

5-5-2023 - What is your - our Climate?

Climate Change is most certainly a constant subject of the NEWS, and what we can do about it. But, from one perspective, what is a major influence of our climate? Now I know that I'm not a "Climatologist", but bear with me. This weekend in the Northwest we are experiencing abnormally warm temperatures (things are heating up!), but what is causing that? One significant cause are ocean temperatures and currents. The atmosphere aside, what is feeding the oceans of the world? It all starts with a source such as a spring, rainwater runoff, glacier melt, etc. From there it all goes into streams, then small tributaries, then then rivers, and finally, the confluence of all of these go into the ocean. So, in effect, what all of the springs, rain, glaciers, etc. look like have a significant influence on what our ocean looks like. If those "Sources" are healthy, so is our ocean. Even a little "contamination" will have an impact on the ocean, and our climate.

Isn't that all a metaphor for our American Legion? Members = Source, Posts = Steams, Districts/Areas = Tributaries, Department = Rivers, and our National American Legion is the confluence of all those inputs equal to the ocean. Just as with the earth's water flow, our organization is driven by its "Source", or Members. Any contamination, even at the "Source" can influence what our organization looks like or how it can function.

So, what may those "Contaminations" look like? One major one would be if we, as members lose focus on our Four Pillars of the American Legion. Let me remind you of what they are:

*"In 1919, The American Legion was founded on four pillars: **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth**. Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its service members, their families, the youth of America and ordinary citizens."*

Another major "contaminate" can be "Self" vs. "Organization". Are we focused on what is best for the "Organization" and its goals, or is it our personal "Ego's"? Are we focused on "**BeTheOne**" for others, or for ourselves?

All of our "Pillars" are extremely important, but I see a significant component of "Americanism" – "For God and Country" as vital to our personal and organization success and wellbeing. I have been asked if The American Legion is a "Religious Organization". While it is not based on one faith or belief, it IS based, by our founders, upon the guidance, wisdom, and blessings of God, however, or in whatever way, we have the freedom to believe. Our First Amendment grants us the Freedom OF Religion (not FROM Religion) and that is not **EX**clusive, but **IN**clusive of all faiths and beliefs in God, or if you like – a Supreme Being. By faith, or not. By

faith, I am a Christian (and wish everyone was), but I also respect each person's right and freedom to believe or not believe, as they wish, as we ALL should. But, given that, in God's inspired word, as found in the Bible, we are to love our neighbor by putting our neighbor first and ourselves last. If we could remember that, would we not have a much better environment, or "Climate", within all its sources, streams, tributaries, and rivers of the whole organization? Throughout the world, past and present, we see the results of Evil on peoples' daily lives by dictatorships, "communism", or any strategy that takes away one's freedoms and personal security through threats or bullying. WE and our forefathers have fought and died against such strategies and now we and our children are enjoying the benefits, by God's grace and mercy.

Right now, our "River" (Department) has some "dams" in it. Things are not flowing as they should, or could be, We ARE facing challenges, but we are also facing opportunities. Just as each confluence of the rivers support our ocean, that same "Confluence" of each members' contribution for the good of all can help eliminate the contamination that has affected us all. Each Member, Post, and District can enable our future success, IF we refocus our efforts and, by putting our self-importance or esteem aside, and put God and others first, each of us can BeTheOne; for our Veterans, Children & Youth, Security, Americanism, and over-all Organization. It's not going to be easy and will take work, dedication, and God's guidance and wisdom, but WE CAN DO IT, IF WE DO IT TOGETHER, and "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY".

In closing, I'd like to share a Prayer, as found in the "Chaplains Prayer Book", for not only now and our future, but also for our upcoming Memorial Day Honors:

"Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm does bind the wind and wave, we remember the ancient words, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord, and the people whom He has chosen for an inheritance." We are grateful for the heritage that is ours in this nation whereby we enjoy more freedom than any other people of the earth. Help us never to neglect any part of this freedom lest we lose the opportunity for ourselves and children.

We humbly dedicate these moments to You and pray that as The American Legion calls the heart and mind of America back to God, we may enjoy the fruits of righteousness, justice and peace. Keep us ever mindful of the sacrifice made by veterans, named and nameless, who laid down their lives that we and those whom we love might live. For Your name's sake. Amen."