



Chapter Presidents Zoom Call

June 8, 2022 | 2 pm ET

Chapters Represented –Chattanooga, Dallas, Greater Cincinnati, Mary Ball Washington, Orange County, Pensacola, San Diego, Tucson, and Utah

Special Guest – Steve Cotton, National Board Member and Max Schell, New Chapter Organizer and National Sojourners Member

Welcome

Carolyn welcomed everyone on the meeting and thanked all for taking the time to join us for the Zoom call.

Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge Updates from Headquarters

First item on the agenda was an update from the May meeting of Freedoms Foundation's national board. The board met with the board of the Union League Legacy Foundation the day before their meeting. Our board toured the Union League and enjoyed a dinner with the Legacy Foundation board members. This was a chance for the boards to get to know one another. After a presentation made by the Legacy Foundation to our board over breakfast, our board moved next door to the Bellevue Hotel for their meeting. The meeting's focus was the discussion of the potential merger with the Union League Legacy Foundation.

The action item to come out of the meeting was the approval of three of our board members to serve on a working committee with three members of the Legacy Foundation board for an organizational assessment conducted by American Philanthropic. The assessment will advise both the Freedoms Foundation and the Legacy Foundation if this potential merger is a good fit for both organizations. The three members representing Freedoms Foundation are Board Chair, Jordan Clements, Vice Chair, Diane Deshong and Treasurer, Jon Nehlsen. Diane is representing the chapters in this committee and she has already reached out to all presidents asking them for their input on this potential merger. The assessment by American Philanthropic will be conducted over the summer with the goal to submit a report of their findings for the next board meeting in September.

With that, Carolyn opened the floor for comments and concerns in regards to the potential merger. Below are a list of the concerns shared. Please note that things are still in the very early exploratory stage and we do not have answers for all of your great questions and concerns. We will make note of all of them and give those to the board to find answers during this ongoing process.

What programs do the Legacy Foundation currently run for students?

Good Citizens Day – A one-day civics centered program for students from the greater Philadelphia region. The event is conducted at the Union League for about 250 students.

What will the Legacy Foundation want from the chapters? Will they require certain things of the chapters?

At this time, there is not specific answers to that question. We see chapters as continuing to run business as usual. There may be the opportunity for chapters to host Good Citizens Days at their locations. This concern will be discussed further as this process moves forward.

What is the political stance of the Legacy Foundation? Is the Union League facing an age creep like the one our chapters are dealing with?

A major consideration to move forward for our board was what quality of people are the members of the Legacy Foundation and are we of like minds. Our board after meeting with Legacy Foundation board found them to be very much of like minds and values and of the highest character. The Legacy Foundation is not affiliated with a political party. Like Freedoms Foundation, the Legacy Foundation is non-partisan.

Age creep does not affect the Legacy Foundation. Membership to the Union League is diverse in age and those members support the Legacy Foundation.

Who would own the land that is currently Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge?

This issue has not been formally discussed. It is an issue of concern to the Freedoms Foundation's board as well and will be a top point of discussion as talks move forward.

Do the chapters get to vote on this merger or is just the national board of directors?

The chapters do not get an official vote. This is solely the decision of the national board of directors, but your input is vital and will be considered in their decision making process.

Where would staff for this new potential organization be based? Will staff stay at Freedoms Foundation to go to the Union League in Philadelphia?

That has yet to be officially discussed, but the thought is that each staff would stay where they are now. Freedoms Foundation will be the educational center for the new organization so our staff would stay here and any staff related to running programs would join us in Valley Forge.

Where does the Legacy Foundation get its funding? Does the Union League control the Legacy Foundation?

The Legacy Foundation is supported by members of the Union League and the Union League does have influence on the Legacy Foundation. All Legacy Foundation board members are Union League members.

Will the Legacy Foundation use their influence and resources to assist the chapters in re-invigorating and growing the chapter network?

This has not been formally discussed, but we believe that this is something the two organizations will work together to combine their resources to help strengthen and grow our volunteer chapters.

Will there be regional offices?

That is an interesting concept that might be explored down the road.

Will the Legacy Foundation help chapters conduct Good Citizen Day programs nationwide?

This has not been directly discussed, but yes we believe that the Legacy Foundation wants to bring Good Citizen Day to a national level and would assist the chapters in making that happen.

What do the Legacy Foundation's financials look like?

As a non-profit their financials look much like ours. The difference is they have a donor base larger than ours and with a larger capacity to give.

Steve Cotton, member of the national board, was on the call. He briefly discussed the meeting with his counterparts at the Legacy Foundation. He assured those on the call that the national board is working very hard and taking this process very seriously. The national board has many of the same concerns you have and will make sure to address all of these before moving forward with any agreement. Your opinion matters and the board wants to hear from you.

Chapters and Partners Conference

This discussion leads us to the upcoming Chapter and Partners Conference – October 6-9. During the conference, attendees will have the opportunity to meet with staff of the Legacy Foundation and get to know them and hear directly from them about their thoughts on this potential merger and how they see chapters playing a role if the merger were to move forward. Please make plans to join us and be part of that discussion. The conference will also feature a trip to Gettysburg led by Arch Hunter and plenty of time to share ideas and collaborate with your fellow chapter members. The cost of the conference is \$450 per person. Registration forms have been sent to all of you and can be found on the website.

Education Updates

The first update for education is a change in personnel. Kate McAndrew has left the organization to pursue other ventures. Deepak Bhagat has been hired as the new Associate Director of Education. Many of you may already know Deepak. He served as a program director for many of this year's Spirit of America programs. Deepak started his new role on May 23rd and we are very excited to have him on board full time. We are also in the process of looking to hire more individuals for our education team including a VP of Education and Civic Program Manager.

Student Programs Update

We held 7 Spirit of America programs this spring. The number of participants was down considerably from where we normally see them. This was due to a variety of circumstances. However, it was very important to our organization to still run these programs and get back up on our feet. The summer is looking good with 2 Spirit of America programs and our SLiPP Program. We also had a very strong May with 4 History Encounters programs.

We do have fall dates for Spirit of America. These are open to anyone who wishes to participate. If you have any students who were unable to attend in the spring who would still be interested in participating in Spirit of America are welcome. The dates are October 20-23 and October 27-30.

Dates for 2023 Spirit of America have been announced. Thank you Utah, Chattanooga and San Diego for making your reservations. The dates for 2023 are as follows...

- March 2-5
- March 9-12
- April 13-16

- April 20-23

We have increased the price to \$495 per participant for 2023. The cost of everything is going up and we need to keep up.

Graduate Programs Update.

The first program starts on June 19th. Attendance for the graduate programs is good, but we still have openings for our on campus seminars.

Awards Update

Thank you for all the 2022 submissions. If you still have some entries you wish to submit we are still taking nominations up to June 13th. They will reviewed over the summer and you will be informed of your recipients no later than Labor Day. We are back to our pre-COVID levels for entries. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

We have the Youth Essay topic for 2023.

The topic for students in grades 7-12 is ...***With so much diverse information available, how can you become an informed citizen and make an impact on our nation's political life even before you are eligible to vote?***

The topic for grades K-6 is... ***Why is voting such a vital responsibility in our nation?***

Please note that we will be continuing the practice of two deadline dates for essays. The first date is March 1st and the second is June 1st. The early submission date give you the opportunity to present awards to students while they are still in school and get some recognition for your chapter in the local school district. We are also changing the length of the essay for students in grades 7-12. The essay now must be 500 to 750 words in length.

Website

Things are moving forward on the new website. We are currently working on the content for the site. Carolyn shared her screen showing the sample chapter website page. We went through each section noting the cleaner site with information more easy to find.

Information is still needed from the chapters for your sites. Please send us pictures you wish to use on your site, a brief overview of your chapter's history and current programs, plus a list of all of your upcoming event dates for 2022. If you have a membership form or student application for Spirit of America. please send that to us as well. You can send everything to Carolyn at csantangelo@ffvf.org.

We will be launching the new site on September 1st.

Other News and Notes

We have a new general brochure that is at the printers. This brochure is much like our old "Quick Facts" that was used to give a brief overview of our organization. Carolyn will be sending out a copy to each president as soon as they are ready.

Chapter Input – Open Floor

It was asked if chapters could get an updated roster of Freedoms Foundation staff. Carolyn will send that roster out immediately to all chapter presidents.

Tolar Nolley of Mary Ball Washington, brought up a potential like-minded partner organization, Youth Americans for Liberty. This organizations works with college students.

He noted that it could be a nice way to give our high school students the next step when they are in college to continue learning how to be engaged citizens. You can learn more about this organization at <https://yaliberty.org/>

Carolyn concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who joined. She will keep everyone updated on the process with the potential merger and she encouraged all to reach to her or Diane Deshong or any board members to voice their comments, concerns, questions or support to the possible merger.

Our next meeting will be in person at the Chapter and Partners Conference on October 6-9, 2022.

This Meeting Was Not Recorded