



# The Rising Star

Disney-Bell Post 66  
Newsletter

February 2006

# Commander's Message

February is the shortest month of the year, not much happens at the Post this time of the year. This is the get ready for the final push time of the year. When I use the word push, it relates to Membership. Membership is everything in The American Legion and without a solid membership we close our doors. We have been awarded the highest membership award in the State of Maryland for 17 years in a row, and when we close out the Legion Year 2005 / 2006 at the end of June, we need our membership totals where we can again be awarded our 18th Four Star Award. Help us to get our membership totals where they should be by renewing your dues.



Just a short list of what the Post is doing in February. Lets start with the Super Bowl Party Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, Turkey Shoots every Sunday, except Super Bowl Sunday, four Friday Night Dinners, One Tuesday Night Dinner (2-21), one shrimp night on Saturday (2-11), and check your newsletter calendar for more events and meetings. A Sweetheart Dance on the 18<sup>th</sup> with the music provided by the David Wayne Band.

The pavilion is still a work in progress; I should have something to report on next month.

God bless America and god bless our Veterans

Thomas D. Murphy  
Commander



Post 66  
Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, February 23  
7:30 p.m.

# Adjutant's Call

*The following article by Ronnie Polaneczky appeared in the Philadelphia Daily News on December 22, 2005 and I would like to share it with you. If you can read this without getting a lump in your throat, than you are a harder Green Beret than this old paratrooper.*

"It started last Christmas, when Bennett and Vivian Levin were overwhelmed by sadness while listening to radio reports of injured American troops. "We have to let them know we care," Vivian told Bennett. So they organized a trip to bring soldiers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital to the annual Army-Navy football game in Philly, on Dec. The cool part is, they created their own train line to do it.

Yes, there are people in this country who actually own real trains. Bennett Levin - native Philly guy, self-made millionaire and irascible former L&I commish - is one of them. He has three luxury rail cars. Think mahogany paneling, plush seating and white-linen dining areas. He also has two locomotives, which he stores at his Juniata Park train yard. One car, the elegant *Pennsylvania*, carried John F. Kennedy to the Army-Navy game in 1961 and '62. Later, it carried his brother Bobby's body to D.C. for burial. "That's a lot of history for one car," says Bennett. He and Vivian wanted to revive a tradition that endured from 1936 to 1975, during which trains carried Army-Navy spectators from around the country directly to the stadium where the annual game is played.

The Levins could think of no better passengers to reinstate the ceremonial ride than the wounded men and women recovering at Walter Reed in D.C. and Bethesda, in Maryland. "We wanted to give them a first-class experience," says Bennett. "Gourmet meals on board, private transportation from the train to the stadium, perfect seats - real hero treatment." Through the Army War College Foundation, of which he is a trustee, Bennett met with Walter Reed's commanding general, who loved the idea. But Bennett had some ground rules first, all designed to keep the focus on the troops alone: No press on the trip, lest No politicians either, because, says Bennett, "I didn't want some idiot making this trip into a campaign photo op." And no Pentagon suits on board, otherwise the soldiers would be too busy saluting superiors to relax. The general agreed to the conditions, and Bennett realized he had a problem on his hands. "I had to actually make this thing happen," he laughs.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



## *Squadron 66 Report*

Hello, I hope that everyone is well and surviving this mild winter. We are already half way to spring. I do have some sad news. The Tuesday Sandwich Night is being cut back to only the 3rd Tuesday of the month. We had no volunteers, so we were unable to go weekly as hoped for. We will be back on the February 21<sup>st</sup>.

We are still planning our 2nd Annual Chili Contest. It will be held on Saturday February 4th. Chili can be dropped off between 12 noon to 1pm. Judging will be between 1pm to 2pm. Eating will be between 2pm to 4pm. Entry fee is \$5.00 (comes with 2 tickets) Cost to eat is \$5.00 per person.

Next, we have our Sweethearts Dance. The dance is set for February 18, 2006. The dance will go from 8pm to 12 midnight and is featuring The David Wayne Band. The cost will be \$10.00 per person. Hope to see you there.

Finally, the much anticipated annual Bull & Oyster Roast. We have that set for March 18, 2006. The menu will be the same and we are glad to say the price will stay at \$25.00 per person. Tickets will be on sale after the Sweethearts Dance.

Food will be served from 6pm to 8pm with music and dancing from 8pm to midnight.

Our membership is going strong, to date we are only several members shy of making our goal. Please send in your renewals if not already done. As always we gladly accept new eligible members. Applications can be obtained at the Post.

The Friday night dinners are going well. The SAL has their half chicken dinner on the 3rd Friday of each month. ---- That's a lot of chicken, take home containers are available.

We meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Please attend if possible. Hope to see you there.

Joe Weik  
Commander

# Sweetheart Dance

SATURDAY

February 18, 2006

8:00 - Midnight

ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS  
WELCOME!

\$10.00

Tickets on Sale at Post NOW!

**Music By:**

*The David Wayne Band*

# Pool League Starting

Anyone interested in participating in the annual Post pool league should attend the organizational meeting being held on Monday, February 13 at 6:30 p.m. Play will begin that evening. Details such as the cost, rules of play, etc. will be discussed that evening. Play is open to all members of The American Legion family (Post, Auxiliary and SAL). If you have any questions, please leave a message at the Post for John Delinsky.

## Bowie Food Pantry Collections

At a recent meeting of the Post membership, we have decided to have a collection box for the Bowie Food Pantry placed in the Post. All members are encouraged to bring non-perishable food (i.e., canned goods, dry mixes, etc.) and deposited them in the box provided. Paul McCoy, a member of Post 66, volunteers for the Bowie Food Pantry and will be making the deliveries on out behalf. This year-round program is just another example of how The American Legion serves the community.



SAL Squadron 66  
Monthly Meeting  
Monday, February 13  
7:30 p.m.

## AMERICAN LEGION UNIFORM CAP

Post 66 normally has a supply of American Legion uniform caps in stock. The basic cost for an American Legion Uniform Cap is \$30.95 for the lined, style 2 Post Cap with Bowie, Md. on the left side and the number 66 on the right. The mandatory state insignia Maryland shield is an extra \$6.00 and the "For God and Country" patch for the left side of your cap is \$1.95. An armed forces tack of your branch of service is also available for an additional \$3.95. It is recommended that you purchase a plastic cap cover for \$1.95. If you order through the Post and not separately, we will pay the shipping and handling fee of \$6.95. Your total cost for the Legion uniform cap is \$44.80.

If you wish to purchase a cap, please contact the Post Adjutant at the Post (301-464-9814) or his home (301-390-6436), or you may e-mail him at home [jimabiam@aol.com](mailto:jimabiam@aol.com).



We Are Going to Dover. . . Again!



We're going to Dover! Whether you are an experienced NASCAR fan, casual observer or just want to see what the hubbub is about, plan on joining us for the Nextel Cup Race at Dover on Sunday, June 4. We will meet around 7:00 am at the Post for snacks, leave for the race with a full compliment of beer, soda and food, and a ticket to the race. Depending on race time, we should be back at the Post around 8:00 p.m.-ish. The cost for the trip will is \$150 and is all inclusive, including a special American Legion Racing tee-shirt.. Tickets go on sale at the Post on February 1, 2006 and are first come, first, fir served. There are only a limited number of tickets available so don't get shut out.



Auxiliary Monthly Meeting  
Wednesday, February 15  
7:30 p.m.

## Adjutant's Call (continued)

Over the next months, he recruited owners of 15 other sumptuous rail cars from around the country - these people tend to know each other - into lending their vehicles for the day. The name of their temporary train? *The Liberty Limited*. Amtrak volunteered to transport the cars to D.C. - where they'd be coupled together for the round-trip ride to Philly - then back to their owners later. Conrail offered to service the *Liberty* while it was in Philly. And SEPTA drivers would bus the disabled soldiers 200 yards from the train to Lincoln Financial Field, for the game. A benefactor from the War College ponied up 100 seats to the game - on the 50-yard line - and lunch in a hospitality suite. And corporate donors filled, for free and without asking for publicity, goodie bags for attendees: From Woolrich, stadium blankets. From Wal-Mart, digital cameras. From Nikon, field glasses. From GEAR, down jackets. There was booty not just for the soldiers, but for their guests, too, since each was allowed to bring a friend or family member. The Marines, though, declined the offer. "They voted not to take guests with them, so they could take more Marines," says Levin, choking up at the memory.

Bennett's an emotional guy, so he was worried about how he'd react to meeting the 88 troops and guests at D.C.'s Union Station, where the trip originated. Some GIs were missing limbs. Others were wheelchair-bound or accompanied by medical personnel for the day. "They made it easy to be with them," he says. "They were all smiles on the ride to Philly. Not an ounce of self-pity from any of them. They're so full of life and determination." At the stadium, the troops reveled in the game, recalls Bennett. Not even Army's lopsided loss to Navy could deflate the group's rollicking mood. Afterward, it was back to the train and yet another gourmet meal - heroes get hungry, says Levin - before returning to Walter Reed and Bethesda. "The day was spectacular," says Levin. "It was all about these kids. It was awesome to be part of it."

The most poignant moment for the Levins was when 11 Marines hugged them goodbye, then sang them the Marine Hymn on the platform at Union Station. "One of the guys was blind, but he said, 'I can't see you, but man, you must be f---ing beautiful!'" says Bennett. "I got a lump so big in my throat, I couldn't even answer him." It's been three weeks, but the Levins and their guests are still feeling the day's love. "My Christmas came early," says Levin, who is Jewish and who loves the Christmas season. "I can't describe the feeling in the air." Maybe it was hope. As one guest wrote in a thank-you note to Bennett and Vivian, "The fond memories generated last Saturday will sustain us all - whatever the future may bring."

May God bless the Levins and all who made this wonderful event occur and may God bless and support our troops.

James L. Pritchett, Jr.  
Adjutant

## Unit 66 Report



Welcome to the New Year. Now that the holidays have come and gone, it's time to really knuckle down and get to work for our veterans and their families. The Auxiliary has been very busy over the last month working fund raisers to raise monies for programs such as the Americanism Youth Conference at Valley Forge, scholarship programs and special projects like the Veterans Creative Arts Festival, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and others.

Our fund raisers this year are Turkey Shoot breakfasts and I would like to thank Tami Planty, Valerie Hayes and Nick Muller for all of their work in scheduling kitchen help and doing work themselves. Another fund raiser is the Gas Card Raffle. We are raffling a \$100 gas card, the cost of which is \$1 for one or \$5 for six and we are conducting one every month. I wish to thank Michele Larson for all of her hard work selling raffle tickets. She is amazing! Our Friday Night dinners are every second Friday night of the month. This months dinner will be chicken Parmesan, with spaghetti, salad, garlic bread sticks and dessert. Everyone is welcome, but we do ask that you sign up by Wednesday, February 7th so that we know how much food to purchase in order to accommodate everyone wanting a dinner.

We are a very busy organization, but we are never too busy to care for our fellow Americans. If you are a member and you have any suggestions for activities, or if you would like to take part in any of the above mentioned activities please leave a message at the Post (301)-464-9814 for Juanita and I will be glad to respond.

One of our most active members has moved to Arizona and she will be sorely missed. Priscilla Sprehe, Past Unit President and Chaplain (our own Mother Superior) has moved on to a warmer clime and we wish her the best of luck in her new surroundings!

I would also like to thank Judy Williams for taking care of our Thanksgiving food basket project and for getting us more information on the family in need. She is a welcome addition to our ranks.

Juanita L. Thompson  
President



TURKEY SHOOT!  
EVERY SUNDAY  
BREAKFAST AT 8:00  
SHOOT AT 9:00  
20 SHOTS, \$55

## Melvin Buck Scholarship Award

Nominations to receive the 2006 Melvin Buck Scholarship are now being accepted. The winner will receive financial assistance in the amount of \$1,500. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a graduating high school senior in 2006.
2. Be a child, stepchild or grandchild of a member in good standing of the American Legion, Disney-Bell Post 66.

This scholarship is awarded by a blind draw of all applications accepted. Applications must be in writing and contain the following information: The applicant's name, address, telephone number, relationship to the member, member's name and membership number, and the name and telephone number of the high school the applicant attends. The deadline is April 1, 2006.

Applications may be delivered or mailed to the American Legion, Disney-Bell Post 66, 9605 Old Laurel-Bowie Road, Bowie, Maryland 20720 and marked to the attention of Doug Peters, Chairman, Children and Youth Committee. Applications may also be sent via fax or e-mail.

# What's to Eat at Post 66???

Friday, February 3  
N. Y. Strip Dinner  
Baked Potato, Vegetable, Salad, Dessert  
\$10.00 (RSVP: NLT 2-1)

Tuesday  
February 21  
SAL Dinner Night  
Always something differ, Always something good.  
\$??.?  
5:00 until 8:00 p.m.

Friday, February 10  
Chicken Parmesan  
Spaghetti, Garlic Bread, Salad, Dessert  
\$8.00 (RSVP: NLT 2-8)

Saturday, February 11  
Shrimp Nite (with hush puppies)  
Baker's Dozen with drink  
\$6.50  
Walk Ins Welcome  
5:30 until 8:00 p.m.

Friday, February 19  
½ Roasted Chicken  
Parsley Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Dessert  
5:30 until 8:00 p.m.

Friday, February 24  
Honor Guard Hosted Dinner  
\$8.00 (RSVP: NLT -22)  
5:30 until 8:00 p.m.

## Disney-Bell Post 66 Officers

Commander . . . . .	Thoms D. Murphy
First Vice Commander. . . . .	Nick Muller
Second Vice Commander. . . . .	Dan Healy
Adjutant. . . . .	James L. Pritchett, Jr.
Judge Advocate . . . . .	J. D. Larson
Finance Officer. . . . .	Dick Lanham
Service Officer . . . . .	Eddie Thompson
Historian. . . . .	Myron James
Chaplain. . . . .	Toni King
Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . .	Brian Goldman
Executive Committee:	

David Cooks, Brian Fry,  
Roger Goll, Clif Morvant, Mark Ryan

## Unit 66 Officers

President . . . . .	Juanita Thompson
Vice President . . . . .	Valerie Hayes
Secretary . . . . .	Tammy Planty
Treasurer . . . . .	Anna Thompson
Chaplain . . . . .	Lois Van Sickle
Historian . . . . .	Linda Healy
Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . .	Anna Planty

## Squadron 66

Commander . . . . .	Joe Weik
First Vice Commander . . . . .	Stephen E. Planty
Second Vice Commander. . . . .	Skip Powell
Finance Officer . . . . .	Darby McNeill
Chaplain. . . . .	Del Billings
Sergeant-at Arms. . . . .	Jimmy Clark
Historian. . . . .	J. Holman
Adjutant . . . . .	Stephen R. Planty