



# ON THE LOOKOUT

From the  
**National Chairman**  
**Keith A. Argow**

Vienna, Virginia  
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## **DON'T THINK FOR A MINUTE THAT YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN FFLA LEADER!**

The more we become involved with FFLA, the more fun it becomes. Our association is, after all, a gathering of folks who love fire lookouts and are willing to work together to secure their future. For most of us, that means working with a specific lookout, either staffing (volunteer or paid), working on its maintenance, serving as a "lookout keeper" to be sure the cabin gets the care it needs, and other activities. There is a special good feeling working at a lookout, either alone or with a group of friends.

The FFLA is also a dedicated group of "lookout enthusiasts." We gather together in work, play and share experiences. At these meetings we both exchange ideas on how to accomplishing difficult tasks (like painting an 80' tower), or how to glaze windows (if not done right, the darn things leak), we learn what paint really works, and generally share experiences.

We also **SHARE CONTACTS**. Lookouts are built, staffed, maintained and used by people. It is these People-to-People contacts that are so important to our future success. As public agencies continue to downsize or to get out of the lookout business (or both!), we know that the role of volunteers is ever more important.

When it comes to fire lookouts, **WE** are those volunteers!

## **FROM LONERS TO LEADERS**

People who are attracted to lookouts, especially those who want to spend time in them, are self-directed, independent types. We can take care of ourselves. We like physical challenge (climbing all those stairs with a full load). We may

be also slightly nuts. (Who else would even think of staying up there in a raging lightning storm?)

Committed as we are to our objectives of saving and serving lookouts, we are adverse to group dynamics which, of necessity, require that some of us volunteer to lead certain tasks. These may be restoration projects, serve as contacts with local district rangers and fire control officers, or send stories to local newspapers.

It is no accident that half of our 26 State or Division Directors are among the founders of this association. That's right, half of us are mid-way in our second decade of leadership in FFLA! That alone is enough to scare anyone. Once you are elected to the Board you can never get out!

The flip side of this coin of course is that our leaders like what they are doing. So they just keep going along, and the rest are willing to watch. After all, the Association is rising to new levels every year.

### **CHANGE IS INEVITABLE, WE EITHER PLAN FOR IT, OR IT OVERTAKES US**

As FFLA continues to grow and add new states (eight already now have State Reps, the first step toward getting a Director on the Board), it is essential that we plan for the future. To do otherwise is like dying without a will! We simply can't let that happen.

Most of our members have shown a willingness to accept special tasks with a completion time in sight. It is when we are asked to accept leadership roles with no end that we get cold feet. Remember, you can always ask to be replaced if the task does not feel right. In the end, we are still volunteers!

### **ARE YOU WILLING TO RESPOND TO THIS CALL?**

I hope so! To make it easy, just contact me at [argow@cs.net](mailto:argow@cs.net). Let me know your interests, and your ideas. Fact is, we have a place for you and we need you!

**Keith A. Argow**  
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