



# Strategic Plan Update

## 2012 Membership Survey Results

Submitted February 2013 by Committee Chairman Jim West

# Strategic Plan Update: Survey Results

## Overview

This report summarizes the results of a recent membership survey produced and conducted by the Grand Aerie Marketing & Communications Department at the request of the Strategic Planning Committee. This is the second such survey.

## Survey Details

The survey period was Nov. 6 to Dec. 31, 2012. And, like 2011, surveys were distributed both electronically and in print. There were two primary differences:

- The survey period was one month longer to allow a wider communication window and increase participation, based on suggestions from members last year who were unaware.
- The printed distribution was by direct mail to leadership in 2011. In 2012, the full printed survey was distributed in the Soar bulletin. This resulted in a high rate of printed return.

In 2011, separate surveys were delivered to Grand Aerie leadership and membership. The 2012 survey was a single tool, with built-in segmentation mechanisms. Responses can be sorted in various ways – by age group, by Aerie/Auxiliary membership, by years of membership. This has the potential to provide a clearer picture of the desires of unique segments.

It is important to note that this survey, like the one before, is not solidly scientific (sample size, statistical analysis, etc.) Rather, it offered a communication channel through which members at all levels could offer honest input.

In addition to demographic questions (age, years of membership) a few questions from the 2011 Survey were retained in order to help us begin to identify trends, or key in on significant data changes. Two years does not constitute a solid trend, but we are building a base for the future.

Fewer “open-ended” questions were deployed in 2012 to provide a more clear data pool for analytical purposes. However, the “open-ended” qualitative approach remained in large part to encourage free thinking. These types of questions (i.e., “What should the Fraternal Order of Eagles do differently or change in order to remain a relevant and effective organization?”) tend to be more objective – and therefore provide us with ideas that have perhaps not risen to the top of the list in past discussions.

## Survey Participants

A total of 997 completed surveys were returned to the Grand Aerie Office – both electronically and by mail. There were 827 completed surveys received in 2011. Question 2 segregated leadership (an officer at any level). Data shows that 542 “leaders” submitted responses, with 455 responses coming from members not holding office.

### Aerie/Auxiliary Participation

	2011	2012
Aerie	57%	65%
Auxiliary	43%	35%

### Age Range

In 2011, just 27% of the participants were 50 or under at the time the survey was conducted. The largest group of participants fell in the 51-70 age range. The significant change in 2012 was a measurable drop in the 50 and under crowd from 27% to 15%. While the cause cannot be fully determined, it is of note that hand-written surveys increased in 2012 – likely due to wider distribution through the Soar bulletin.

#### Age Range

	2011	2012
30 or Less	2%	1%
31-40	5%	3%
41-50	20%	11%
51-60	30%	25%
61-70	32%	30%
70+	11%	30%

### Years of Membership

In 2011, 23% of our participants reported being members for more than 25 years. That number climbed in 2012 by 7%. Exactly half (50%) of the 2012 participants reported being members for more than 15 years. The number of participants reporting 25+ years of membership climbed by 7%. Again, this shift is likely due in part to the wider printed distribution method, as 459 (more than 50% of all submitted surveys) were mailed back to the Grand Aerie, most of these delivered to members through the Soar bulletin. In any case, we are fortunate to have such a strong base of history and knowledge from our longer term members.

#### Years of Membership

	2011	2012
0-5	20%	20%
6-10	23%	16%
11-15	14%	14%
16-20	11%	11%
21-25	9%	9%
26 or More	23%	30%

## The Local Level

This question appeared on the 2011 survey in the same format, and is one of several which will provide us with emerging trends over a longer period of years. The notable difference is that this question did not involve Grand Aerie Leadership in 2011 – it was presented only on the Membership version of the survey. This does not mean that local officers were excluded in 2011. They were, in fact, a part of the “Membership” group.

Given that difference, it is interesting to note little variation in the response percentages from one year to the next. The results, in fact, are very similar.

### Thinking of your local Aerie, please rank your experiences regarding the following:

	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Attractive/Clean Facility	36%	41%	38%	32%	19%	16%	5%	7%	2%	4%
Available Training/Mentorship	12%	14%	21%	20%	33%	31%	21%	20%	13%	15%
Friendly, Inviting	37%	35%	32%	31%	20%	20%	8%	9%	3%	5%
Family-Oriented	24%	26%	30%	28%	24%	26%	15%	12%	7%	8%
Younger Members Welcome	35%	33%	30%	31%	21%	21%	11%	10%	4%	6%
Strong Support for Charities	40%	42%	28%	27%	17%	18%	10%	8%	6%	6%
Positive Local Leadership	24%	25%	29%	30%	25%	22%	12%	13%	11%	10%
Support from Grand Aerie Leadership	22%	23%	26%	27%	30%	27%	14%	13%	9%	9%
Support from Grand Aerie Office/Staff	27%	27%	31%	28%	25%	28%	10%	10%	7%	7%

### Membership Benefits: What Matters to You?

Based in part on the 2011 Survey, this question was designed to provide insight into why members are proud to be affiliated with the organization, and what benefits are most important. Input from this question helps us not only to build a program that attracts new members, but one that also keeps current members involved (retention).

What respondents told us is that charity work and the fraternal/social aspects of the F.O.E. are the most important components of their involvement in the organization.

The most important benefits, based on survey input, are:

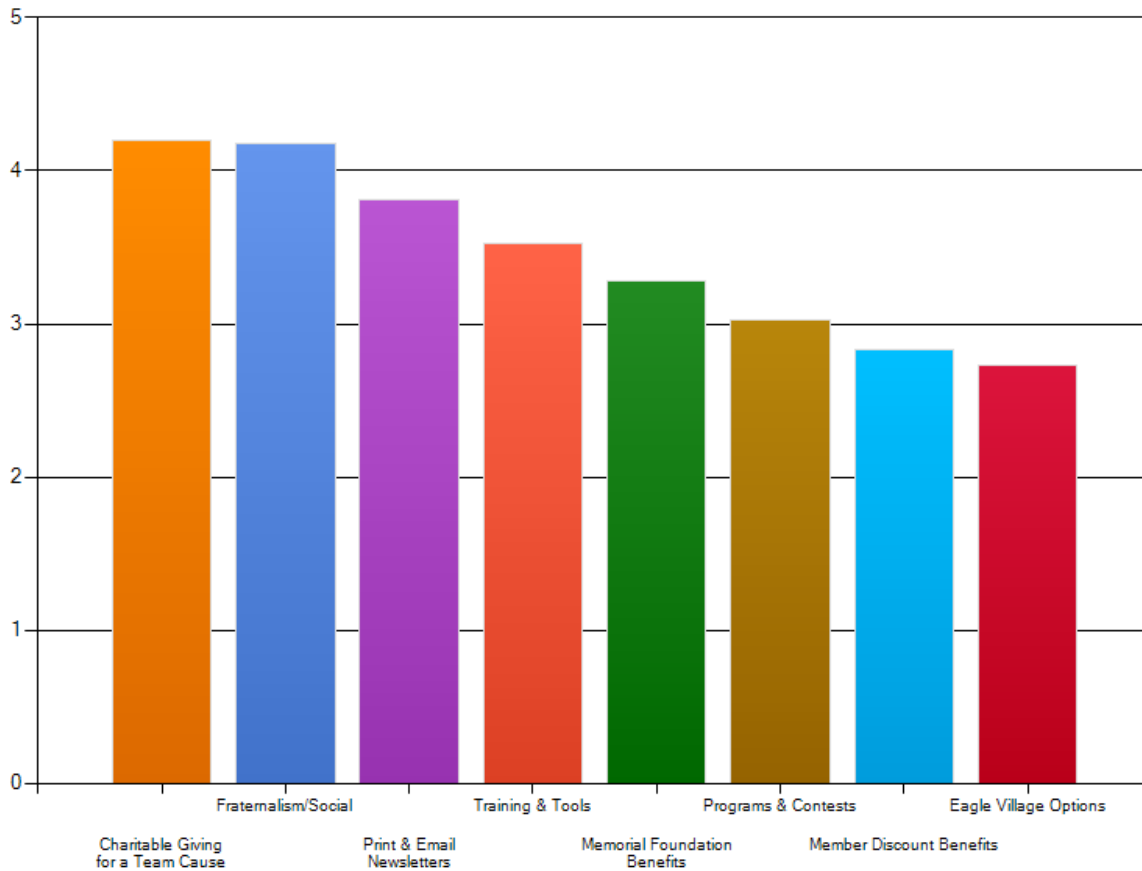
1. Charitable giving for a team cause
2. Fraternalism/Social
3. Print/Email Newsletters

The least important:

1. Eagle Village options
2. Member Discount Benefits
3. Programs & Contests

It is of interest to note that the choices in this question were harvested from the top open-ended questions from 2011. In that first survey, members listed the top two strengths of the organization as Fraternalism and Charity Work/People Helping People.

**Please rank the value of the following F.O.E. member benefits with 1 being Least Important and 5 being Most Important.**



### The Value of Membership

New to the survey this year was a question regarding perceived value of membership based on dues paid. Results showed that 68% either agreed or strongly agreed that they receive a good value, while just 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The highest reported annual dues was \$80.

**I believe I receive strong value from my local Aerie/Auxiliary for the annual dues I pay.**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29%	39%	19%	8%	5%

## The Future Health of Local Aeries

Responses below are divided into two categories: those from membership, and those from leadership.

### I am confident my Aerie/Auxiliary can sustain operations for the next decade.

#### Membership Response

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2011	27%	28%	22%	15%	8%
2012	20%	37%	19%	15%	9%

#### Leadership Response

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2011	21%	42%	13%	21%	3%
2012	21%	29%	22%	17%	11%

#### Sample "Agree" Comments

These comments were shared by participants who marked "strongly agree" regarding the sustainability of their Aerie home. While all comments are not included, this sampling gives a well-rounded picture of the overall responses in this category.

- Hard working and interested people
- We just keep growing and expanding.
- We have some young leadership interested in putting on functions. And older members still interested in attending meetings and support.
- No more mortgage, strong membership.
- Strong Aerie and Auxiliary. core of officers who work very well together to share ideas and work load in the Aerie.
- We have a very diligent and caring group of members and a great group of caring officers.
- We work hard together on fundraisers, bingo, etc.
- We have always been a strong operation.
- We need help in club and need membership to keep up.
- Good management & communication
- We are going strong believing in helping others. We may not follow the outdated ritual but we send our money in to the charities and locally we are well thought of and not as just another bar
- We have a strong membership - proud of our club and community - with many volunteers always willing to pitch in.
- People care about others
- Aerie and Auxiliary work well together and have honest hard working officers that attend local, district, zone, state and national meetings.
- We have a strong active Aerie, good leadership and are financially sound
- Our Aerie has been around for 66 years and our Auxiliary for 58 years. We support each other and our community. We work hard to keep up membership.
- We have a vibrant new group of members who are involved along with a core group of older members who are open to new ideas and are willing to assist newer members.
- Men and women work together

- We are trying new things to bring in new younger members.
- New building, increase of 50% in membership and a committed leadership with the strong support of the Auxiliary
- 19 years ago membership was decreasing with a low of below 150. Now nearly 400 and growing every year since approx. 1996. With that trend I don't see anything but more growth for the next decade and beyond.
- We are 108 years old -- not going down now.

### **Sample "Disagree" Comments**

These comments were shared by participants who marked "strongly disagree" regarding the sustainability of their Aerie home. While all comments are not included, this sampling gives a well-rounded picture of the overall responses in this category.

- Aerie closed, building for sale
- I will be surprised if our doors do not close within two years.
- Majority of Officers and Members if owned a business would be out of business in less than a year
- Not enough members too much overhead not leadership and trustees are not business people they do not inventory just do a random check and call it and inventory
- Our Aerie will crash and burn very soon. There is an ongoing battle to not change or evolve in business practices as well as offerings.
- It will depend on increased per capita tax commitments planned on all of our Aeries and Auxiliaries such as DRC
- Seems the younger generation wants everything free and don't want to help.
- We are having a hard time attracting younger people because of the old peoples club syndrome
- At this time my Aerie is in great financial difficulty.
- Not enough new and young members
- Grand Aerie always has its hand out!
- Not enough revenue from members alone, cannot keep the doors open with only bar income
- Our Aerie struggles to meet cost of operation.
- Must have mentoring on what the Eagles are. Must have fund raisers, benefits , education on duties of all officers
- TOO many members set in their way and not friendly or welcoming. Refuse to consider or embrace modern change. WILL NEVER draw younger members to an old folks home!
- The participation at the Aerie has taken a tremendous drop the last few months. I honestly do not know if it will ever recover from the damage done.
- The economy is bad and we are trying to survive and if the Grand Aerie continues to show their lack of fiscal responsibility the membership will again take another loss of members for we cannot continue to pay higher per capita tax so that they can continue to live off the members' expense. Remember they choose to represent us and times are tuff and they have to cut back.
- Old timers are set in their ways, they do not want to see any younger people try to move forward with ideas
- Charity is a business and when a business becomes a Charity it no longer functions in the parameters of the Charter.
- Low number of active aging members, unable to attract young members.
- Our Aerie needs an agent to come in and train our officers. Our Aerie secretary has been in place far too long, refuses to allow the books to be audited and treats everyone as if it is his Aerie and no one can do anything that he doesn't approve of. I am Auxiliary so I can't ask for any of these things and the Aerie members are "afraid" of him so they won't place the request either.
- At this rate we will not last into 2014

## The Most Important Issues

Data from the 2011 Survey led to this question: "What do you believe are the most important issues to be addressed by the Grand Aerie Leadership?" Through the 2012 Survey, participants were asked rank seven items in order of importance. These items were harvested from the 2011 responses.

The most important issues, based on survey input, are:

1. Membership Growth
2. Membership Retention
3. Increased Public Awareness of the F.O.E.

The least important issues identified were:

1. Completing the Diabetes Research Center Commitment
2. More Training from Grand Aerie
3. Strengthening Communication from the Grand to Members

**What do you believe are the most important issues  
to be addressed by the Grand Aerie Leadership?  
(Rank 1-7, 1= Most Important/7=Least Important)  
The lowest average/response is the MOST important to respondents.**

Issue	Response Average	Response Total
Membership Growth	2.94	2198
Membership Retention	2.97	2216
Increased Public Awareness of F.O.E.	3.31	2476
More Youth Involvement	4.28	3200
Strengthening Communication from the Grand to Members	4.57	3414
More Training from Grand Aerie	4.86	3629
Completing the Diabetes Research Center Commitment	5.06	3783



## Communication Channels

Members made a very loud and clear statement through the 2011 survey: "Please strengthen communication to us!" Since then, a number of plans have been developed. In our quest to continue to improve, three questions were added regarding the communications channels our members use and find most effective. We asked how they receive news from the Grand Aerie, with the option of selecting multiple answers. We also asked for a "preferred form of communication" with a single choice answer.

### Printed Communications: Soar

Two questions were introduced in 2012 to gauge the effectiveness of the Soar printed communications program that provides a monthly publication to our members: 10 black-and-white bulletins and 2 color booklets. This is the first of those two questions. The majority of the comments received about the Soar were positive in nature.

#### Are you aware of the Soar, our new printed monthly publication?

Yes	No
95%	5%

#### Sample Comments

##### Positive

- Excellent - it provides me information on the whole organization - gives us ideas from other Aeries.
- Like our local newsletter I read Soar front to back.
- This is great for the whole family to read.
- I personally like SOAR and a few of us watch for it.
- Keep it coming!
- I paid for a subscription to receive it at home because I am editor of our club newsletter.
- I enjoy soar. It's the only Eagles news I get. None comes out of Aerie.
- Very informative and pleasant to the eye. Great tool.
- I love being informed of the charity distributions that are done and I love reading the newsletter
- Communications with the membership is very important and the Soar should continue.

##### Negative

- Not too helpful
- This is 2012 it should be electronic
- This publication is a waste of money. It seems like we get rid of one publication and we start another. This info could be put on the website.
- I doubt the cost is outweighing the benefit
- It would have been nice for an officer to have told me what SOAR means when I received my membership c
- Excellent information, unfortunately Aerie Secretaries are not promoting this product
- Never heard about it until 11-15-12. Been a member for 25 years.

##### Eagle Magazine

- I still prefer the Eagle Magazine over the Soar. The Magazine had more information than the Soar.
- Good to get regular updates, sorry we cannot afford magazine and color communication.
- I liked the old Mag. better - but with the cost, mailing etc. I can see why it's changed to what we get now.
- I liked the "Eagle" magazine but I am getting used to the SOAR publication.
- There's not much news to even have it printed. Need to go back to our old Eagle magazine.

### Soar: Is it Distributed Locally?

Bundles of 25 black-and-white Soar issues are delivered monthly to every Aerie home, addressed to the Worthy Secretary. The goal is to have these copies placed in the Aerie home for those who would like to keep up with Grand Aerie activities and reports. As comments show, there remain issues with local distribution, and the knowledge that additional copies may be printed off from our Members-Only website.

#### Are copies of the Soar available monthly in your Aerie home?

Yes	No
82%	18%

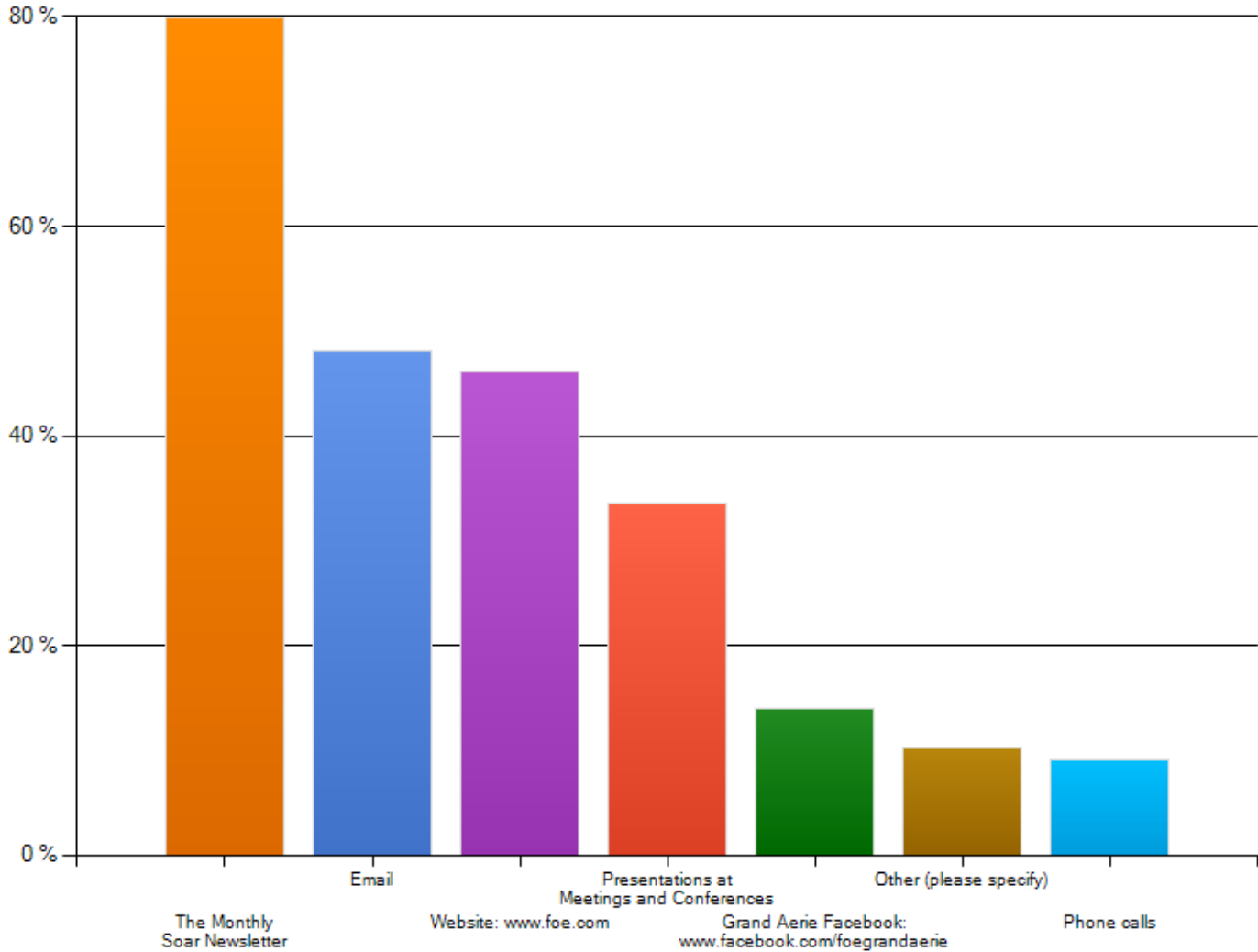
#### Sample Comments

- They are usually found under a newspaper or a mega touch machine and they are not in plain sight.
- Our Aerie secretary is not providing any communication.
- Worthy secretary insures we have it out.
- Many of our local membership is either too lazy to read or do not care. So sad.
- They are often difficult to locate.
- They are placed on a table for members to pick up
- Just wish more members would take them and read them.
- Only available to the few that frequent the bar.
- Like the increased communication from the Grand Aerie
- No one knows they are here!
- Posted by Aerie Secretary
- I pass out to each member at our meetings.
- I enjoy reading Soar. It's full of useful information.
- Aerie secretary makes copies and puts them out
- I bring to meeting and give out to members
- Secretary keeps about 25 copies and places them in Aerie for members to pick up. I get mine each month to my home.
- They are put out in general area but probably 90% get thrown out after 3 weeks.
- More needed, even though we have good newsletter also.
- I have never seen one
- More copies would allow interested members. Take it home and get inspired by what other Eagles are doing.
- Local Aerie doesn't make them available.
- We have a special spot where members can pick those up at any time.
- They could be but I've never seen them in plain sight.
- It is a good informative magazine and in time some of us old timers will quit comparing it to "The Eagle"
- I truly believe fewer sent to Aerie would be better, most thrown in trash every month. People read it and put them back for others to read.
- As secretary I put them out every month
- if we run low we print off copies
- I believe this mailing is a waste of money. I end up throwing most of them away.
- Our Aerie secretary doesn't think they are important enough to share

### How Grand Aerie News is Received

Seven choices were presented, including an “other, please specify” line. Participants were asked to mark all channels that applied to them. The significant leader was the Soar, with 780 selections out of the 976 members who completed the question.

How do you receive news from the Grand Aerie F.O.E.? (Choose all that apply)

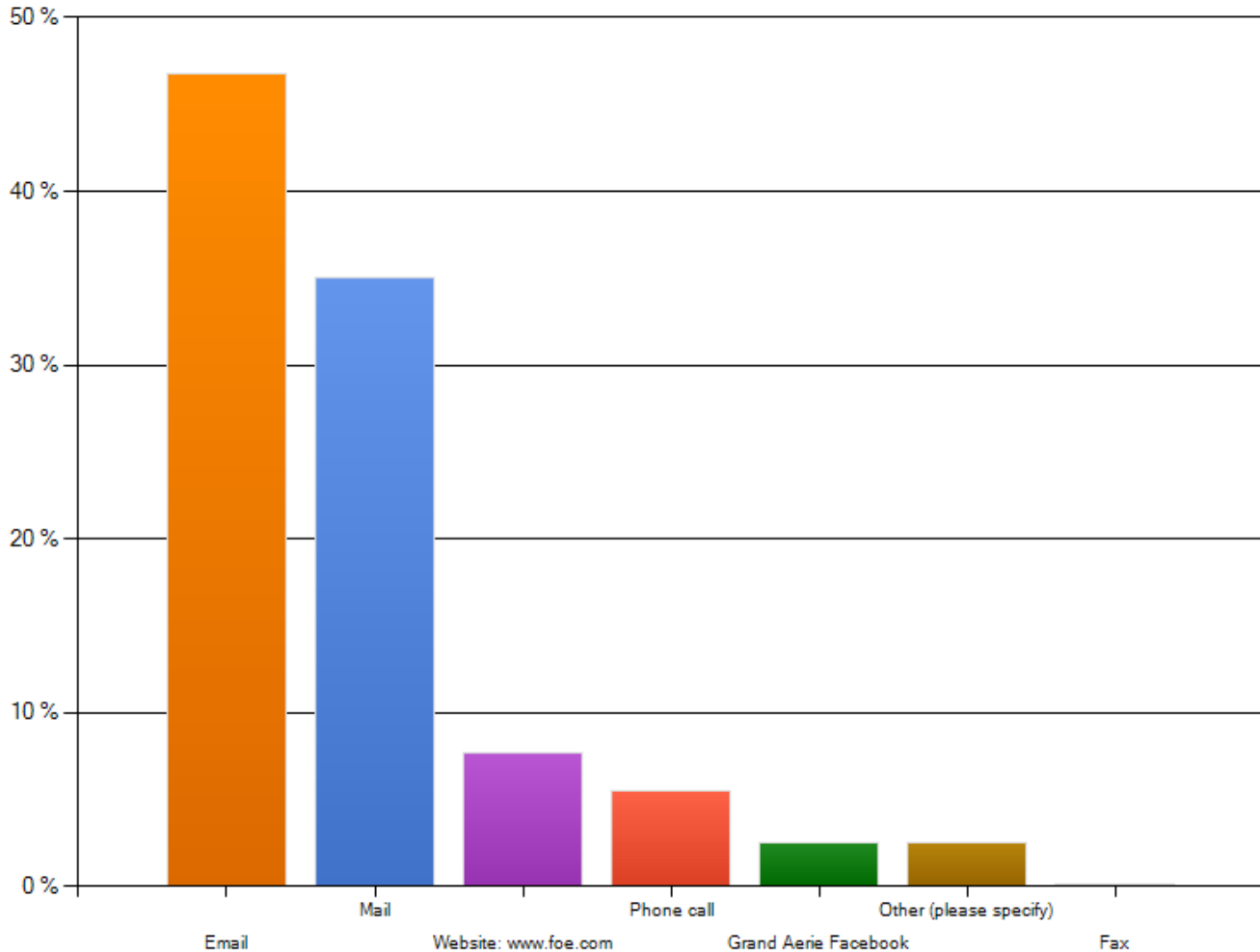


**Other:** The most frequently entered items in the “Other” category were Aerie Bulletin Board, Local Newsletter, MMS, Mail, Word of Mouth, and meetings, including International Convention.

## Communication Preferences

Seven choices were presented, including an “other, please specify” line. Participants were asked to select just one method – their personal communication preference. This information helps us understand how to most effectively reach a solid cross section of members. Two clear choices emerged: 47% selected Email, and 35% selected Mail.

**What is your preferred form of communication from Grand Aerie leadership?  
Choose only one.**



**Other:** There were very few responses listed in the “Other” category. The most frequent were Local Newsletter, Meetings, and Conferences/Convention.

## The Health of Our Organization and Your Ideas

The following three questions provided open comment areas, and produced a myriad of concerns. This body of responses will provide key pieces of the roadmap moving forward.

### Is the Organization Better or Worse?

This question appeared in consecutive years so that a baseline could be set, and any emerging trends could be identified over a period of years. Responses below are divided into two categories: those from membership, and those from leadership.

#### Since I joined, the F.O.E. has changed for the better.

##### Membership Response

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2011	14%	29%	34%	17%	6%
2012	9%	31%	36%	16%	8%

##### Leadership Response

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2011	13%	26%	24%	29%	8%
2012	10%	31%	34%	20%	5%

### Sample "Agree" Comments

These comments were shared by participants who marked "strongly agree." While all comments are not included, this sampling gives a well-rounded picture of the overall responses in this category.

- Excellent current president and the trustees are doing a fine job.
- Friendly, organized, giving.
- More training - more informative
- The MMS has made things simpler, and more accurate.
- Our club has grown leaps and bounds and we together with the Aerie donate over \$35000 a year to charities.
- I had a dance band in the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's. Always had a hard time getting paid. Now band gets paid on time. Also more activities for all ages.
- They've tried hard to keep up with the times.
- We donate to more charities and we have an Auxiliary now and we have state officers.
- The Auxiliary are equal members with the Aerie
- Newer fresher ideas. Change is slowly coming to an environment that needs to change with the times and economy.
- The men seem to give more credit to the women.
- The Aerie and Auxiliary are working together instead of fighting each other.

- A new found sense of pride and self-worth
- Putting in the MMS has really made secretaries jobs somewhat easier.
- I have seen better leadership from our state and local officer and especially the Grand Officers
- The Auxiliary. is treated as an equal, 30 yrs ago no Auxiliary. would have been allowed to function on their own without an Aerie as my Auxiliary. has been allowed
- Website, MMS, better communication, more tools for the secretary and membership
- When I joined we had a Membership of barely 150. Now we have a membership of nearly 400.

### **Sample “Disagree” Comments**

These comments were shared by participants who marked “strongly disagree.” While all comments are not included, this sampling gives a well-rounded picture of the overall responses in this category.

- We have lost many members from confrontations over programs and fund-raisers. New members are not encouraged by other members to attend meetings.
- When I first joined, the F.O.E. was not so political.
- Aerie is not operating correctly. Too many secrets.
- Fraternalism is gradually being replaced by bar patronage. I hear too often "What's the benefit of membership?"
- A few bad apples have controlled until it is impossible to feel good about the cause
- Unwilling to step up to current trends to encourage new/younger memberships.
- Aerie not being run as a "Fraternal Order"
- There is no sense of fraternalism. We have gotten away from People helping People to people doing what's good for them
- Things are getting progressively worse at my Aerie. The leadership has forgotten that they are there to support the members. The atmosphere in our Aerie is often hostile.
- We have retro-actively dropped death benefit for 25% of our membership and eliminated potential benefit for another 25% --- Yet the Grand is raising fees.
- I have seen three agents come into different Aeries and completely screw the Aeries up more than they were. I also have to say the Aeries & Auxiliaries are having problems filling the chairs and attendance at the meetings have dropped down to nothing. Charity donations have dropped.
- It went from people helping people to people helping themselves. I don't think our local Aerie has done an audit in over 15 years. went to the state foe help & they just blew it off
- You need over a 100 dollar bill to attend district meetings just for all the raffles.
- Trend is that the Charities are supported to the very minimums in order to keep the Charter on the wall and the bar open. The bar provides zero donations to the Charities and the members complain that the Charity activities interfere with their sports and conversations.

### **Your Suggestions: Question 14**

This question, near the end of the survey, matches exactly a question posed in 2011: “*What should The Fraternal Order of Eagles do differently or change in order to remain a relevant and effective organization?*” Because this is an open-ended question, responses were sorted by key word, and are presented by subject matter. This approach provides a cross section of the most frequent issues addressed by survey participants.

### **What should The Fraternal Order of Eagles do differently or change in order to remain a relevant and effective organization?**

#### **Membership:**

- We need to find a program for pre-teens that will get them familiar with the Eagles. Positive early association to make a future member.
- Contact other fraternal organizations, veterans and Civic groups. And volunteer police fireman's groups about F.O.E. They already joined one group, may show interest in Eagles club.

- We need younger members now. I am a 3rd year member, Ladies Auxiliary. President for 2 years and a State Trustee. I am moving up because our older people have no choice but to step down. We have to have younger members to continue in their footsteps.
- Many things we do cannot provide membership desire for potential members. We are out of touch with the children of the seventies, eighties, nineties and millennia's. My own son sees zero value for him and his lifestyle in FOE. We are a 40/50/60 generational habit with very small clues to the children, young adults and parents now our best sources for recruitment.
- Contact former members of Aeries that have lost members to find out why they have left and see what can be done to get them to come back.

#### **Public Awareness:**

- Get the word out- Many people do not know what FOE stands for. People know the 'Elks' and 'Moose' but have no idea what Eagles are. Especially the letters 'FOE'.
- We must continue to use our Brand and the idea of People helping People. We must show the world we will be there for almost any cause which makes us different and needs to be shown more.
- I really believe that we need to have strong affiliations with business, I.E. associated with several of the dozens of celebrities with diabetes, like having coke or Pepsi and or Budweiser or Miller being the official drinks of FOE., get us on their advertising with them, we have 800,000 plus members and when you include family, relatives, co-workers and friends, we are talking several millions of folks. That has an impact on those companies. Align with w drug manufacturer etc... to get our name on TV and in printed magazines by those sponsors. This is doable, it just takes the right approach from marketing and membership together. We need more than just NASCAR and the drink companies, we don't have to pay them.
- More viability locally ie building identification. More local advertising or viability. Via local media. More publicity for charity work. Better signage.
- Get our name out in the open more, let the public know more what we do. There is still a lot of people who still don't know about us or what we stand for and do. Some just think we are a bunch of drinkers and a glorified bar.

#### **Club Operations:**

- The Grand is great. The local has become terrible. Our membership is so focused on a cheap beer and cheap food it has totally lost support of what the Eagles are supposed to be. Incredibly frustrating! Educate our local Aerie to operations and current tools and procedures of Today's FOE. Our membership think those of us who "play" on computers are crazy and that we make up these tools we try to use provide by the Grand Aerie via our.foe.com. You, the Grand Aerie have been great. Our local Aerie is ignoring you.
- Proper inventory of food and beverages should be maintained in order to help keep the club solvent. Hire people with food and beverage experience.
- Not to be sarcastic but if I could offer the advice I would try to start with our own local having more of the Aerie involved in functions, decorating, etc. instead of letting the Auxiliary take care of 99% of it. I do not feel we are a unit as we were once when I first became a member. It was fun instead of political.
- Change the method of internal administration to something resembling the 21st century. The manner of internal controls is outdated and wide open to abuse.
- Improve service in bar area i.e. wait on tables, learn from commercial establishments. The system in place is slow and inefficient.

#### **Local Aerie/Auxiliary Support & Retention:**

- There needs to be much improved support from the Grand Aerie for local Aerie's. It seems the only time we hear from the national organization is when there is a problem.

- I really believe at this time is to pay attention what is happening in local clubs. When a member from a local club takes the time to write letters, with concerns for their club, I feel it should be acknowledged by somebody.
- Require each Aerie to conduct an annual strategic planning session. You will need to provide the tools and teach each Aerie to conduct on annual one year, 3 year, and 5 year and submit to our Grand Aerie. Then they should implement and follow their plans.
- Allow Aeries to run like a business. Require qualifications for trustees, treasurers, secretary....allow trustees to work and receive payment as employees.. This is an issue for small Aeries. Grand should provide \$\$ loans to new Aeries
- Listen to its membership - especially those who have been around for quite awhile. Actions were taken here without the consideration of overall membership. Emails were sent to Grand Aerie without any acknowledgement coming back that the email was even received or read. Nothing but SILENCE. We reached out to the Grand Aerie hoping they would realize that good kind decent men who cared for and loved that organization with all of their being - were trashed, self respect taken away, and integrity questioned - all because a small group of individuals were spoken to by your Agent sent down (who is strong friend with the group he spoke with) and did not gather all facts before taking any actions.

#### **Communication:**

- Provide more info to officers to keep the meetings active and interesting as is done at the district meetings by representatives. Not to have someone show up; but maybe an informative letter to read and discuss from higher up. Maybe on laws or what's going on and so on.
- Our local foe need to find a way to communicate better. For only hanging the info on a board doesn't always get out to everyone.
- Communication is most important and the representatives that are local, state and international, we should be more selective in our leaders qualifications. These people should be of the highest integrity and abilities. The Grand Aerie should have better guidelines to assist with the everyday workings of the Aerie homes. If this was happening there would be fewer needs for Agents.
- Encourage the Aeries to move into the 21st century with communications and ideas. Antiquated ideas that are not updated by local organizations will leave many behind and eventually cause them to shut their doors.
- Grand Aerie leaders should be more responsive to local members and Aeries. Listen to the membership. Should be easier to get info from Grand.

#### **Finances:**

- Clear defined goals including financial (fiscal responsibility), personnel structure (who's in charge - procedures- processes), goals: membership & charity, continued training (members/officers (all levels), GA board (possibly redefine - different structure, maybe GA & GA officers all be the goodwill ambassadors keeping GA Board separate), develop process for GA to collect pct/membership fees: dues go to GA then processed may cost \$\$ for new employee/s, equipment could save \$\$ in long run.
- Remember that the small Aerie don't always have a lot of extra finances to give to our Grand Aerie charity funds. We do a lot of local donations and do struggle at times in helping with Grand Aerie charities. We still do try our best.
- Quit raising per capita so we have to raise dues. This makes more members drop out every time we have to raise them.
- The Grand Aerie needs to start at home. Tighten the belt. The money you spend on travel and expenses is exorbitant- needs to be cut back- way back. You're 'Other' expenses also. Then advise Aeries they 'SHALL' donate a minimum of 25% gross income to charity. 20 years ago this was automatic. It was a family and



charity oriented. It's not anymore. Even put a ceiling on what a secretary can earn. \$1.10 a member is a disgrace- half of that to charity.

- Need better check and balance for members who handle finances.

### **Training:**

- Need training for all officers so they are very aware of their responsibilities. Trustees need to be aware they must bring expenditures to meetings and vote on. You have a grand officer that has told Aerie officers the trustees do not have to do this.
- Talk more on quality than quantity! More training offered to everyone who wants to take it not just chosen few. I have ran thru local Auxiliary chairs and president twice and ran the state line chars and not once been offered schooling except incoming state president schooling.
- Officer training, local community awareness of the FOE (charities and history). More assistance from state officers. In the past few years our Aerie receives an end of year visit from the state officers and their allies in order than they can get from the local Aeries money for their annual chosen charity
- Look closely to how other similar organizations are evolving. Don't be afraid of change. Int'l Moose was a net gain organization last year. Makes me question, what are doing that we aren't???? They have mandatory training for their lodge officers and administrators.
- District meetings should be more of forum to exchange ideas on what to improve or discontinue at each individual club, make it more interesting for traveling clubs to take the time to travel there. Loss of interest in meetings stops other clubs from wanting or making time to go to monthly district meetings. A small tidbit of teaching info should be given at these meetings, whether it's a recap of how to fill out reports, or club ideas to bring members and/or their guests in, on a regular basis.

### **No Changes:**

- I believe that the Fraternal Order of Eagles is doing now will allow it to remain a relevant and effective organization for the future.
- Nothing I can think of. Very satisfied with the present Eagles.
- I think if we stay at what we are currently doing we will be just fine.
- I am satisfied with local organization.
- Don't fix anything if it ain't broke. Keep up the good work.

### **Rules & Regulations:**

- They need to change with the times: family is first not the Eagles. Ritual is outdated. Auxiliary symbol is really ancient and embarrassing. Need to make it easier for Auxiliary members to join Aerie. We work together for the same charities. Why make it so hard and have to lose membership for whole year. Not all members have computers these questions should be sent to Aeries & Auxiliary and sent to conventions for discussions.
- Hold Aeries/Auxiliaries accountable for following the Rules & Regulations. Update rituals for meetings, initiations, etc. Grand Aerie, State or District Officers should conduct annual audits/inspections of local Aeries/Auxiliaries.
- The Ritual needs updating. People under the age of 40 don't understand the stilted, outdated language; it's a turnoff for them. The Grand Aerie needs to solicit today's celebrities and leaders to be members. The listing of famous Eagles on the Grand Aerie website includes Billy Ray Cyrus as its youngest entry, and he's 51. The FOE needs to observe a more equal mindset regarding women and communicate this clearly from the top down.
- Implement some way that all Aerie/Auxiliary's have to abide by a set of rules within the local Aerie where this type of gossip mongering is forbidden and have a real form of accountability. If not then this Fraternal Order becomes a breeding ground for Racist to hide in and unfortunately to flourish in. When the trustees

of the Aerie are ineffective the membership can behave in any manner it wants. When the trustees of the Aerie police only the members they dislike and allow other members to get away with bad behavior - the double standard is very discouraging.

- Consider changing structure to an officer only based structure. The officers and trustee structure sets up organizations for failure - 2 different groups trying to lead.

#### **Local Leadership:**

- Change the leadership to people that are trustworthy and honest. This is gaining in last couple of months there are still changes need to be changed.
- I think everything is being handled fine. I just wish our local Auxiliary and Aerie would run more smoothly and our current trustees would learn more about what the Eagles stand for. Everything is their way or no way.
- Trustees have too much power. Auxiliary should have power also. Anything that goes on in the club has have permission from trustees. This is very negative and lopsided.
- Encourage more involvement from members with management and leadership skills. We have a tendency to elect the "nice guy" over what is really needed for officers.
- It's not what the Grand Aerie can do it is what they do in the local level to change things.

#### **Other:**

- Work even more closely with the Auxiliary even though we are two within one and giving the Auxiliary more of a voice in how things are to be run so the Auxiliary doesn't have to wait for the answers of the Aerie but doing things together.
- I think that allowing women to join the Aerie was a bad idea. It has hurt our local Auxiliary a great deal. I also believe that the Aerie needs to make new rules as far as women members are concerned. Our Aerie has a husband and wife that are trustees, I really think there should be rules in the constitution about this.
- I believe that Auxiliary members should be allowed to transfer to their local Aerie without the waiting period that is currently in place. If an Auxiliary is having trouble recruiting members because everyone wants to belong to the Aerie part of the organization it would seem to me the Ladies should be allowed to transfer and help make their local club as strong as it can possibly be maintained.
- Continue our Charity work; I believe that the growth of our organizations, depends on the individual clubs attitude toward new membership and existing membership. They must feel welcome and know that is it ok, and wanted that they volunteer and help make a difference.
- Although I am very proud to be an Auxiliary member, perhaps the time has come to be a co-ed organization in order to survive and be able to continue our varied charitable efforts. The younger people today are joining groups that offer equal opportunities for both sexes and equal opportunities to work together on issues.
- Auxiliary and Aerie should be one club. This is STILL segregation. Bring all Eagles club/Aeries forward. My vote should have just as much weight as a man's. I think our club would run better.
- Never make a commitment similar to the one made to the DRC - that was ridiculous. Let the individual Aerie's choose where they want their donations to go.
- I feel that membership should not be billed for diabetes through our per capita tax. That is unfair!
- Become more proactive with its younger membership or there will be none to come?! Put as much interest into your membership as you do your "diabetes fundraising"! I think it's great to have charitable causes but not to be told what we will raise and give to a "dictated charity!" Within our leadership alone we have 3 breast cancer patients alone in our Auxiliary! We'd like to be able to earmark some of the dollars that "we" work for to that charity alone!!! Because we have a quota!!
- Give the Eagles back to the members and listen to them. We are no longer over a million strong doesn't that tell you something. The members are feed up with the spending of the Grand Aerie.

- People are upset. Mind-set is "Grand" people are better than the "work-horse" regular members. All the Grand cares about is us sending in our money, they don't care about the local level, no training offered. Only time Grand cares about a local is if they may close and lose that income. Hear that frequently. What happened to equality where the Grand is concerned?
- I wish I knew! In my opinion (fraternalism) is dying. I am a member of VFW, American Legion, and all 3 of us are suffering. The young people just don't seem to care. Maybe this is just the opinion of an old and crotchety man but membership in fraternal organizations is suffering. Eagles, VFW, legion, Free Masons, Moose, and Elks (ALL). We ask God bless America and He has. What have we done?
- It's all about involvement at the local level. Sadly many members don't know anything outside their own Aerie. In some cases I've met eagle members that don't even know we have a state organization let alone an international one.
- Go back to home, country & god, leave out the me part! We are a good organization but have lost our way. Everyone needs to go back to the basics.
- Get back to the basics of the Bible on our altars not accepting other Gods in our programs. Get back to family activities and values. People are wanting family programs not just a bar for drunks.

### **The Final Question**

In closing, participants were provided space to list any additional comments, and many members took advantage of this opportunity. Like Question 14, responses were sorted by key word, and are presented by subject matter. This approach provides a cross section of the most frequent issues addressed by survey participants. Categories are presented by number of mentions, with the first being the most discussed.

### **Local Leadership**

- When first joining it was enjoyable, fun now it's more of a war zone. Our state is a smoke free state, but when trustees and their group continue to smoke and the foul language used in the social quarters continues in the presence of Aerie officers and nothing is done. It doesn't say much about our local leaders. Membership is dropping off and I can see more members leaving. Too negative a place. Officers need training and abide by state and local FOE rules.
- Sometimes in the past a few officers forgot that they are supposed to lead by good positive example, not be a poor example for themselves, the Aerie and Eagledom as a whole!
- Well, been a member in good standing for 27 years and have never been asked to be an officer or trustee and my family has done a lot for the Eagles. I feel an investigation on the club needs done and the club manager checked into and the employees as it all a group sticking up for each other and the membership has dropped a lot. Hope someone calls or takes time to talk to members or myself.
- I have seen a decrease in membership in the past 5 years due mainly to local leadership and their lack of knowledge as to what to do. They seem to make up the rules as they go along. I have held every local office and now no longer wish to be as involved as the organization has become cliquish.
- The Fraternal Order of Eagles as a whole is a wonderful organization. It is unfortunate that some of the 'local' and 'district' people let power go to their heads and portray a negative image to the public.

### **Membership**

- There are plenty of members; the existing members need to have a reason to be involved. 2000 members with 200 active people is a click, not a club. If more existing people were involved there wouldn't be such a need for new members all of the time. Let's figure out a way to get everyone involved.

- From what I can tell the FOE is a dying organization. The amount of work that the average American does has to be considered when planning anything. Training & supporting each Aerie's leaders is essential to this effort. Also, the membership is aging and doesn't mesh well with younger people.
- We need to do things to encourage membership. More incentives for members. If you do so much in club free dues for a year. Lifetime members like Moose. More public awareness. People working together for Good of club, most themselves.
- Our membership is down within our District so I would think we need to get some more tools & promos to help us get new, solid members in the door. The economy has really pinched within our area so it's hard for many to find a few extra dollars to join...let alone be able to support their families. We are trying hard to start a Jr. Eagles so we can perhaps start building our membership at a younger age & be able to do more within our schools & local communities but it has been a struggle to put it together so far. We continue to work on it though.
- Members are always rewarded for signing up a large number of members. The problem I see is that I may sign up 20 members this year but how many of them are going to renew their membership next year. I believe that a greater focus should be on retaining our existing members.

### **Finance**

- Keep costs down for conventions. Do we really need to pay for celebrities to draw attendance?
- Drop the NASCAR ads. Help Aeries increase membership through a reduced price for new members, drop initiation fee for a year. We are competing with other clubs that have a \$10 a year membership fee, their membership is going up and ours is going down. I know you won't do any of this. Don't know why I write it.
- The grand spending masses of \$ partying when that \$ could have already paid for the DRC! Somewhere the organization I joined 19 years ago has forgot we are all volunteers working to help others less off than us. And we survived financially but when one hears that those you admire are stealing and some get away with it and have destroyed clubs it makes me sick and now I only give sparingly for I have trust issues with the organization.
- The concept of the FOE is great. It's just not being upheld any longer. Our money is being spent on race cars, hospital floors, etc., instead of the charities. The agents being sent in are not trained and they have friendships of many years and do for them instead of listening to the members.
- Stop committing to large donations that are unsustainable for the long run. Commit only to projects using current available funds not future pledges.

### **Communication**

- It would be helpful if the Grand would answer phone calls or e-mails in a timelier manner.
- As webmaster of 2 websites for my Aerie and my District, I am sorry to see the Local Aerie Website support being discontinued. However, that being said, a stronger support for the Aeries to move in this direction with better guidance so that we cannot only improve communications, community awareness and an opportunity to make money while doing this. Facebook may be the Social Media of the future, but there is not enough control of content with face book and a strong website program is in my opinion a better way to go. I have found a way to move forward and not only keep an active website, but make money in doing so, but my local Aerie is against anything that they cannot see IMMEDIATE response to if you are spending money.
- I have no complaints because whenever I call or need anything I have had good responses and good help from the Grand.
- I feel the Grand Aerie/Auxiliary is trying to reach out to the local members and that needs to continue. More emphasis needs to be made on the fact that the Eagles is a charitable organization and not just a

social organization. Also, the Eagles leadership must emphasize the business aspects of local and state Aeries and Auxiliaries. The economic times we are living in demands this.

- Continue to take these surveys to get the pulse of the membership.

## **Training**

- Perhaps the Grand Aerie should take more time to help those aeries that are in financial trouble. Not by financing them but, by training them in correct procedures of doing business.
- I truly believe in the Fraternal Order of Eagles. I have serious concerns that we are falling apart. Our Aeries need "outside" guidance and training. We are losing Aeries because of the changes in tax laws, and other factors related to business. Generally, most people are NOT qualified to do the Secretary job. This position needs to be one that can be filled from outside and not necessarily an elected position.
- Aeries in trouble need more support from the Grand Aerie, not just an agent that goes in and takes over. I was an officer of a defunct aerie that I believe could have been saved. How many other closed aeries could have been saved?
- As a new Secretary given very little guidance from the previous secretary I feel I was/am forced to learn through trial and error, not good for such important tasks I need to perform. I'd like to see quality, detailed training made available and even a contact list of local and Grand reps to assist in issues typical for the Secretary. Sometimes I feel very lost and uncomfortable in dealing with issues.
- To give more guidance to the incoming state presidents such as what should be expected or customary to bring to the meetings, actual ideas of how to help & instructions for the struggling auxiliary/aerie. We out here are struggling and need guidance from those that have been there many years, we only get one year to try to help.

## **Rules and Regulations**

- The constitution should be re-written in everyday language, not by some lawyer. Each Aerie should have more control of operation. They know what they need to be a positive club.
- I know many will not join because they must give the pledge to honor God and the way it is presented. Our society is changing and we must change with the times to appease other, but we can still choose to worship our way in our own private setting.
- We need to take a look at our rituals, especially the wording. Since we have more women joining the Aerie the wording needs to be changed to be neutral of gender.
- Catch up with times. In the modern days of internet and electronics we should not still be handling so much paper. Expense cash books when spreadsheet can accomplish the same goals, expensive minute books when a 3-ring binder can be just as effective. Sending checks electronically is accepted but has not been updated in the appropriate rules and regulations.
- if there could be true rules that are followed that would control the ugly gossiping - if there could be a true rule that makes people responsible for the injury they cause to someone's reputation it would a great step in making this a fair Order to be a part of.

## **Public Awareness**

- Encourage Aeries and auxiliaries to be more involved with media, newspapers magazines television; most all areas have local magazines that are always looking for articles to include in their media. Encourage aeries/auxiliaries to form media committees; you cannot succeed by computers alone. In all my years in business I came to believe one adage: encourage trust and endowment funds to the FOE. Many older members do not have children nor have grandchildren with successful lifestyles.
- TV ads showing the public more of what we are really about!
- When we talk about the Eagles, not many people have ever heard of us. We need to be proactive and letting people know who we are and all the good we do both local, national and international.

- The public needs to be more aware that we are more than a bingo place and a bar. Most have no idea about the good work we do in the community.
- Make the general public aware of what a Fraternal organization is all about. We cannot continue to operate like a local street bar or club, allowing any one access without becoming a member.

### **Diabetes Research Center**

- When the Grand Aerie made plans for the state Iowa to be the Diabetes Research Center they should have talked it over with the small aeries to see if they could afford this project.
- The Grand is a representative group. You need to remember that. Many projects like the DRC are self-serving to the grand officers. They have and are becoming more like the congress of the US. That means more dysfunction and less support from the local aeries and auxiliaries. While the DRC was wildly popular with the delegates in Louisville, the lukewarm monetary support that has not materialized from the majority of the local aeries and auxiliaries should tell you a lot about how out of touch the grand aerie has become with the needs and issues of the locals
- On a personal level I realize how debilitating diabetes is and can be..And know the commitment that the FOE made but I would love to see that much commitment to other diseases for both children and adults.
- Over the last thirty years I have see us grow and projects come and go. This order has peaked and now seems to be on a downward slide. I am fully behind the DRC project, but feel that it may have cause a split in our great organization.
- After our commitment to the DRC, we need to back the American Red Cross.

### **Other**

- Someone needs to figure out how to better explain the benefits of belonging to the FOE when the message about the Memorial Foundation and what good Eagles do in the local communities doesn't seem to register with the younger population of individuals who are not members.
- The Grand Aeries should instruct the State Aeries to take a more active part in ensuring that the local Aeries are following the requirements of the Charter, Constitution, and bi-laws. Our Rituals should be a thing of beauty and a team effort. With that as a foundation leadership has a place to start to have successful membership drives and retention. Strength is in numbers and numbers will rise when illustrated that the Aeries is something more than a neighborhood bar with cheap drinks.
- We are losing Aeries/Auxiliaries at an alarming rate. We need to find the problems, and fix them more quickly. More focus should be on keeping existing Aeries than starting new ones. We need to have strong Aeries to grow. We need to get back to our roots. I love doing for our charities, but we are spread way too thin. It is too difficult for the locals to support all the Grand Charities. We work hard in a tough economy, we have to make sure our doors stay open, and try to give back to charities...we are struggling to cover everything. All are good charities, but we have way too many.
- We need to get our club to be a FUN place to go and enjoy the fraternalization. I do think our Grand Aerie needs to modernize its ways of operation.
- Eagles need to do more to support Local Charities. E.I. "Meals on Wheels", "Sunrise", (Domestic Violence Shelter.) Food Banks, "Toys for Tots."
- The supply order catalog should be an easier tool to use - prices on everything and pictures. Again, I feel the Auxiliaries should be disbanded and the women should be absorbed into the Aerie. The "good-old boys' mentality" is still alive and well, and at the end of 2012, it should not be. We should be one.
- When the men "give in" to women joining the Aerie, they begin to let the women fill all the chairs and dominate the meetings. Now you have a female Aerie and a female Auxiliary. This does not work. Men feel there is no use to attend meetings or even come down to the hall. We need to be either a "joint unit" or two separate entities. We do so much good that we cannot let petty squabbles and stealing members from one group for the other destroy all the good.

- The worst thing the Grand Aerie ever did was start the Eagle Riders. They have ruined a once thriving Aerie. They have taken over all the local offices. At election they show up in force with all their garb on and intimidate all the older members to the point that they won't come out to vote. The good officers got voted out by them. We know how to run this Aerie but since they have taken over we have lost \$3,000. I can handle them but many others can't so they quit coming here. You guys are worthless. Also we are 600 members less than a year ago.
- Redistrict the zones, especially in Indiana, would mean less driving for meetings.
- Like to see more young people taking part. Get bands started up again. Have breakfast on Sunday and charge \$5-6. Have kitchen open on Fridays & Saturdays at least two times a week. Have food pantry for ones that need it. Food drive twice a month. Holiday dinner for public. Some fish fry's once or twice on Saturdays.
- Issues that need addressing never seem to get any attention. (i.e., Meetings: The numerous Aerie meetings required per month is ridiculous especially if you're an Officer. Two General Membership meetings, four/five Trustee meetings and one Aerie/Aux. Officer meeting; not to mention any Special or Standing Committee meetings. This is just one example of why members don't want to get involved with the Aerie. A person of working age and not retired; finds it is very difficult to come up with all this time required attending meetings and volunteering for other events and activities; another example is the rituals of the meetings themselves. When was the last time anyone seriously reviewed these antiquated contexts and procedures?
- Let's continue with the good work that we have done through the years and strive to be receptive to ideas and changes that, while consistent with our core principles, have the capacity to expose our order to a younger generation of future Eagles in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them. Just because "we've always done it that way" does not make it the correct way any longer.