

AMERICANISM  
BEVERLY NEEL (ROBERT)  
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National President Rita Navarrete has set forth her theme as “Reconnect with our Heritage to Strengthen our Future!” What a great theme that our Americanism program can find many ways to do just that. As many of you know our schools to some extent do not educate our youth on the ideals of Americanism and Patriotism. Therefore, it is our duty as Great Americans – You and Me – to ensure our patriotic organization gets involved in our programs and get into our schools whether they are public, private, denominational or home school. We have an obligation as Great Americans to exhibit Americanism and Patriotism by our own actions. Many of our past programs are continuing again this year. We would appreciate it if each Unit would get involved in at least two segments of the Americanism Program and bring it into your community through school, church, other civic organizations, student council, administrators and more.

**CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST** (formerly known as the Oratorical Contest) is a program of The American Legion. However, it is a program our Auxiliary members may be involved in. Working with The Legion to get this contest into the public eye, into our schools will take your Unit Public Relations Chairman and your Unit Americanism Chairman working hand-in-hand with The Legion. The scholarship monies available at all levels of this contest should be at least one selling point for your address to the general public of what this program is and who can apply. We are at the mercy of The Legion to get this program up and going in our community, but be there for them. The Legion must promote and bring this program to a conclusion in December 2009, so they do not have much time and would appreciate our assistance I am sure.

**AMERICANISM YOUTH CONFERENCE** held at Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, PA. is a great leadership and educational program of our American Heritage. Students in **Grades 10, 11 and 12 may apply**. It is hoped that each Department will be able to send at least one student to this four-day event to be held **MARCH 4-7, 2010**. Students will be required to complete an application blank and to write an **essay (300 – 500 words)** on “**Civic Education – Why It’s Important to Me.**” All applications, essay and required materials must be to the Unit **postmarked on or before November 24, 2009**. The Unit must have their selection to this Chairman **postmarked on or before December 1, 2009**. The Department of Nebraska will send one student. Unit/Post/Squadron may also work together and support additional students. Website for Freedoms Foundation [www.ffvf.org](http://www.ffvf.org) (800) 896 5488

**GIRL SCOUT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** (one National winner is chosen) This segment also requires an application, a letter of recommendation and a **500-word essay** describing the applicant’s Gold Award project explaining why the project was chosen and how it made an impact on the Girl Scout and her community. All applications must be to the Unit President **postmarked on or before March 1, 2010**. She in turn must have her selection to this Chairman **postmarked on or before March 15, 2010**. This is a \$1000 scholarship and is open to Girl Scouts who are a Junior or Senior in High School. Website for Girl Scout of USA [www.girlscout.org](http://www.girlscout.org)

**AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST** is open to students from **Grade 3 through Grade 12**. Essay theme is **“What is My Patriotic Role as a U.S. Citizen.”** The contest is open to students in public, parochial, private and/or home schooled. There are five Class levels; namely:

Class I	Grades 3 & 4	150 – 200 words
Class II	Grades 5 & 6	250 – 300 words
Class III	Grades 7 & 8	350 – 400 words
Class IV	Grades 9 & 10	450 – 500 words
Class V	Grades 11 & 12	450 – 500 words

**Department awards are:** First Place in each Class \$25 cash award & certificate (**all First Place essays in each Class will be sent to the Northwestern Division Chairman for competition**); Second Place in each Class \$15 cash award and certificate; Third Place in each Class \$10 cash award and certificate.

Any of the First Place Department Winners if selected as the Northwestern Division winner will be awarded \$100 and a citation. Should the Division winners go on and win National then they would receive \$500 award and a citation plaque. Local Units are encouraged to provide prizes at their level as well.

All essay entries must be to the Unit **postmarked on or before March 15, 2010** and the Unit selection must be to this Chairman **postmarked on or before April 1, 2010**. Remember Units can only send one entry per Class to this Chairman. Further instructions and examples are in your Americanism packet. Be sure to share that data with the schools.

**FLY OUR FLAG & PATRIOTIC HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES** – You know we know as Auxiliary members that we can fly “Old Glory” each and every day and also at night but there should be a light illuminating the flag. This light should be a separate light and not a street or yard light casting a shadow upon the flag. Remember to visit with your local businesses and ask that they display “Old Glory” in front of their business on Patriotic Holidays if not each day. Make sure your schools have “Old Glory” swaying in the breeze, greeting students and faculty each day they arrive at school. Work with The American Legion and Sons of the American Legion (SAL) to create a 30-minute presentation for students early in the school year. This will take advance preparations with the school as well. Remember every day can be a “God Bless America” day and every day is “Veterans Day” so thank a Veteran each day. You will bring a smile to their face and a beat to your heart.

**JUNIOR MEMBERS & AMERICANISM** Yes our Junior members are our closest link to the school to which they belong and they can have quite an impact upon the students they relate to each and every school day. Our Junior members should be instructed in the Unit on proper display of the flag, what to do when you hear the National Anthem either in a parade or on a sports field. They can be mentors to younger students on how to salute the flag, why we do it and what our flag symbolizes. These young gals we call Juniors are a beacon of hope to instilling what it means to be proud of our flag and to be an American citizen. However, it will take the Unit to educate these gals and that is a task we cannot ignore. Get involved.

**POCKET FLAGS** can be a project for both Junior and Senior members to be involved in. Many a Unit has purchased the small cloth flags and removed the wooden stick then folded the flag and placed them into a jewelry sized Ziploc bag with a note from their Unit. The flags are folded, as they would be at a military funeral, thus another avenue of educating all of our members. How many of our members know what each fold represents? Not too many, even I do

not know, but I am going to find out. I purchased ten dozen cloth flags so I have some work ahead of me. These flags are given to our military personnel and they are small enough to slip into their uniform pocket and have a piece of America from home close to them.

**APRIL – MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD** is a reminder that the children of our military personnel are special in that they have a parent(s) in the armed forces and they may be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. These kids have a void we cannot fill but we can create opportunities for them to be honored because of their parent(s) call to duty. Host a special party for the kids, bring in guest speakers from the military who can explain to all kids what is it that our military personnel do while they are away. Get involved in the **Operation Military Kid (OMK)** program sponsored through local 4-H Councils and the National Guard. The OMK program hosts various events and perhaps your Unit could get involved and provide refreshments, games or just a listening ear to these special kids. Contact your local or state 4-H Council for more information on OMK events. Website for OMK [www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org)

**VOTING** is an American right and privilege that should not be taken lightly. Although this is not a big election year we can still educate the general public on issues close to home and to Veterans. We can also incorporate a Kids Vote session to educate younger students on why Voting is a privilege and right for all Americans. Holding mock elections can be fun and challenging, but in the end the kids will walk away knowing that in years ahead they too will be able to exercise their right and privilege to VOTE. The County Government Day program if put into practice correctly is another avenue of teaching the older students the importance of just one VOTE can make a difference. Again the County Government Day program is a Legion program, but Auxiliary members are probably more versed in the voting rights because many of them have served on the balloting board in their community. Share your experience. Website for Kids Vote [www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)

Be sure to follow your sample Annual Report sheet (lavender paper) and record the data as you do the events or programs. Be sure to return that sheet to this Chairman by **April 15, 2010**.

**NATIONAL AWARDS: Americanism Essay Contest:** Awards were described in the paragraphs above.

**Clara B. Smith Plaque:** A plaque will be presented to the Department that reports the Most Outstanding three-point Americanism program encompassing youth, adult and community. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1000 words. The entry may include up to five pictures and news articles. All entries must be **postmarked on or before May 1, 2010** to Department Chairman, who will forward to the National Vice Chairman **postmarked on or before June 1, 2010**.

**DEPARTMENT AWARDS:** A plaque will be presented to the Department Chairman in each Division reporting the Most Outstanding Overall Americanism Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. **DO NOT** include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc. All entries will be submitted by the Department Chairman **postmarked on or before June 1, 2010** to the Northwestern Division Chairman.

**Dorothy Pearl Plaque:** A plaque will be presented to the **Unit** that reports the Most Outstanding Americanism Program targeted to children and youth. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1000 words. The entry may include no more than

five pictures and news articles. All entries must be **postmarked on or before May 1, 2010** to Department Chairman, who in turn will forward to: National Committee Member Mickie Prendergast, 1114 Fawn Ridge Road, Duncanville TX 75137 **postmarked on or before June 1, 2010**.

**Junior Americanism Award:** A plaque will be presented to a **Junior group** that reports the Most Outstanding Americanism Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1000 words. A maximum of five pictures and new articles may be included. All entries must be **postmarked on or before May 1, 2010** to the Department Chairman, who in turn will forward to: National Committee Member Donna Ray, 5724 Willnean Drive, Milford Oh 45150 **postmarked on or before June 1, 2010**.

**Girl Scout Achievement Scholarship:** One \$1,000 National scholarship will be awarded to a Junior or Senior High School student earning the Girl Scout Gold Award and the appropriate religious emblem. Award application is available online (hopefully). Interested students will complete the online application and submit a 500-word essay and letter of recommendation to a sponsoring Unit. Students must have their entry to the local Unit President **postmarked on or before March 1, 2010**. The Unit President must have the selected entry to the Department Chairman **postmarked on or before March 15, 2010**. Department Chairman will forward the Department winner to the National Chairman **postmarked on or before May 15, 2010**.

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#### CITATION POINTS - 25 points assigned

Unit has used the sample Americanism – Annual Report 2009-2010 form to develop a Unit Americanism program and has mailed the completed form to this Chairman no later than April 15, 2010.

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#### **Resources you might find helpful, if not educational, in your pursuit of reaching out with Americanism:**

- 1 – Americanism Youth Conference Face book Page
- 2 – U.S. Capitol Building Flags: To order flags flown over the U.S. Capitol Building, contact your Congressional Representative or Senator or visit his/her website. Flags are available for a nominal fee; 4 to 6 weeks should be allowed for delivery.
- 3 – Unserviceable Flags, the ceremony transcript can be found at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) click on Americanism or you may ask your Post Commander, as it should be in their Post Officers Guide Book.
- 4 – Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette – available through Emblem Sales [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org) (Stock No. 766.200) or your Department Office
- 5 – “Knowledge in a Nutshell on America” by Charles Reichblum – probably found in most bookstores or is available from Emblem Sales [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org) or [www.knowledgeinanutshell.com](http://www.knowledgeinanutshell.com)
- 6 – “Know Your America” (Stock No. 755.205) Complete manual on Americanism, includes a comprehensive flag education and etiquette section. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org) or (800) 688 7435
- 7 – Flag Code (Stock No. 755.201) illustrates and describes the correct way to display the flag [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)
- 8 – Light of Liberty comic book (Stock No. 755.301) 20 pages detailing our fight for freedom, how government works and the rights and responsibilities of every citizen. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

9 – Our Country’s Flag comic book (Stock No. 755.300) 20-page educational comic book relating the history, significance and proper treatment of the United States flag. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

10 – Pledge of Allegiance comic book (Stock No. 755.302) Teach young people all about the Pledge of Allegiance with this colorful and fun booklet. An essential part of every young person’s education as an American. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

11 – Flag Appreciation Certificate (Stock No. 733.120) Designed to honor those individuals, organizations and businesses that display the flag on a daily basis. [www.emblem.legon.org](http://www.emblem.legon.org)

12 – Flag Education DVD “For Which it Stands” (Stock No. 755.400) A 20-minute video and learning activities with teacher’s guide. Designed to help Grades 5 thru 9 meet state mandates for required flag education. Topics include the history, significance, meaning, proper display and treatment of the U.S. flag. Flexible options for Legion presenters or teachers. You can make a difference. [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org) or 1 888 453 4466

13 – [www.Apples4theteachr.com](http://www.Apples4theteachr.com) is a website I have used to put some of my items together. You can sign up free for the newsletters as well. Take a peek and find something you can do with the children in your local school.