sunday, delegates to the 36th annual National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion elected Raymond P. Giehll, Jr. as their National Commander.

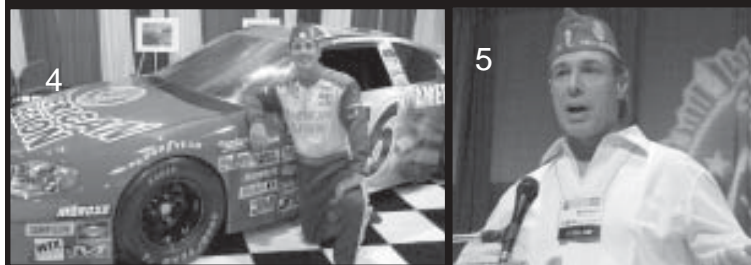
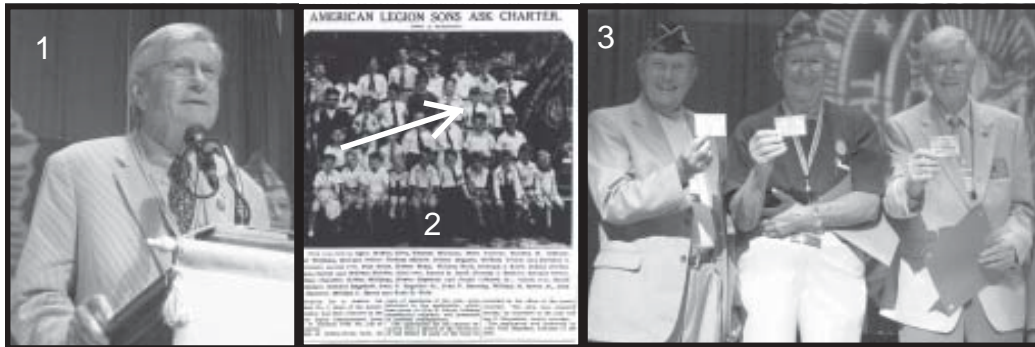
A member of the Sons for more than 30 years, Commander Ray hails from a true Legion Family. His wife, Debbie and all of their children and grandchildren hold memberships in The Sons or the Auxiliary.

A resident of Indianapolis, IN, it should come as no surprise that Ray has chosen a racing theme for the membership campaign in the coming year. His overall theme will be "Making a Difference" and he'll travel the country asking Sons to go out into their communities with service programs. He also has his eye set on a new activity for Sons, a National Veterans' Assistance Day. The plan is to select a single day each year when Sons throughout the U.S. do things for veterans.

"Whether it's go to their house and help them personally or go to the hospital and visit them, maybe take them some place," says the new commander. "It will be one day each year we can say the Sons of The American Legion are sponsoring this day for our veterans."



A week packed into three days



1) Robert Ragsdale is the nation's senior member of the Sons of The American Legion. He and his two brothers were charter members of the nation's first S.A.L. squadron and held S.A.L. membership cards 001, 002 and 003. Both of his brothers were killed in action during World War II. Mr. Ragsdale is a World War II and Korean War veteran and has 62 years of continuous membership in The American Legion. **2)** A 1933 photo of Robinson Squadron 133 in Indianapolis, IN, the nation's first. Robert Ragsdale, now 82 and a resident of Nashua, NH, is marked in Row 3. **3)** Proudly holding out S.A.L. membership cards proving they have held continuous membership in the Sons for more

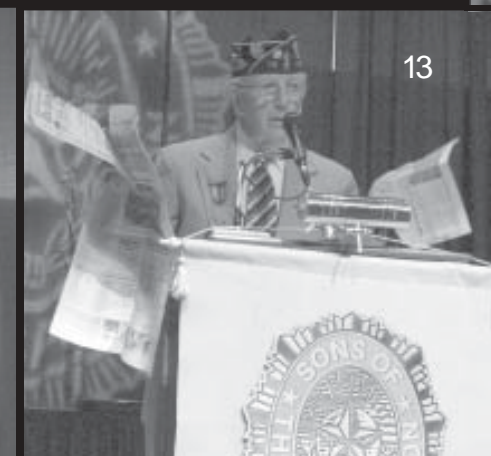
years than anyone else; from left, Weber LaGrange of Franklin, IN (74 years) – Bert Bertrand of Banning, CA (74 years) – George Hooten of East Point, GA (75 years). All three are dual members. Weber LaGrange is a Past National Treasurer of The American Legion. Bert Bertrand is still an active officer in his squadron and is serving this year as Chaplain of the Detachment of California. George Hooten has served many years as Executive Director of the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA). **4)** The man behind the wheel who is driving hopes for The American Legion's NASCAR Busch Series team is Jerick Johnson, a proud member of the Sons. **5)** Country music star Michael Peterson is leading promotional efforts for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. On Saturday, he took the stage and switched from his trademark cowboy hat to his own S.A.L. cover and told fellow Sons how proud he is of the activities we undertake on behalf of veterans, children and the communities in which we live. **6)** All five American Legion Youth Champions were introduced to the S.A.L. convention by The American Legion National Americanism Director, and S.A.L. member, Michael Buss. **7)** Members of the Detachment of Wisconsin like to answer the convention roll call with a resounding "mooooooo!" This year, they brought along some visual aids, as well. **8)** National Commander Earl and National Adjutant Brian O'Hearne threatened to wear Speedo swimsuits when they took their turns in a fundraising dunk tank. **9)** The Detachment of Minnesota created a limited number of Diamond Jubilee medallions and presented them to national leaders. **10)** A room full of Sons snapped to

National Convention convened Friday afternoon. **11)** Marty Conatser, leading candidate for National Commander of The American Legion this year, took time out of his campaign to thank Sons for their efforts and challenged them to help with programs that will benefit returning soldiers as well as veterans and their families. **12)** This year's Honorary President of the Junior Auxiliary is Ashley Stover, a Legion Family member since birth. Commander Earl presenter her with a plaque and made her a Distinguished Guest of the Sons' convention.

"As we settled this country we all came together to build barns for our neighbors and went home. We didn't ask for plaques. We didn't ask for something in the newspaper. We just did it because we were great Americans."

Robert Spanogle
National Adjutant
The American Legion

13) American Legion Past National Commander Jake Comer of Massachusetts has been addressing Sons conventions for 20 years. This weekend he brought along newspaper clippings from major East Coast newspapers showing front page coverage of S.A.L. activities. **14)** As part of the 75th anniversary celebration, Sons coming to the convention were asked to bring along S.A.L. memorabilia that was displayed in the concourse outside the convention hall.



"I'm here today to remind you that there's a whole generation of people my age just waiting to have a relationship with somebody who actually stands for something instead of falling for anything. There's a generation behind me and a generation behind them and a generation behind them. You make a difference; not with what you do but with who you are."

Michael Peterson
Musician/American Legacy Scholarship Spokesman