


The Avenger

8-2012

The Avenger - August-December 2012

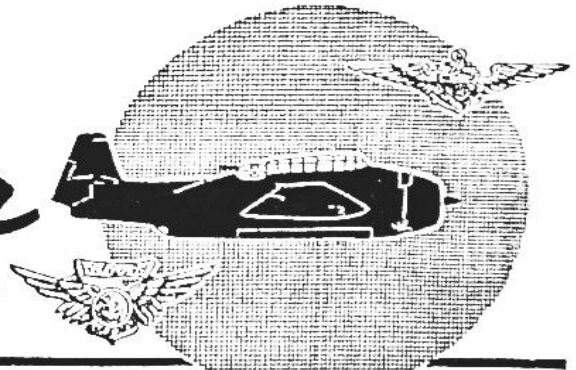
Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Museum

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The Avenger

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION - FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



Educating . Preserving . Honoring the Heroes

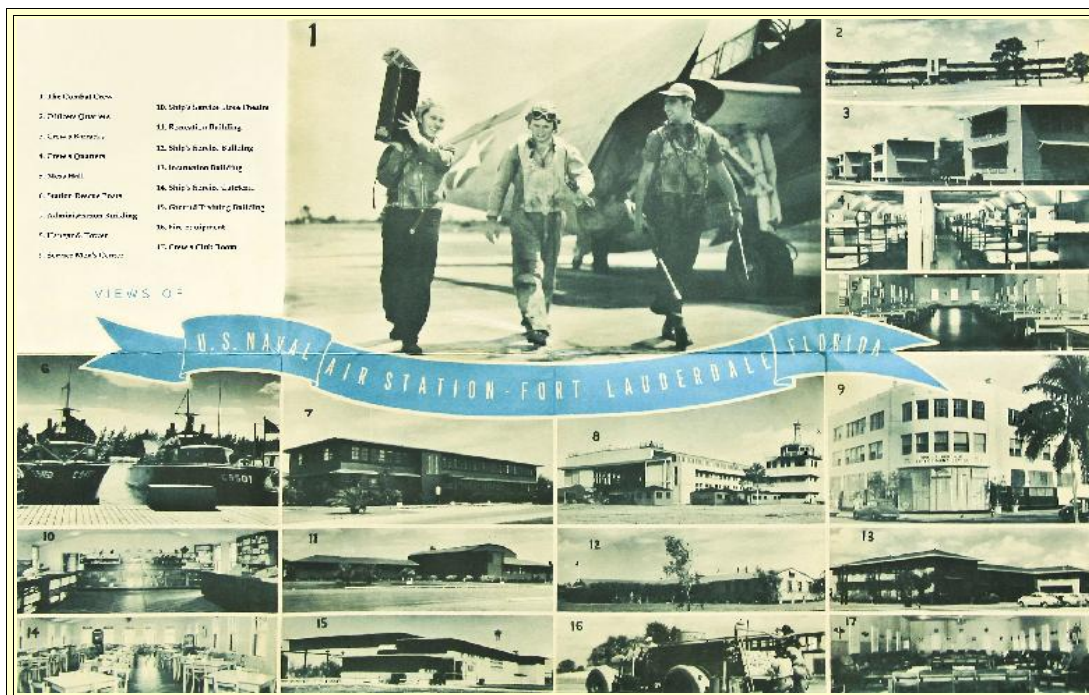
Newsletter of the NAS Fort Lauderdale Museum

August – December 2012

Website: www.nasflmuseum.com Giftshop: zazzle.com/nasfortlauderdale E-mail: nasft.lauderdalemuseum@netscape.com

ATTENTION: IN ADDITION TO (954) 359-4400 WE HAVE ADDED A NEW PHONE NUMBER: (754) 300-9259

INTRODUCING OUR ONLINE-ONLY EXHIBITS!



Take an exclusive Virtual Tour of our *Online-Only Exhibits* by visiting our website:

nasflmuseum.com/online-only-exhibits.html

On Exhibit Now

- Aviator's Flight Diaries of WWII
- Visual Exhibit of Flight 19
- Amelia Earhart: *Our Poetic Tribute*

Coming Soon

- Nose Art of WWII
- Memories of Flight 44
- The Art of Bob Jenny
- The WAVES participation at NASFL
- WWII Ship Silhouette Identification Training

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Robert C. Scott, Eugene H. Secord, William A. Davids, Richard & Anne Blattner, Donald & Hellen Fallon, Gordon Hartman & Family, Daniel A. Feirman, Michael Vlasak, and Lifetime members George F. Weixler and Mark Macek & Family!

AUGUST LUNCHEON at LAUDERDALE YACHT CLUB

Our Guest Speaker was Historian **Karl Kahn** from the Military History Research Foundation- a Florida non-profit corporation. <http://www.mhrf.us/> His team brought two WWII Willys MB Jeep restored by his Foundation. To view more photos from this Luncheon: nasflmuseum.com/1/category/luncheons/1.html



Gloria Epstein, Donald Prichard and WWII veteran David Epstein



WWII veteran Architect Paul Bradley



Historian Anthony Atwood



Members Angela Piraino & Jordane Morgan

NEWEST EXHIBIT DONATIONS

- **William Davids** donated a *Projected Location* Map of Flight 19, and a vintage commemorative coin of the USS Enterprise. In addition, Mr. Davids began to work on an Archeology project for the Museum.
- **Gary Kilbride** donated military books, videos, patches and a model ship of the USS Forrestal.
- **Don Fallon Sr.**, donated a large collection of miniature vintage airplane models that he built.
- **George Lord** donated his Flight Suit, and Flight Bag which he used while he was stationed at NASFL.
- **George F. Weixler** donated WWII *Welcome Home* memorabilia and a WWII Japanese flag.

DOCUMENTARIES IN THE WORKS



Thalassa France 3, one of the oldest running documentary TV series in France which focuses entirely on the sea and presented by Georges Pernoud, filmed on location at the Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Museum for a documentary on Flight 19. Jon F. Myhre, aircraft expert in Sebastian, FL, was also interviewed by the production team. Mr Myhre wrote the book *Discovery of Flight 19* after his 30 years of research. Also the **Discovery Channel** and the **National Geographic** filmed at the Museum for their own respective documentaries about WWII Avenger Aircraft, and Flight 19. The date for each broadcast will be announced on our Blog.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

THANK YOU to Broward Teacher **Angela Piraino**, University of Florida student **Lauren Crawford**, and High School students **Nicholas Vasil** and **Anthony Alberico** for their outstanding participation! Many thanks also to Ray Rivera and his son Larry, John Casey, Richard Haddad, Jordane Morgan, John & Minerva Bloom, Dorothy Riser, David Epstein, Diane Halloran, Alexis Peña, Forrest King, and the Navy Reservists, for their helpful support!



Angela Piraino



Lauren Crawford



Nicholas Vasil



Anthony Alberico

NASFL VETERANS ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION



We invited five WWII Veterans living in the area of Fort Lauderdale for a Round Table discussion at the Link Trainer Building #8 (our current Museum). These Veterans served at the NAS Fort Lauderdale base during the period of 1942–1946. **George Lord** was a Gunnery Instructor; **Henry Torres Sr.**, had been in charge of the Machine Shop at the Beach Target Range, **Allan McElhiney** was stationed aboard the USS Asheville at Port Everglades. The Asheville tested experimental weapons for NASFL. **David Epstein** who got to train with George H.W. Bush, would drive a Jeep Willys loaded with parachutes from NAS Key West to NAS Fort Lauderdale. And **David White** a Senior Flight Instructor, was part of the search for Flight 19. We received many interesting answers, and learned from their recollections. We're going to try to do more small sessions with veterans and civilians that served at this base. If you were part of the [Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale](#), please feel free to [contact](#) the Museum, so we can record your history. Thank you!

MEMBER NEWS

Our deepest condolences to members David White and Paul Bradley for the loss of their beloved wives, and to the family of Capt. James E. Westfall who was a Flight Instructor at NASFL.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: We will not have a **Luncheon** for the rest of this year. We're planning the next Luncheon for January or February 2013. We're organizing the **Flight 19 Memorial Ceremony** which will take place Wednesday, December 5, at 1:00pm. We're also organizing our **Open House Party** for Saturday, December 22 from 12:00 to 5:00pm. Both events will take place at the Museum.

NEW! Capt. John Payne Memorial LIBRARY and RESEARCH CENTER



The storage room in the NE corner of the building was cleaned out, re-carpeted and painted, and new window treatments were provided by member **Dorothy Riser**. The project was led by **Richard Haddad**, with volunteers **Ray Rivera**, **John Casey**, **John Bloom** and **Anthony Alberico**, including Navy Reservists who moved all the bookshelves and books into this space to create our new Library/Research Center. This created space in the hallway, to include our Gift Shop! The large hallway is our next project, and will consist of removing old carpet to expose the original wood flooring—which will be restored.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED !!

We are developing several **Committees** that could attract more volunteers. You don't need to be at the Museum to help. We understand that traveling to and fro can be complicated. You can help once a week, or once a month. Your help is much appreciated. **Some projects can be done from the convenience of your home and schedule. "Flexible" means that the project can be accomplished via phone, e-mail, public relations or file sharing websites. "At Museum" means the volunteer needs to be at the building. If you are interested in a particular area, please contact Minerva Bloom for detailed information of each project: (954) 205-1098 or e-mail at minerva_bloom@yahoo.com**

1. Flight 19 Memorial Ceremony Committee (Flexible)
2. Committee for "National Register of Historic Places" Plaque (Flexible)
3. Organizing the *Open House* party during the holidays (At Museum)
4. Luncheon Committee (Flexible)
5. Janitorial (Physical work, at least once a month at Museum)
6. Restoration Projects: Hallways and Bathrooms (this requires physical work, at Museum).
7. Creating a Volunteer and Docent Manual (Flexible)
8. Organizing Tours (Flexible, but need to be at Museum on tours dates)
9. Inventory and catalog of Books and Photographs (At Museum)
10. Organizing Online-Only Exhibits (Flexible)
11. Online Media Management (Flexible)
12. Creating a Donation Program (Flexible)
13. Grant Writing & Public Relations (Flexible)
14. Committee for Grand Opening (Flexible)



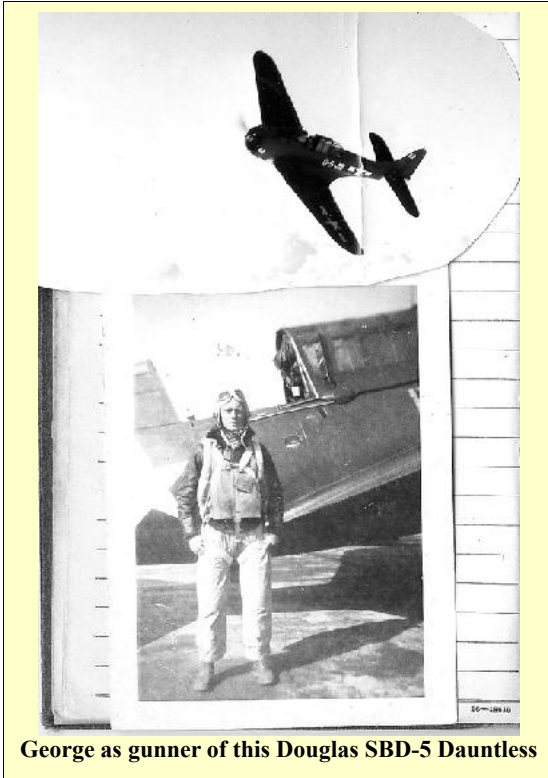
PEMBROKE PINES HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Pembroke Pines Historical Museum is presenting a Continuing Exhibition of World War II and 65th Anniversary of North Perry Airport. North Perry Field was an outlying field of Miami Naval Air Station in Opa Locka, Dade County. The wagon wheel layout of the field was designed to train pilots of the Grumman Wildcat planes for carrier landings. It was completed in 1943 and operated until 1945. Eventually, it was turned over to Broward County for use as a general aviation airport. This Museum is looking for photos and stories of Pembroke Pines residents who are WWII veterans, and their families, to preserve and include in their exhibit. For information contact Director Gerry Witoshynsky

(954)986-5049 or e-mail gerywito@comcast.net Website: www.ppines.com/history/

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

PFC George F. Weixler - USMC WWII



George as gunner of this Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless

George F. Weixler from Ridgewood, Long Island, was a Radio and Search Gunner from the United States Marine Corps, serving during WWII on a Douglas SBD-5 Dauntless aircraft. George volunteered at NAS Miramar in San Diego to be a replacement gunner. He was sent to El Centro, CA for gunnery training, and then back to Miramar. He shipped out to the South Pacific, leaving from San Francisco on a troop ship going under the Golden Gate Bridge. Soon after, he was assigned to Marine Scout Bomber Squadron 243 (VMSB-243), a dive bomber Squadron which was activated for missions in the Philippines. This Squadron known as the "Flying Goldbricks" fought also in the Battle of Bougainville and saw action against Japanese forces in the Islands area at Noumea, New Caledonia, Espiritu Santos, Efate Island, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Munda, New Georgia, Emirau, Bismarck Archipelago, Hollandia, New Guinea, Luzon, Mindanao, Seadler Bay and Los Negros. They were deactivated shortly after the end of the war on September 25, 1945.

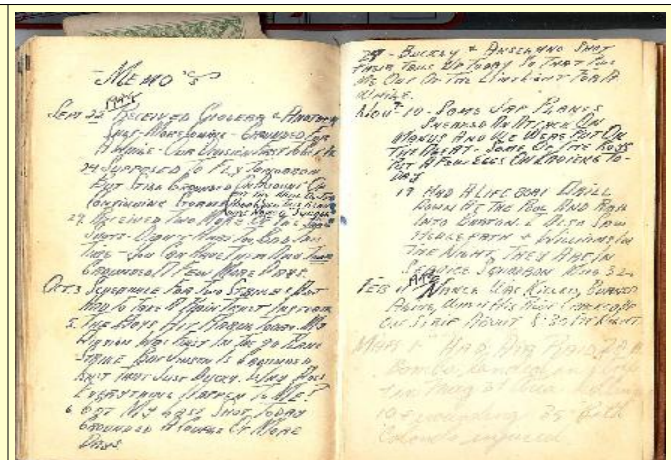
After the war, in 1948, George met Agnes Muriel Beach ("Muriel"), who was part of a military family. 3 months later, they would marry. Soon after, the couple would settle in the

state of New York to raise three children. George went on to work at the Long Island Lighting Company for 34 years; and then retired and lived in Bethpage, Long Island close to the Grumman Aircraft Manufacturing Plant. In 2002, George and Muriel moved to Fort Lauderdale Florida. His wife passed away recently. George has eight grandchildren of whom he is very proud. One of them is currently in Beirut, Lebanon working among the community in behalf of better relations between the United States and Lebanon. George F. Weixler will soon be a great-grandfather.

George kept an [Aviator's Diary](#). Its pages are on exhibit at our website. In it, there are photographs, foreign currency, and a feather which reminded him of Native Americans like the Navaho "Code Talkers" helping with the war effort. He also kept records of missions and enemy raids, which sadly would injure or kill some of his fellow marines. George was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and several Air Medals.



George F. Weixler (bottom row second from right), with fellow Marines, as part of Squadron 243 (VMSB-243). Image taken while stationed in the Philippines. Circa 1945.



Writes about "sneak attack" by Japanese and being put on alert and "Nance was killed, burned alive when his pilot cracked up on strip about 8:30 at night." Writes "Air Raid at 2:00am by Japanese. 10 casualties and 35 wounded, and both Colonels injured."

MEMBER PROFILE



Fireman First Class USNR WWII

Henry Torres Sr. **Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale**

**In charge of the Machine Shop
at the Fort Lauderdale Beach Target Range**

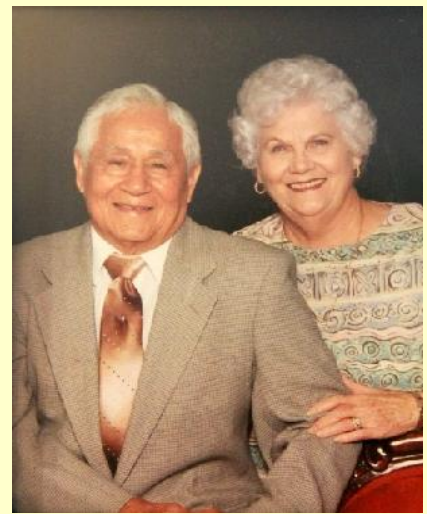
Henry Torres Sr., was born in Los Angeles, California, the 6th of 10 children. At 22, Henry was working at a US Defense Plant, making aircraft parts. He also had experience as a welder and machine operator. He enlisted in the Navy in 1942, and because of his experience with mechanics and tool making, he was awarded Fireman First Class rank.

Henry attended boot camp at the San Diego Naval Base and then went onto the Naval Air Station in Norman Oklahoma where he trained in Aviation Mechanics for 6 months before transferring to the Weapons Department at NAS Cecil Field Yellow Water Facility. He trained at this facility for a month then got assigned to the NAS Fort Lauderdale and remained at this base from 1943 to 1945.

While at the NASFL, Henry had to learn a specialized syllabus to fly with pilots, and learn to shoot turret guns geared specifically for Avenger Aircraft. He flew almost everyday, then he would go to target practice at the beach range. Later on, Henry went onto setting and managing the Machine Shop which was located at the Fort Lauderdale beach Target Range. While at the NASFL, Henry met Margaret Jarvis, a local girl. They got married in the Auditorium of the NASFL. Soon after, the Navy offered Henry the opportunity for further education and Henry and Margaret set off to Mary State Teacher's College in Mary, Kentucky, where he was qualified as a Pilot. To continue with training, the couple left then for Athens, Georgia. However, the war ended, and after Henry was discharged, they decided to return to Fort Lauderdale. Henry began working as an auto mechanic and electrician, and then started his own auto mechanics business which he had for 40 years. Henry and Margaret had three children. The oldest son Henry Torres Jr., joined the Army Aircore and served in Vietnam, then settled in Fort Lauderdale next to his parents home. Margaret passed away two years ago. Henry Sr., has six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



Henry Torres Jr., Army Aircore, Vietnam



HONORING THE HEROINES



Captain Jeanne Grushinski joined fellow veteran [Ray Rivera](#) from the USS Bunkerhill at the NASFL Museum, where they shared stories and reminiscence about their service in the Navy.

Captain Jeanne Grushinski a Registered Nurse from Stirling New Jersey, was working at Bellevue Hospital, one of the biggest city hospitals in the USA— when she decided to join the Navy in 1942 at the age of 24. She felt she had to do something to help, as the war had touched her close to home. Her family is from Lodz, Poland, a country that was ravaged by Nazi Germany. Jeanne was transferred to her first station at a US Navy Hospital in Philadelphia, when the Battle of Guadalcanal was taking place. This hospital treated returning wounded sailors. After 6 months in Philadelphia, she transferred to NAS Pensacola where she remained for 1 1/2 years. She then got orders for San Leandro US Navy Hospital, where she would experience a more intense work load with total patient and psychiatric care units. The war ended when Jeanne was in San Leandro. Soon after, she received orders to set for the Pacific Islands with a small team of nurses and corpsmen, to provide post-war relief. They made their way from station to station until they got to Okinawa, where the team would take charge of a makeshift Fleet Hospital.

As Jeanne remembers: *"The Hospital was between Yonabaru and Naha. Naha was razed to the ground. The nurses quarters was fenced in and we had marine guards patrolling, as well as flood lights all night. We slept in butler huts, which had one bed on each corner. We would take care of native civilians and American military. The corpsmen (male nurses), would bring in the wounded. We women couldn't go into any dangerous areas. We had a limited staff so we sometimes had to go 4 weeks straight on night duty. We stayed in Okinawa for a couple of months, then we were sent off to Guam where we waited for transportation, before making our way to Saipan. While in Saipan, we lived in quonset huts and it was a little more relaxed. It was not a Naval Hospital, but more of a US Navy Dispensary, where a staff of 4 would take care of 10 to 20 people at a time."*

Jeanne related the day when a hurricane hit the area; and how they evacuated to the hills and caves with their patients in tow. They all made it through, safe and sound. She also remembers an unsettling experience with a patient: she discovered that the man in front of her was a Japanese soldier. She had taken care of Japanese civilians before, but this was different. Here it was, the enemy at her hands. Emotions overwhelmed her, but she reconciled with the fact that she was in service to make people feel better. She went on performing her job. After a year in Saipan she returned home to the USA. In 1947, Jeanne got married to a Navy pharmacist from New York. She then had to retire because as she says *"back then, no women could stay in the military if married."* Nine years later, Jeanne went back into the reserves and stayed in the Navy until 1978 when she became a Captain. Jeanne received the American Theater Ribbon medal, the Asiatic Pacific Theater medal and the WWII Ribbon. Captain Jeanne Grushinski lives now in Sunrise, Florida.

SENATOR JOHN McCAIN VISITS THE NASFL MUSEUM

Senator John McCain visited the NASFL Museum on Thursday, October 25th. Senator McCain spoke about Veterans issues, mingled with the crowd of about 150 people, and then signed the 25x7 aviation mural "On Final Approach" by Bob Jenny. Several WWII and other war Veterans attended the event. You can view more photos from this event, on our Blog: nasflmuseum.com/our-blog.html



Signing "On Final Approach" mural



David Epstein, David White & Ben Langley



Jordane Morgan & Richard Haddad



Tim Davis, McCain and Dr. John Bloom



McCain and Producer Ron Lowther



McCain and Toni Kissel



Founding member of NASFL Historical Association Ben Langley and wife Pat



Senator McCain & Founder of NASFL Historical Association Allan McElhiney

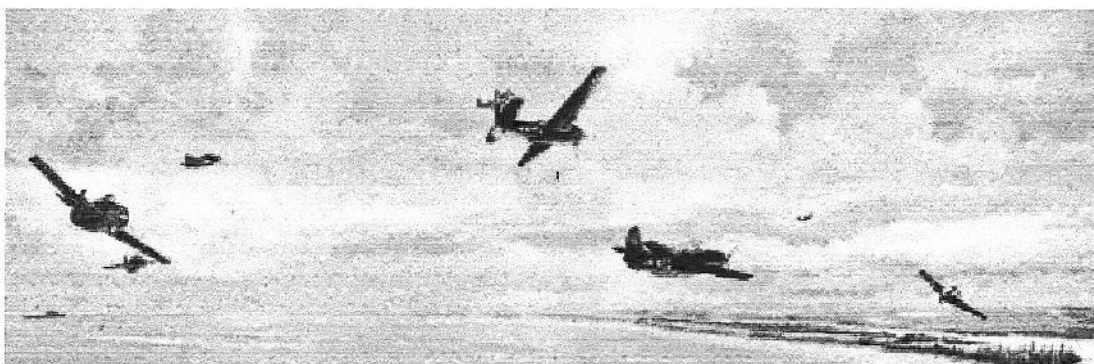


Diane Halloran

Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Museum
4000 West Perimeter Road, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315

Newsletter Staff: Allan McElhiney, Minerva Bloom & Debbie Hamilton

ATTENTION: IN ADDITION TO (954) 359-4400 WE HAVE ADDED A NEW PHONE NUMBER: (754) 300-9259



Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale Museum

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MUSEUM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please fill in your information where applicable

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

Zip Code: _____ TEL: _____ E-mail: _____

I wish to apply for (check-mark the appropriate space)

STANDARD MEMBERSHIP \$35 (1 Year) _____

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP \$60 (Members of one family (1 year) _____

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP \$100 (1 year) _____

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP \$10 (1 Year) _____

Save Money Apply for:

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP \$250 (One time charge) _____

CHARITABLE DONATION (Tax deductible) _____

If you have any questions call: (954) 359-4400

Make checks payable to: **NAS Fort Lauderdale Historical Association or NASFLHA (for short)**

Mail to: 4000 W. Perimeter Rd. Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315

OFFICE USE ONLY

ADD TO: NASFL Roster _____ E-mail List _____ Payment: Check # _____ Cash _____

LABELS:

Reg. Address _____

Luncheon _____

Newsletter _____