More than 1,300 registrants from 45 states attended the NFRW's 35th Biennial convention in Orlando, Florida. North Carolina was represented by 35 NCFRW members.

**Thursday** - Many enjoyed Florida activities, including NASA, Epcot, Universal, Sea World.

**Friday** - Registration was smooth and convenient. Some members enjoyed a day of campaign management training offered to NFRW members and local candidates.

The first time that everyone gathered was for our North Carolina picture on Friday evening on the steps in the grand lobby of the Caribe Royale. We had about three dozen delegates and alternates. Offered just before registration was a "Knock it out of the park" seminar with practical tips on how to organize and grow your clubs. It will be posted on the NFRW website shortly.

Sharon Day, RNC Secretary and Floridian, spoke at the opening reception. Bill McCollum, candidate for governor and former Congressman, also spoke. Jim Greer, chairman of the Republican Party of Florida, also was in attendance and made a cameo appearance as Elvis. Hospitality suites were sponsored by host state federation Florida and by Mississippi (a poodle skirt 50s party).

On Saturday, the general session began with a parade of state flags presented by convention pages, young women from all 50 states. North Carolina was represented by Kimberly Jenkins, daughter of Martha Jenkins. Singing the national anthem was Gina Incanzela, a nine-year-old autistic girl.

Georgia State Party Chairman Sue Everhart was a keynote speaker who identified WINs (Women In Numbers). She raised many millions and told us that on election night 2008, President George Bush called and said "the lights went out across the nation, but the lights stayed on in Georgia."

Florida Governor Charlie Crist was a special keynote, sharing many stories about his family and their humble beginnings. His grandfather was a Greek immigrant who came knowing he could make it in America. He started as a shoeshine boy,
saving enough to then open a restaurant, and then send seven kids to college. One son became a doctor and shortened the family name to "Crist." His son became a governor, and said that "only in America, could this be possible."

Slate Nominations were presented and the following were elected by acclamation with challenges to 4th VP and Secretary.
President Elect – Sue Lyn
2nd VP: Rae Lynne Chornenky
3rd VP: Martha Jenkins
Treasurer: Brenda Smith

One of the most exciting speeches of the entire convention was RNC Chairman Michael Steele. His inspiration started with his mother's story of grit and survival. On a fifth grade education and minimum wage salary all her life, she sent all her kids to college. When he once asked her why she didn't ask for government assistance, she said that she wasn't going to allow the government to raise her kids. He shared his early stories about showing up at precinct meetings and how he was treated, yet he persevered to become a precinct chair, county chair, state chair, Lieutenant Governor, and now national chair. He challenged the NFRW membership to find young people who are "not the future, they are the NOW," including TARs, CRs, and YRs. He encouraged all states to reach out to New Jersey and Virginia this year to help with their governor's races. He said that issues Americans care about are with us.

Convention business included bylaws discussion (http://www.nfrw.org/programs/convention/bylaws.htm):
1) Provision to require two meetings per state Federation per year – North Carolina already requires three State meetings per year
2) Approval of NFRW membership dues increase of $2.00 – This means effective in 2010 NFRW dues will increase to $10, while the NC dues remain at $5.00. Clubs will be required to remit $15 per member to NCFRW. NCFRW then forwards the $10 dues to NFRW.
3) NFRW intervention with club matters as requested by Federated States upon the request of the State Executive Committee.
4) Bylaws amendment restricting speakers to Republicans only was tabled indefinitely. North Carolina passed this bylaw in May 2009. Since no bylaw passed at the National level, then we are not in conflict with NFRW. The discussion was focused on the differences between states on voter registration and the state election process, and that this should be a decision on the state level. I am proud that North Carolina has been a leader on this issue to stand strong behind the fact that we are strong, proud Republicans and that our organization is a partisan organization, and we will continue to be seen as such.

Saturday lunch featured Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty who presided over the presentation of the "My Favorite Teacher" award. Before becoming governor, he served in the legislature. One story he told was about a district attorney savoring a courtroom victory who was abducted, kidnapped, shot, and left for dead, but survived. Her appeal to then Legislator Pawlenty resulted in the STOP program (Stop Turning Out Prisoners) tightening up early release rules.

The winner of the "My Favorite Teacher" award was Susan Jordan from Kansas with over 19 years of teaching experience and 30 years as an aviation officer in the Army National Guard, which included serving as a pilot in Afghanistan in 2003-04. One of the eight year old students who nominated her said she has "taught us to serve our country by example."

Workshops on Saturday afternoon included Technology, Membership, Why Women Lose Elections, and Health Care.

Common themes and topics during the four-day event included opposing President Barack Obama’s healthcare reform plan, supporting the flourishing tea parties and other grassroots conservative movements, and helping the Republican Party build momentum for the 2010 elections. Nearly every speaker commented on the raging healthcare debate, with a few dedicating their entire presentations to the issue. Ben Sasse, former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, gave a speech titled, "What if Politicians Told the Truth About Healthcare?" Bob Asztalos, Sally West and Dr. Julio Gonzalez presented a workshop titled, "How Healthcare Reform Will Impact America."

In addition, 10 state presidents (including North Carolina State President Valerie White), as well as several members of the Florida Federation, participated in a healthcare roundtable with Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele the afternoon of Sept. 12.
Saturday evening was on your own for dinner, Florida fun, and enjoying the sights. There were also more hospitality suites and theme parties for the various candidates for NFRW office.

Sunday morning was Election Day! Voting began at 6:30am. By 9:00am, the general session began and bylaws discussion continued. Five resolutions were also passed.

Valerie White sat at the Head Table and introduced NCFRW sponsored special guest speaker Mason Weaver who revved up the audience with his stories from the Washington DC Tea Party on Saturday. He shared much excitement about having been there, among the million plus freedom-loving Americans. He even made the news with a comment about "not having brought his teleprompter." NFRW Shirley Sadler expressed her appreciation to North Carolina for bringing Mason to the NFRW.

Another special speaker on Sunday was Jackie Gingrich Cushman, daughter of Newt Gingrich, recounting her dad's political beginnings. He lost once, he lost twice, but finally won on the third try. She shared that you must persevere and that Republicans must provide practical solutions to problems, sounding an awful lot like her dad.

The last speaker during the convention session was Angela McGlowan, Fox News contributor and author of "Bamboozled." Her inspiring story about rising above circumstances and speaking the truth was uplifting to all in attendance. One of her pointed comments was "Uncle Sam is not your baby daddy!" She was quite a shining star and might have a political future, if someone can convince her to run for office.

Complete NFRW election results were for new officers for 2010-2011: Sue Lynch, President (Wisconsin), Joyce Smith, First VP (Indiana), Rae Lynne Chornenky Second VP (Arizona), Martha Jenkins, Third VP (NC), Jessie Morton, Fourth VP (Louisiana), Jane Lane, Secretary (New Hampshire), Brenda Smith, Treasurer (Kansas). At-large members elected were Patt Parker (Maryland), Kathy Brugger (California), and Carrie Almond (Missouri).

Sunday lunch featured Frances Rice, the National Republican Black Assembly chair, who spoke forcefully about the history of the civil rights movement and how Democrats have high jacked advances made by Republicans. She also shared a thoughtful reflection on Martin Luther King being registered as a Republican and how we need to make a compelling case to uphold the constitution, which is color-blind. Her own family beginnings and a strong work ethic turned into an impressive military career and service to several Republican Presidents including Reagan, Bush 41, and Bush 43.

NFRW's 2009 Convention concluded on Sunday with an awards presentation to states, clubs, and individuals in several notable categories.

North Carolina Awards
(To be presented at NCFRW Fall Board Meeting)

Betty Heitman Award for State Excellence: North Carolina
The Betty Heitman Award for State Excellence is presented to states that demonstrate excellence, achievement or accomplishment in communications, outreach, programs, campaign activities and state functions.

Campaign Award
The Campaign Award is presented to states that demonstrate excellence in donating volunteer time to the benefit of the Republican Party, Republican candidates, or the NFRW.

50-80 Club Category: North Carolina

State Federation Members with Most Volunteer Hours Reported
North Carolina – Ada Fisher, Salisbury-Rowan RWC
Club Achievement Awards
The Club Achievement Awards are presented to clubs that demonstrate excellence in membership development, campaign activities, community relations, programs and club functions.

DIAMOND CLUBS
Crescent RW
Crystal Coast RW
Cumberland County RW
Fayetteville RW
Forsyth County RW
Gem Country RW
Greater Greensboro RW
Mecklenburg Evening RW
Salisbury Rowan RW

GOLD CLUBS
Blue Ridge RW
Gaston County RW
Lower Cape Fear RW
RWC of Chapel Hill

SILVER CLUBS
East Lincoln RW
Johnston County RW
RW of Pitt County
South Cabarrus County RW
Wake RW

BRONZE CLUBS
Brunswick County RW
Haywood County RW
RW of Cary & SW Wake
Scotland RW

Club Membership Award
This award is for clubs achieving a minimum of 25% increase or greater over their 2007 membership.
10-50 Member Club: Brunswick RW
51-100 Member Club: Wake RW

Winning Webs of the Week
The NFRW Winning Webs of the Week program was launched in 2009 by the NFRW Web Site Assistance Committee in an effort to recognize states and clubs for outstanding achievement in the development of websites and other digital communications tools. Recognized in 2009:
Sweet Union RWC, North Carolina  www.surwc.com

North Carolina also presented a State Quilt that was made by Mona Brommer, East Lincoln RW.