



California Forumeer

American GI Forum

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1948

California Forumeer
3rd. Quarter 2006

Commander Willie Galvan Recovering Nicely

By: Helen Galvan

This is an update on Willie's recovery and it will be five weeks tomorrow since his surgery. He did have to have six bypasses constructed to his heart, with the veins taken from his leg. So he actually had two major incisions. The doctors boast that they haven't lost a patient in close to ten years, and Willie wasn't about to become a new statistic.

He was in the hospital for four days, and then home. By the third day at home, he was anxious to get out, so we took short trips to the mall, the bank, grocery store, etc. Every day he took longer and longer trips. Then he would have at least one visit at home every day. By the second weekend at home, he felt like he could then have a "celebration party", and there has been one every weekend since. The visits have been very therapeutic, but also a little tiring.

By the fourth week, Willie started physical therapy. He goes for about an hour and a half three times a week. They tried to start him too slowly, and he quickly graduated to higher weights and paces. He has gained a great deal of strength, is now driving himself around town, and is doing some GI Forum work from home.

Willie will not be going back to work for another two to three weeks. He is looking forward to doing some traveling around the state, especially to do American GI Forum work. A big thank you to all the people who prayed for, called, and emailed him.

Los Angeles Larry Amaya Chapter at National Conference

Twelve members and one youth from the Los Angeles Larry Amaya Chapter traveled to and registered at the 2006 AGIF National Conference in Overland Park, Kansas. It was one of our largest member contingents to attend a national Conference in years. Only when our Chapter and the Rudy Escalante Chapter co-hosted the 2005 National Convention in Anaheim did we register more members.

Our Chapter sponsored 18 year old Liliana Salazar as our Ms. AGIF contestant. She had already won the Ms. AGIF at the State Conference in Santa Fe Springs. Guess what! At the National Conference the Kansas contestant won Ms. AGIF. We are proud of Liliana. She is an academic honors student and captain of her school girl's "futbol" team. This fall she is entering Cal State Long Beach University majoring in language and math and was recruited for Cal State's women's soccer team. We thank Maria Martinez for contributing to her wardrobe, VICS for sponsoring Liliana and Corky Emmett for escorting her.

At the national Conference our Chapter submitted two resolutions that were accepted. Due to the absence of Willie Galvan the state's Vice Commander, Fred Rodriguez, played an important role. He was able to guide us during the election process and keep us informed of activities as they emerged throughout the Conference.

During a post Conference analysis many of our members agreed that the 2006 National Conference and workshops lacked substance, especially those regarding veteran's issues. Also, the invited speakers should have been higher ranking government executives. We also agreed that the process to elect officers was cumbersome, the election rules were difficult to follow and the time element took too long to elect the national officers.

Fernando Del Rio, Commander Los Angeles Larry Amaya Chapter

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The Forumeer is your Quarterly Newsletter, submit ideas and materials for the next issue by October 31, 2006. Submit articles highlighting your chapter's events with the names of people who make events happen. Mail materials to: California Forumeer c/o: A. G. Lerma 765 Story Rd. Ste 150 San Jose, CA 95122 or call at 408-288-9470.

E-mail to: alerma@agif.org
<http://www.agif.org>

**AGIF NATIONAL CONFERENCE CONCLUDES WITH MAJOR RESOLUTIONS**

OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS – With the conclusion of the 59th Annual American GI Forum Conference on July 29, 2006, members of the only Hispanic Veterans Family Organization chartered by Congress re-affirmed their commitment to the United States, veterans and their families, and the health, education, and welfare of our youth.

The 2006 National Conference opening address was given by the Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Governor of Kansas who welcomed the American GI Forum to Kansas and spoke highly of the many contributions that Hispanic veterans and the American GI Forum has made in Kansas.

Two other well-known Kansas natives were also present and both gave inspiring presentations. Janet Murguia, President of the National Council of La Raza was the keynote speaker at the Women's Luncheon and Mr. Ernest Garcia, Chief of Staff for the Selective Service System was recognized with a Founder's Award for a long and distinguished career in the military and public service. He also assisted the National Commander in recognizing five Kansas City veterans of the Korean War. Retired Army LTC Consuelo Kickbusch was the speaker selected by the national youth officers for their Saturday Luncheon. LTC Kickbusch gave a very inspiring and motivational presentation that was geared especially for the youth attending the conference. She stressed the importance of studying hard in school, staying away from gangs and bad influences and also stressed the importance of always respecting parents, family and others.

Other speakers and guests at the Kansas National Hispanic Veterans Conference were Dr. James E. Sanders, Chief Medical Officer, VA Heartland Network; Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits, Wash. D.C.; Charles S. Ciccolella, Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment Training Service, Department of Labor Wash. D.C.; and Rosa Rosales, newly elected President of LULAC.

The 59th Annual Hispanic Veterans Family Conference saw some important resolutions passed as follows:

- Resolution to petition President Bush to take immediate action to broker an immediate cease fire between Israel and the Hezbollah of Lebanon.
- Resolution to petition the appropriate government officials to establish a medical outreach clinic in the Texas Valley area to preclude the many disabled and other veterans living there from having to drive countless miles to other VA facilities.
- Resolution to petition Justice Department to consider humanitarian release for 1970 civil rights leader, Ramiro R. Muniz because of failing health.
- Resolution to petition the Defense Department to remove from isolation, incarceration and base restriction eight members of Kilo Company, Third Battalion, Fifth Regiment, First Division, and U.S. Marines until a full investigation is completed.
- Resolution to support legislation passed by the Senate which provides for a guest worker program and the opportunity for deserving guest workers to obtain citizenship after meeting certain requirements without punitive reforms.
- Resolution to petition the VA to recognize those veterans who served in Thailand during the Vietnam war and who also were exposed to hazardous defoliation chemicals and insecticides and to provide them the same medical treatment as their Vietnam counterparts.
- Resolution to petition members of Congress to act responsibly in addressing the needs of the new wave of veterans by increasing the level of funding for the Department of Labor who has been at the same level of funding since 2002 and is that level is not adequate to encompass the new veterans through the Veterans Workforce Investment Program.
- Resolution to petition the Orange County Board of Supervisors to preserve for historical purposes the wooden dirigible hangars at Tustin, California.
- Resolution to enter into a dialog with NBC Universal and Telemundo on behalf of the Hispanic community to ensure diversity in programming and in hiring and retention practices as a result of acquiring Telemundo Television.

Twenty resolutions were presented at the 2006 National Conference, ten resolutions passed, eight failed and two were tabled.

The Kansas National Hispanic Veterans Conference also recognized some of its own members who have worked tirelessly in their local communities. Among those recognized were: Veteran of the Year, Felipe Flores Jr., Calif. – Woman of the Year, Hilda DeLeon, Okla. – Youth of the Year, Emilio Duran, Kansas and Raphael Colbert, Okla. – Veteran's Chapter of the Year, Visually Impaired Veterans Chapter, Calif. – Women's Chapter of the Year, Detroit Women, Mich. – Youth Chapter of the Year, Ulysses Youth Chapter, Kansas. The 2007 American GI Forum Hispanic Veterans Family Conference will be held at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma the first week of August 2007. **Marty Martinez, Oklahoma State Commander**

◆◆◆◆ THANK YOU ◆◆◆◆

El Primer Pueblo Libreria, Multi-Cultural Bookstore 410 East Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113 (408) 295-3627

"Valor and Discord" by Eddie Morin now available from Valiant Press online: <http://www.valiantpress.org>

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American GI Forum “Latina Awareness Conference”

The Latina Awareness Conference and the 1st Annual Reconociendo La Mujer Awards Gala that took place on July 26, 2006 prior to our National Conference was very successful.

We had a day of workshops featuring topics on Motivation, Leadership Strategies, Maximizing your Talents and Skills, Health, Immigration, and Financial Aide with exhibits outside the meeting room. The facilitators Guillerma Morales and Yolanda Suarez (NVOP) did a wonderful job of keeping us on track with time. Speakers included:

- Albesa “Abby” Vela, President and Co-Owner of Universal Connections,
- Rita Valenciano, President for Coalition of Hispanic Organizations,
- Mary Lou Jaramillo, Executive Director for Hispanic Economic Development Corp.,
- Graciella Couchonnal, PH.D Health Care Foundation,
- Francisca Devora, Diabetes Outreach Coordinator for Southwest KS Diabetes Prevention and Control Program,
- Cielo Fernandez, M.S. for Mattie Rhodes Foundation
- Maria Smith, Investigator for U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services,
- Melinda K. Lewis, MSW Director of Policy Advocacy & Research-El Centro,
- Katherine Coates, U.S. Department of Education.

At the Luncheon, we had the Mr. & Miss Scholastic Achievement Program contestants say their speeches and also invited members of the VSO Training Program to attend. These contestants were awarded at the 1st Annual Reconociendo La Mujer Awards Gala that evening.

Also awarded that evening were Elida Cardenas, AGIF and LULAC member, receiving the Anita Avila Community Service Award, Rosa Rosales, President of LULAC, receiving the Achievement Award, Latina Style Magazine, and accepting was Robert Bard, CEO, receiving the Chairwoman’s Award. Also being awarded but unable to attend were Delia Garcia, KS House Representative, receiving the Public Service Award and Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez receiving the Educational Award. The Nora Gonzales Leadership Award was presented to Janet Murguia, NCLR President at the Women’s Luncheon on Friday where she was also the Keynote speaker. The Corporation Appreciation Award was given to Coors and presented to John Ortiz.

Albesa “Abby” Vela was the Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening with Tencha Wilcox singing the National Anthem for us. A presentation about Dr. Hector P. Garcia and the role he played with the women over the years as was a presentation in remembrance of Anita Avila. Irene Velasquez, Coordinator, continued with the Mr. & Miss Scholastic Achievement Program. The evening was very glamorous and fun filled for all. Robert Bard, of Latina Style Magazine has graciously offered to assist the women with the 2nd Annual Reconociendo La Mujer Awards Gala. As National Chairwoman, I would like to say thank you to all the women that worked hard and spent endless hours along with positive energies to ensure that this would be a success. There isn’t anything out there that we as a team cannot achieve. **Debbie Salazar, National Chairwoman**

California Regional Meetings

We have gone back to the concept of regional meetings, and have divided the AGIF of California into four regions, Southern, Central Coast, Northern, and Central California. Our first meeting will be in the Southern Region and will encompass all the southern chapters of Larry Amaya, Casillas/Rodriguez, El Camino Real, Rudy Escalante, Joaquin Murrieta and Oceanside. All Chapter Commanders, Board of Directors, and Appointed Persons are invited to attend the meeting to be held on September 9th, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, at the VICS Center, 10260 Matern Place, Santa Fe Springs, California. Lunch will be served, courtesy of VICS, Tony Gallegos. All the past AGIF Commanders and Boards have done their share of continuing the philosophy and mission of the Forum with the commitment to serve Veterans and families.

We will continue with the commitment, but will attempt to raise the Forum's level of service to the next plateau. Our future plans and goals will focus on issues that impact Veterans and families, educational, legislative, civil rights, restructuring chapters to be self-sufficient through 501(c)3 non-profit status, and membership expansion through one-time honorary memberships. We will strengthen the Forum's visibility and role in VA affairs and in public policy for the benefit of our Veterans and families through our positive friends in Sacramento. Our Forumeer newsletter is becoming stronger and better with every issue, thanks to our Editor, Mr. Augie Lerma. This is one of the tools that will assist us, not only to bring messages to the membership, but to show legislators and corporate America that we are active, growing and involved in all the above areas as well as in the political arenas through our individual memberships. Other region meetings with locations, dates and times will be scheduled in the next few weeks with mailings to all concerned. I urge you to please make all efforts to attend this meeting. We will need attendance confirmation, so please call or email Fred Rodriguez at 310-502-7747, fredrodriguez@hotmail.com and/or Ramon Diaz at 714-904-0212, ramond9@netzero.org. Thank you for continuing to work in the Forum's and Veterans/families' interest and for attending this meeting. **Willie Galvan**



American GI Forum San Joaquin Valley Chapter On The Move

Commander Gil Molina of the San Joaquin Valley Chapter attended and represented the AGIF at two excellent functions:

1. As Co-Sponsors with Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) <http://www.piqe.org>, the Black Chamber of Commerce, Central Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, AGIF, Chicano Alumni, and Latino Journal (companies that paid for the event PG& E, ATT); The Latino Journal was the lead, we (AGIF) Co-Sponsored the event with these folks; approximately 80 educators as well as business folks attended the event; they addressed the drop-out rate in California...48% of Hispanic HS students graduate, the State School superintendent Jack O'Connell claims his program (Exit exam is working); this means 52% do not graduate. By the year 2040 Hispanics will be the largest minority group in the Nation. The program "piqe" has a 72% success rate for student involved in this program in the San Diego area. The school system is looking into implementing this program statewide.

2. I attended the Central Hispanic chamber of commerce Small business man of the year award; Our member Pete Estrada, Vietnam vet/Disable.. won the award; key note speaker Jose Perez from the Latino journal <http://www.latinojournal.net> provided a very well and profound dissertation about the AGIF.....he did us proud on both events....Thank you Mr. Jose Perez.

Gil Molina, San Joaquin Valley Chapter

San Jose East Valley Chapter, Commander's Report

Our next meeting of the AGIF San Jose East Valley Chapter is at 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, August 16, 2006. All committee reports are due. See you at the Moose Lodge # 401, corner of Mt. Pleasant and Marten Avenue I San Jose, CA.

Now that the AGIF State Conference in Santa Fe Springs and the AGIF National Conference in Overland Park, Kansas are over, we go to work. Please mail your \$30.00 for 2007 membership. Mail in all your friends, relatives and family names, addresses and phone numbers to become honorary members of the AGIF for free.

The Latino Role Model Conference will be held in October, 2006. Volunteer and call Esau Herrera (408) 891-4833. The new State AGIF Commander is Willie Galvan from Santa Maria, CA. More on the new state and national officers in our next newsletter.

Have you volunteered for the AGIF San Jose East Valley Chapter Veterans Day Dinner/Dance? This event will be on Saturday, November 11, 2006 at the Moose Lodge #401 corner of Mt. Pleasant and Marten Avenue from 6 P.M. to 12:00 P.M. Call chairman Frank Chavez (408) 254-3827, 10 A.M. to 9 P.M., Monday thru Friday. We need donations and sponsors for the dinner, music, dance, awards and to print the program and tickets as soon as possible. We will be honoring Veterans form WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Iraq. We would also donated door prizes. Thank you Peter J. Rondero, form Fresno for the \$50.00 donation to print the tickets. **Commander, Isaias Christopher Aguilera**

Register to VOTE and VOTE November 7, 2006. GOD BLESS THE USA.

Veterans In Community Service, Inc.

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Felipe Flores Honored At National Conference

Past California Commander and current National Veteran Service Officer Director Felipe Flores received the prestigious Veteran of the Year Award at the National Conference of the American GI Forum for his tireless efforts on behalf of Veterans and their Families. The California Chapter also started by Mr. Flores "The Visually Impaired Veterans of Santa Clara Valley" was also selected as the Chapter of the year for their many accomplishments and activities on behalf of California Veterans.



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National Chairwoman thanks California

Thank you for having me at your State Conference, I enjoyed it very much as well as the new friendships that I made. I would also like to send a special thank you from the National women to VICS for their donation to the National Latina Awareness Conference. The presentation for Anita Avila was fantastic and for her family and all the other members that are ill, family is ill or deceased; you are in my prayers always. A special prayer is being sent to the State Commander and State Chairwoman Willie and Helen Galvan to help you get through the tough time you are facing now. A special thanks to Mariana Tinoco for all your help at the National Conference, I would not have gotten through some of the times without you. I would like to personally thank California for once again supporting me and trusting that I will do the utmost best for the women of the United States.

Debbie Salazar, National Chairwoman

Let's all shop at Sears!!!

I assume you have all seen the reports about how Sears is treating its reservist employees who are called up? By law, they are required to hold their jobs open and available, but nothing more. Usually, people take a big pay cut and lose benefits as a result of being called up...

Sears is voluntarily paying the difference in salaries and maintaining all benefits, including medical insurance and bonus programs, for all called up reservist employees for up to two years. I submit that Sears is an exemplary corporate citizen and should be recognized for its contribution.

Suggest we all shop at Sears, and be sure to find a manager to tell them why we are there so the company gets the positive reinforcement it well deserves. **Gil Molina, Fresno, CA**

Stephanie Beach and Marcelino Sumaya selected as Mr. and Miss AGIF

On Wednesday, July 26, 2006, the Mr. and Miss American GI Forum Scholastic Achievements Contests were held in conjunction with the Women's Leadership Conference. Selected as the 2006 Mr. American GI Forum of the U.S. was Marcelino Sumaya from Dodge City, Kansas. Stephanie Beach from Wichita, Kansas was selected as the 2006 Miss American GI Forum of the U.S. Marcelino will be a freshman at the University of Kansas this fall, and Stephanie will be a sophomore at Wichita State University. **Barbara Olivas**

VA HEALTH CARE

VA operates the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,300 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities. For additional information on VA health care, visit: http://www.va.gov/health_benefits/

DUES

A gentle reminder to all local Commanders and Treasurers to submit their membership dues and transmittals, as of now, to the newly elected State Treasurer: Daniel Morales, P. O. Box 52617, Riverside, CA 92517, Cell #: 951-675-1489. **Willie Galvan, State Commander**

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Marie Alarid, Women's Chaplain



Modesto Chapter Continues To Advocate

The Modesto Chapter of the American GI Forum continues in its role of advocate for veterans and the Hispanic community in the county of Stanislaus.

Commander Frank Alvarez "The past year has been a success because we have been able to build upon the work begun by Commander Emeritus Raul Ortega."

Our 7th Annual Black & White Ball was a huge success this year. 375 Forumeers and Community members joined together to raise \$10k and award 35 scholarships to deserving students in the local community. Our Forumeer of the Year went to Dr. Lilia DeKatzew, Professor of Chicano Studies at Cal State Stanislaus. Our chapter in partnership with Dr. DeKatzew and Cal State Stanislaus honored 15 students of Chicano Studies for Scholastic Excellence and Original Research in their field earlier this year. This program of honoring Latino Students will continue into next year. We also honored Maria Jaime as a Friend of the GI Forum for her work as a young Chicana attorney bringing 2 civil rights law suits in Stanislaus Co.

We will be hosting our 3rd Annual All VW Car Show on 10-15-06. The Show will be held at Modesto Junior College, East Campus from 7am to 3pm. Admission is free. We partner with Wolfsburg's Wickedest Car Club, and The Business, Behavioral & Social Science Division of MJC to put the show on. Last year there were 120 VWs in attendance.

We have also arranged to have a street sign put up on 11th and I Street in Downtown Modesto right across from the Courthouse. The street sign includes our Logo, our Motto and the name of our Founder. We expect our sign to go up on September 15, 2006. Full size replicas of the sign are available from Signtech (209) 581-9677 for \$55 plus shipping.

"I would like to thank all our brothers and sisters in the American GI Forum of CALIFORNIA for showing a united front to the rest of our chapters across the United States. We continue to lead the American GI Forum by example."

Commander Frank Alvarez

“We have also arranged to have a street sign put up on 11th and I Street in Downtown Modesto right across from the Courthouse. The street sign includes our Logo, our Motto and the name of our Founder. “



General Membership Application

Qualifications to join: Any honorably discharged veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States is eligible for membership, as is any person who is approved by the membership. Chapters hold monthly meetings. The Mid-Year Conference is held during the first quarter of the year. The State Conference is held during the second quarter of the year and the National Conference is held in August.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Chapter Name _____

Email _____

DUES (Dues are \$30.00 for most chapters)

Annual membership dues includes local, state and national dues. Members receive a subscription to The Forumeer, the official AGIF Newsletter, and discounts to the AGIF's conferences and events. Mail application and dues to: AGIF State Treasurer Daniel Morales, P. O. Box 52617, Riverside, CA 92517. You may also send application to your nearest AGIF chapter.

• Veteran _____ Yes _____ No • New Member _____ Renewal _____ • Gender _____ Male _____ Female

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MID YEAR BOD MEETING

AGIF California Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, December 2, 2006 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
American GI Forum Center/Marian Clinic
117 West Bunny Avenue Santa Maria, CA



A Menudo and Mexican Pan Dulce breakfast from 9:00 to 10:00 AM and Santa Maria Style Tri-tip Lunch will be served. All members of the Board of Directors, Chapter Commanders, Appointed Persons and Members are invited and urged to attend. The meeting will mostly be geared toward the future plans of the AGIF of California and will include planning for increasing organizational membership. Willie Galvan, Commander 805-714-6015 or 805-928-2274

MARIACHI CONCERT

Scholarship Fundraiser Saturday, Sept. 9, 2006 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Featuring: **Mariachi Chula Vista** 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm & **Ballet Folklorico Zapatillo** 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Sponsored by: American G.I. Forum Oceanside Chapter & San Diego Gas and Electric. Advance Ticket Sales Dinner, Admission, Reserved Seating \$25.00 (Admission only \$15.00)
Martin Luther King Middle School 1290 Ivey Ranch Road Oceanside, California. Info: Pete Magana 760 757-6276, Manny Astorga 760 721-1579, Johnny Lozano 760 724-1890, Rod Sandoval 760 630-5198, John Herrera 760 724-2508

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