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## From the Gavel



Dearest Members,



And just like that (imagine the snapping of my fingers) the world is different than it was just a few weeks ago... and it is going to change everything... from now on.

Sounds pretty dire... this COVID-19... because it is. But look around every day at the positive things people and organizations are doing. Have you seen the news, have you heard about what our brilliant Corps of Engineers are doing? These are OUR SPOUSES and friends. OUR HEROS. Quoting from a news source The Hill, "The Army Corps of Engineers is eyeing at least 114 facilities to potentially serve as hospitals to treat patients during the coronavirus pandemic." LTG Todd Semonite told reporters: "The Army Corps has assessed 81 of the locations — including hotels, sports arenas, convention centers, college dormitories and fairgrounds — that could either accept patients who have contracted COVID-19 or treat non-infected individuals in order to free up overwhelmed hospitals." Essayons!!!!

It's gonna take everyone to pitch in and do what they can during this time. That includes our organization and its members. As a club, after assessing the situation around the U.S. and the world, we've decided to cancel this year's AEMA and GKM Awards Luncheon. NOT the Awards; just the luncheon. Our Awards Committee, headed by Laura Putnam and Kara Anderson, is at this moment pouring over all the applications and determining who the Awardees will be based on the preset criteria. I am looking forward to our next virtual board meeting on April 1st to hear the recommendations.

Our Vice President, Mary Alice, made the right call and has cancelled all of our outings for the foreseeable future.

We've also cancelled our annual bake sale at Knollwood. So I was thinking we may not be able to go to Knollwood to shower people with our baking prowess but I feel each of us can do something. I challenge each and every member to send out one or two handwritten notes or cards to someone you know who may be alone during this time. Let's shower these people with a little love this month and show that we care!!!!

Vanessa Joly, our Nominations Chair, has been super busy and with great results! See her article about elections in this Castle Gram.

We just don't know what May will bring. We are in this together! Stay home and save a life.

Warmly,  
Launa  
President 2019-2020  
[president@armyengineerspouses.com](mailto:president@armyengineerspouses.com)



*Keeping our Worldwide Engineer Family Connected  
Through the Years and Across the Miles*




LATEST UPDATE  
**CORONAVIRUS**

Like all Americans, military families want to know what steps they need to take to keep themselves healthy and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the National Military Family Association, we're committed to ensuring military families have the information they need to ensure their well-being.



[Read More](#)

**AESC 2019-2020  
Executive Board**

**ELECTED BOARD:**

**President**

Launa Klimowicz-Brown

**Vice President**

Mary Alice Jakso

**Secretary**

Kimberly Gibbs

**Treasurer**

Basia Kent

**AEMA Chairperson**

Laura Putnam

**VOLUNTEERS:**

**AEMA Scholarships**

Kara Anderson

**Castle Boutique**

Betsy Rayfield

**Castle Gram Editor**

Susan Wright

**Circulation**

Sheila Kelly

**Corresponding Secretary**

Shannon Luzzatto

**Fairfax Liaison**

Kay Burlin

**Historian**

Michelle Funkhouser

**Hospitality & Reservations**

Lucy Fratello & Ria Etheridge

**Knollwood Bake Sale**

Priscilla Noah

**Knollwood Liaison**

Ann Kem

**Membership**

Jackie Caldwell & Laura Putnam

**Nominations**

Vanessa Joly

**Nominations Emeritus**

Bette Meuleners

**Parliamentarian**

Michelle Tyler

**Publicity/Facebook:**

Carolyn Hudson

**Service/Welfare**

Brenda Schultze

**Webmaster**

Terri Stevens

**HONORARY ADVISORS:**

**Honorary President**

Connie Semonite

**Honorary Vice President**

Kim Houston

**SES Spouse Advisor**

Jackie Caldwell

## AESC 2020-2021 PROJECTED SLATE OF OFFICERS

The 2020-2021 Slate of Officers for the Army Engineer Spouses' Club is as follows:

President: Mary Alice Jakso

Vice President: Lois Cook

Secretary: Brenda Schultze

Treasurer: Basia Kent

AEMA Chairperson: Laura Putnam

Members may still nominate additional individuals for each position.

Mail in nominations must be post marked no later than April 24, 2020.

If there are any new nominations for the elected positions, they will be listed with the nominees above in the May Castle Gram (due out May 1, 2020) and also in an email to the entire AESC membership.

To make a nomination from the floor:

Contact our Nominations Chairman:

by email at [nominations@armyengineerspouses.com](mailto:nominations@armyengineerspouses.com) or

by mail to Army Engineer Spouses' Club (Nominations)

P.O. Box 6332

Alexandria, VA 22306-6332.

You need to state, "I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of \_\_\_\_\_."

You must be a member in good standing to nominate or vote in this process and you must have received permission from the nominee to be considered.

Voting will take place by email and mail beginning May 10, 2020. Mail in ballots (available in the May Castle Gram and in an email to the membership) must be post marked no earlier than Friday, May 8th and no later than Saturday, May 16th.

Results of the election will be included in the June 2020 Castle Gram.

In addition, an email with the results will be sent to the entire AESC Membership.

Thanks for participating in AESC's election process.

Vanessa Joly/Bette Meuleners

Michelle Tyler

AESC Nominations 2019-2020

AESC Parliamentarian 2019-2020

[nominations@armyengineerspouses.com](mailto:nominations@armyengineerspouses.com)

[parliamentarian@armyengineerspouses.com](mailto:parliamentarian@armyengineerspouses.com)





## SUMMARY OF AESC ELECTION PROCESS

The membership of AESC, as you know, is varied - not only by the eligibility requirements, but also by the geographic locations of the membership. We *truly do* span the globe.

As your membership with its privileges is important to the Executive Board, we developed a virtual voting system to assure that all members were included in the decisions made for the organization. Roberts Rules of Order for Voting was the guiding framework for our virtual voting procedure.

A summary of the procedure for election of your Executive Board is as follows:

Nominations Chairman surveys membership for volunteers/recommendations to fill the Executive Membership Positions

Nominations Chairman presents PROJECTED SLATE to the serving Executive Board for their voting (approval of slate) by April meeting

Nominations Chairman calls for further nominations from the floor in April after publishing the PROJECTED SLATE

FINAL SLATE is presented in ballot form in May CastleGram for general membership voting\*\*

If a MAJORITY of the membership responds NAY, the ballot is reworked and the successive vote will be on each position with the ballots collected and tallied.

If a MAJORITY of the membership responds and casts an AYE vote, the ballot is approved by the general membership as submitted.

Election Results Presented in June Castle Gram

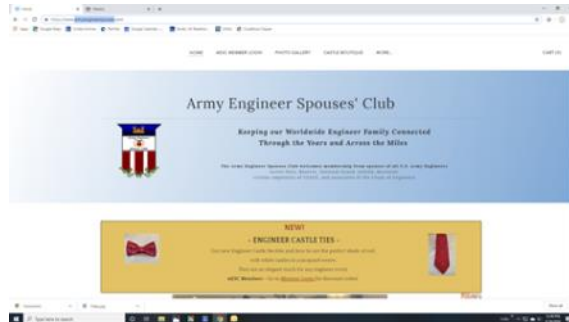
\*\*Consensus voting is used in this general membership voting. While a ballot is published (in print and/or email), only a NAY vote need be returned.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this process, your privilege.

Michelle Tyler

AESC Parliamentarian 2019-2020





Check out our new and improved website, featuring a streamlined design and user-friendly format. You'll find information on upcoming events, Castle Boutique coupons, fundraising and volunteer opportunities, archived Castle Grams, and lots of fun photos.

<https://www.armyengineerspouses.com>



The online Castle Boutique now accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. The PayPal option is available as always, so take a look at the beautiful jewelry, one of a kind souvenirs, and lovely gifts.

Happy Shopping!



**June 1**

<https://www.armyengineerspouses.org>



The AESC URL will transition from **www.armyengineerspouses.com** to **www.armyengineerspouses.org**. (Don't worry, if you enter the old address, you'll be redirected to the new website.) Nonprofit websites such as ours generally use the ".org" extension, so this is another step toward modernizing the AESC website and increasing our exposure to our Engineer family, near and far.



**A great big THANK YOU to Terri Stevens,  
our AESC webmaster!**

**What an awesome job you are doing!!**



# Army Corps of Engineers to Convert Hotels, Dorms to Hospital Units amid Outbreak



*Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, 54th Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, speaks to contractors at one of three barrier construction sites near Lukeville, Ariz., Sept. 10, 2019. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/Carlos Lazo)*

In a dramatic sign of the coronavirus' anticipated toll, the [Army](#) Corps of Engineers is planning to convert vacant hotels, college dormitories and other facilities into intensive care wards with tens of thousands of makeshift hospital beds, first in New York but probably expanding to California and other states.

That announcement Friday at a Pentagon news conference by **Lt. Gen Todd T. Semonite, commander of Army Corps of Engineers**, marks an escalation of the U.S. military role. Already it is providing 2,000 ventilators and 5 million protective masks and preparing to dispatch hospital ships on both coasts. Governors are calling up thousands of National Guard troops.

[READ MORE](#)



WW II

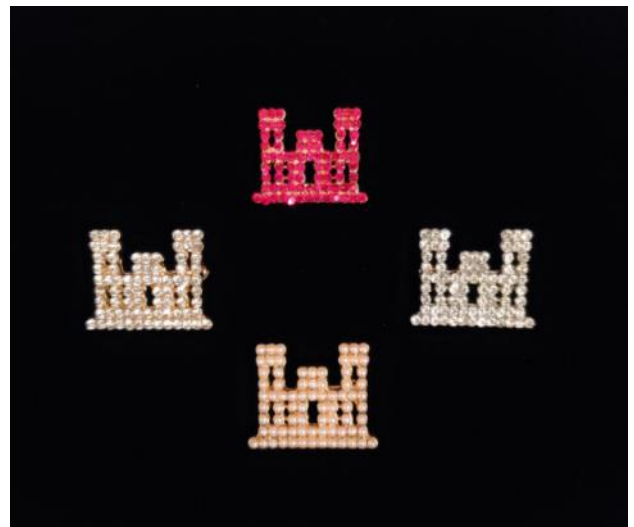


2020 CONVID-19

# Castle Boutique

Our new castle pins are the perfect amount of bling and elegance. The red rhinestones pin pops on a black background, while the pearl pin brings a more subtle look that can be casual or dressy. The crystal rhinestones add just the right amount of sparkle set in either a gold or silver setting. Each pin measures at one inch wide. Find it and other great items now at the [Castle Boutique](#)

**April Member  
Online Special:  
20% off all pins!  
Use code Bling2020  
at checkout**



Make sure you like the Army Engineer Spouses Club Facebook page and be on the lookout for a pin giveaway!



# Welfare and Services

## AEA Envelope Stuffing

Thank you to all the fabulous ladies who came out to help stuff envelopes for AEA on March 10th

We were provided a working lunch by AEA and a generous donation of \$500 to go toward our AEMA awards.

I enjoyed spending the day with: Connie Semonite, Launa Klimowicz-Brown,

Shannon Heitkamp, Mary Alice Jakso, Amy Rhoads, Betsy

Rayfield, Basia Kent, and Stephanie Sattinger

It was the last time I was together with a group of people!! So, I really enjoyed it, except for repeatedly rubbing hand sanitizer into my many paper cuts.

—Brenda Schultze



## From the Honor Flight Website:

### !! FLIGHT ALERT !!

Updated March 18, 2020

Today, we announced that the Honor Flight Network will postpone all trips through May 31, 2020 in response to the growing health concerns over the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. The Board of Directors made this difficult decision following an alert issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which advised that adults over the age of 60 are particularly at risk of infection and should avoid all non-essential air travel. Unfortunately, the vast majority of our veterans fall into the CDC's high-risk category. Many of our veterans also live in community settings, such as retirement homes or assisted living facilities, where the risk of spreading illness is extremely high.

Honor Flight trips are a once in a lifetime opportunity for America's veterans, but their safety is our highest priority. We will continue to assess if any extension needs to be made beyond May 31 as more information is provided by health authorities.



# Welfare and Services

## YANKEE CANDLE® | FUNDRAISING

AESC is partnering with **Yankee Candle® Fundraising** to help achieve our goal this year. They are the world's #1 candle brand and they offer a wide range of premium candles, fragrances, and décor items at a very wide range of prices.

But the most important thing to know is that **35% percent of every sale goes to AESC!**

To help support us, click on the link below and order items online. Your purchases ship directly to your home and our group receives profit on each and every sale. **This promotion is good through Wednesday, July 8, 2020.**

<https://www.yankeecandlefundraising.com/store.htm>

If this link fails to take you to the shopping site, don't worry. Simply type in [www.yankeecandlefundraising.com](http://www.yankeecandlefundraising.com) and enter your **Group Number 999972278** in the "Start Shopping" box there. Then you can shop for the same Yankee Candle Fundraising items and your purchases will still benefit our

Specials!! Free Shipping!! And more!! Yankee Candle Fundraising runs **periodic specials**. Watch for the announcements of these specials on our Facebook and in our Circulation emails.



Now over 500 items online!









**First Friday Story Time**  
**Fort Belvoir MWR**  
 1 May @ 10:30  
 5 Jun @ 10:30

[Fort Belvoir Wine, Suds, and Cider Tour](#)  
 6 Dates · May 2 - Oct 10  
 Taylor Rd, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

## Washington D.C. Trying to Keep Crowds From Cherry Blossoms Over COVID-19



WASHINGTON — As signature cherry blossom trees go through peak bloom in the nation’s capital, officials in the District of Columbia are resorting to mass street closures to keep large crowds away in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.



[Read More](#)



“In the midst of this crisis, we must not only pray-though we must most fervently pray-we must also work. There are many things to be done and it’s going to be up to us to do them.”  
 ~ **Albert Mohler**

## Things to Do in The DMV: Stay Home Edition

[DC](#)

[Maryland](#)

[Virginia](#)



The spouses of Europe District were fortunate to get in one final coffee before the restrictions came in place for coronavirus. We celebrated all things green, welcomed a new spouse to our coffee group, and said farewell to another. We are truly better off for the friendships that we've made, especially in times like these.



We're all doing our best here. Fortunately, at the district headquarters here in Wiesbaden, DODEA is providing virtual schooling. It's been met with great reviews so far. We know how fortunate we are that kids can continue with school. The borders may be closed, flights canceled, our annual District birthday ball also canceled, and a million other European adventures, but we're all doing our best and trying to keep our spirits up.

*On behalf of the spouses of Europe District, we wish you safety and peace.*





March saw the JED team say goodbye to the Japan Self Defense Forces 4th Engineer Brigade Commander, COL Amako and his wife Ai. Thankfully, we were allowed to attend the ceremony as it had been significantly scaled down to due cautionary measures put in place for the coronavirus. Interestingly, the JSDF has two ceremonies for changes of command. The first honors the outgoing commander and then there is a second ceremony on a different day for the incoming commander. We were not invited to the incoming commander's ceremony as it was a closed ceremony. When the time allows for us to have visitors, we'll invite the new commander and his wife over to the house for dinner. COL Amako's new job is at the Engineer School in Japan, about three hours or so away from Tokyo. Ai will return to work for the Japanese government at Ichigaya (the "Japanese Pentagon") and will be in Tokyo with their two kids.



Saying goodbye to the Amakos



COL Amako



4th Engineer Brigade

The annual Camp Zama open post Cherry Blossom Festival was cancelled this year. However, spring has not been cancelled and the Cherry Blossoms are near full bloom. All around Camp Zama and the surrounding area, the blossoms are out. This is the time of year where the Japanese have "hanami" or picnics under the blossoms, sharing food, drink, and good times. Tokyo's mayor has asked people to refrain from doing that this year, however many people have flocked to traditional hanami sites to view the blossoms. As such, Tokyo saw a spike in coronavirus cases the week of 23 March. *Prayers for all of us during these challenging and uncertain times.*



Blossoms around Camp Zama



Cherry Blossoms on Zama



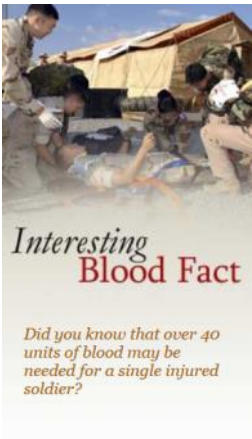


# Schofield Barracks, Hawaii



We have not done anything as a spouses' group since the COVID-19 outbreak. However I can highlight the 84th and their amazing blood drive they did this past week! "Even in these stressful times, the Never Daunted Battalion rises to

support our fellow warfighters. Fantastic job on day 1 of 3 in supporting the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) get much needed blood to support the COVID-19 response and to send downrange.












Also in March, the 130th Engineer Brigade Soldiers volunteered their time and service to keep Hawaii beautiful, during the Adopt-a-Highway event Friday the 27th.



# APRIL

# 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 AESC Board Mtg - 10a ZOOM ONLY 	2	3	4
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 	13	14	15 Knollwood Bake Sale   MOVED TO JULY 15th	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 	23	24	25  <a href="#">Operation Deploy Your Dress</a>
26  AEMA Awardee luncheon	27	28  Cookie Decorating Class 10:30-1:30	29	30		

## SAVE THE DATE

First Wednesday of the Month—AESC Board Meeting  
10am @ The Fairfax

May 1—National Museum of American History @ 10:00—  
**CANCELLED**

June 10—Army Support Museum, Ft. Belvoir 9:30—12  
pm—**CANCELLED**

July 31—152nd Annual U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Castle Ball

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS PULLS UFO OUT OF DC WATERS NEAR REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, drift removal crews pulled a small alien spacecraft out of waters at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac rivers early this morning as part of their day-to-day mission of clearing debris from channels that could be hazardous to navigation.

### ***The alien spacecraft posed a potential hazard to navigation and was removed***

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, drift removal crews pulled a small alien spacecraft out of waters at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac rivers early this morning as part of their day-to-day mission of clearing debris from channels that could be hazardous to navigation.

*“Most of what we pick up is driftwood, often large trees, branches and pieces of aging piers, but every once in a while we do find strange things like the UFO this morning,” said Baltimore District Deckhand Joe Smith, who was part of the Baltimore Harbor Drift Unit that pulled Chessie “the sea monster” out of the Baltimore Harbor two years ago to the day on April Fools’ Day 2016. “Whether it’s large trees, refrigerators or alien spacecraft, if it’s in the waters around Washington, and it could potentially be hazardous to vessels navigating these waterways, we’re going to pick it up and get it out of the channels.”*

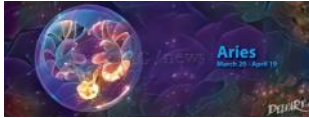
The spacecraft is not much larger than some of the pieces of debris picked up during normal patrols. The Potomac and Anacostia Rivers Drift Collection and Removal Unit pulled more than 600,000 pounds of debris from waters around the nation’s capital in 2017.

The UFO was taken by Air Force personnel to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

(Please note, this is an April Fools’ Day joke) 



# Birthdays



- Missy DiCiro 1-Apr
- Sally Ball 2-Apr
- Melonie Quander 4-Apr
- Stephanie Kelly 12-Apr
- Mary Alice Jakso 13-Apr
- Tia Himes 15-Apr
- Theresa Esquivel 17-Apr
- Megan Rendon 17-Apr
- Anneliese (Lee) Boutin 18-Apr
- Erica Van Epps 18-Apr



**Element:** [Fire](#)  
**Quality:** [Cardinal](#)  
**Color:** Red  
**Day:** Tuesday  
**Ruler:** [Mars](#)  
**Greatest Overall Compatibility:** [Libra](#), [Leo](#)

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 8, 17  
**Date range:** [March 21 - April 19](#)  
**Strengths:** Courageous, determined, confident, enthusiastic, optimistic, honest, passionate  
**Weaknesses:** Impatient, moody, short-tempered, impulsive, aggressive  
**Aries likes:** Comfortable clothes, taking on leadership roles, physical challenges, individual sports  
**Aries dislikes:** Inactivity, delays, work that does not use one's talent



**Element:** [Earth](#)  
**Quality:** [Fixed](#)  
**Color:** Green, Pink  
**Day:** Friday, Monday  
**Ruler:** [Venus](#)  
**Greatest Overall Compatibility:** [Scorpio](#), [Cancer](#)  
**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 6, 9, 12, 24

**Date range:** [April 20 - May 20](#)  
**Strengths:** Reliable, patient, practical, devoted, responsible, stable  
**Weaknesses:** Stubborn, possessive, uncompromising  
**Taurus likes:** Gardening, cooking, music, romance, high quality clothes, working with hands  
**Taurus dislikes:** Sudden changes, complications, insecurity of any kind, synthetic fabrics



- Renee Chapman 25-Apr
- Erin Beer 29-Apr

## Famous April Birthdays

Some of our favorite historical figures were born in the month of April. We couldn't possibly name them all, so here are just a handful of lives we'll be celebrating.

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. APRIL 2, 1805: HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN | 6. APRIL 21, 1816: CHARLOTTE BRONTË |
| 2. APRIL 3, 1783: WASHINGTON IRVING       | 7. APRIL 21, 1838: JOHN MUIR        |
| 3. APRIL 4, 1928: MAYA ANGELOU            | 8. APRIL 23, 1928: SHIRLEY TEMPLE   |
| 4. APRIL 5, 1908: BETTE DAVIS             | 9. APRIL 25, 1917: ELLA FITZGERALD  |
| 5. APRIL 13, 1743: THOMAS JEFFERSON       | 10. APRIL 27, 1791: SAMUEL MORSE    |





## AESC Welcome Membership

The Army Engineer Spouses' Club welcomes membership from spouses of all U.S. Army Engineers and civilian employees of USACE and, with approval of the Executive Board, other persons who are associated with the Corps of Engineers.

### 2019 - 2020 AESC MEMBERSHIP

There are two options for submitting 2019-2020 membership forms and dues:

- An electronic membership form with PayPal on the [AESC website](#)
- Our traditional mail-in membership form

If you would like to be included in the AESC's Red Book, please ensure that we receive your membership form and dues before 31 October 2019.



## Benefits of Membership

- The Castle Gram - This monthly newsletter will attempt to keep you informed, entertained, and connected to your Engineer Family
- The Redbook - This annual publication includes our coveted membership directory. Many members order an extra copy for their Engineer Spouse! Consider it an annual update to where your engineer friends have landed!
- The Castle Boutique - Our boutique is available both online and at live events throughout the year. You may find us at HQ, the annual cocktail party, AEA... you never know where we will pop up or what new goodies we will be offering. Each month we feature certain items available to members only
- The children of our members are invited to apply for the Army Engineer Memorial Awards.







## AESC 2019 -2020 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please PRINT NAME as you would like to be listed in the Castle Directory (The Redbook)

Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Your Birthday (month/day only) \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:  New member  Returning member  Rejoining member

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: Is Spouse:  Active  USACE  DA  Civilian  Retired

Reserve/National Guard  Deceased

Spouse's title/rank/job assignment or firm \_\_\_\_\_

By sending this application, you agree to have the above information listed in the Castle Directory. Membership runs from July 1, 2019 until June 30, 2020. Membership information received by Oct 31st, 2019 will be included in the 2019 -2020 Castle Directory.

Thank you!

Annual dues + 1 copy of the Castle Directory \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Castle Directory: Each \$5 \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to AESC and mail to:

AESC MEMBERSHIP  
P.O. Box 6332  
Alexandria, VA 22306-6332

