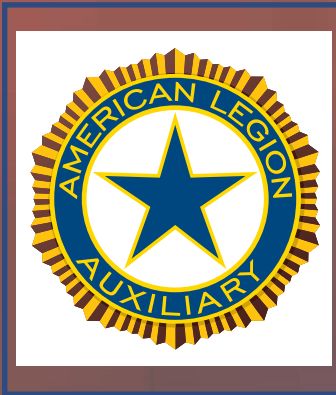




World's largest women's patriotic service organization



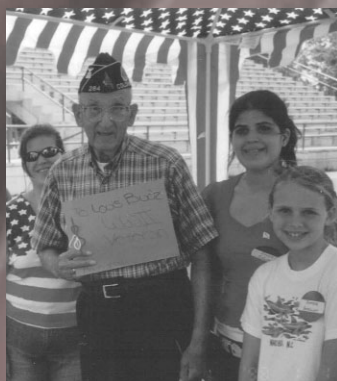
Service, not self





# American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations Handbook



Supporting The American Legion, veterans, young people and the community



Promoting all that is good in the nation today, tomorrow and for generations to come



*The American Legion Auxiliary would like to offer its sincere appreciation to  
The American Legion for its assistance in the publication of this handbook.*

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January 2005



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# Public Relations Basics

## What is Public Relations?

IMAGE. Every member is a part of the image we project. People's perceptions can be made quickly from both the positives and negatives, seen and heard.

Effective public relations efforts increase community visibility and enhance the ability to attract new members. Maintaining a good image requires a continuous public relations effort.

Public Relations (PR) requires that you relate to the public in some manner. The question is, "What is a 'public' and how do we relate to it?" Several 'publics' require our attention as PR volunteers. These include, but are not limited to:

- Our members (Internal)
- The media (External)
- Local and national elected officials and decision-makers (External)
- Local community members (External & potential members)
- U.S. citizens in general (External & potential members)

Every Auxiliary member is involved in public relations by spreading the good word about her Unit, District, or Department. The PR Chairman has the responsibility of planning, organizing and executing a public relations program.

An organization's image is based on the character, integrity and total performance of the organization. It is a composite of:

- The organization's history in dealing with people
- Internal attitude toward members
- External attitude toward community responsibility and involvement
- News releases and other dealings with the media
- Internal and external publications
- Institutional advertising

What is the image of the American Legion Auxiliary today? It depends on which public you ask. In some local communities, the American Legion Auxiliary has no image because no community programs are conducted. In other local communities, members of the American Legion Auxiliary are champions of social issues and pillars of the community.

# Public Relations Basics

## Responsibilities of a Unit PR Chairman

In many ways, public relations is the most important function at any level of the American Legion Auxiliary.

*The responsibilities of a PR Chairman, include:*

- To inform
- To enlighten
- To persuade
- To convince . . . our many publics of our beliefs, events and goals.

*A good chairman is critical:*

- She must be the eyes, ears and voice of the Unit.
- She must know how to get the word out to members and how and when to get information to the media outlets in radio, television and the newspapers.
- The chairman should be able to write and speak clearly and concisely.
- She should be capable of establishing a good working relationship with news media personnel.

The PR Chairman should be included in the planning of all programs and kept advised of everything the Unit and its leadership are involved in that may be newsworthy.

**1. Research** – Listen to Unit members and the people within the community to determine how they perceive the Unit and its programs. It can reveal potential image problems.

**2. Image** – When you have a good idea of how you are perceived, you can develop a logical, consistent plan to either maintain or improve your image. You can begin to change perceptions about the Unit and get others involved, both internally and externally. PR's primary responsibility is to: alter or maintain the image of the Unit, and to communicate various messages to each of the many publics. Based on your knowledge of what your image is, you can better focus your message(s) to achieve your goals.

**3. Action** – Put your ideas into effect. This encompasses the total process of letting members and the public know via newsletters, booklets, speeches, news media, good citizenship and examples. Develop potential PR outlets.

**4. Evaluation** – Was your effort successful? Evaluation begins with the planning process and continues through the action phase. Offer suggestions for next time. Ask media contacts to critique actions and offer suggestions.

# Public Relations Basics

The Unit, District or Department PR Chairman, will be responsible for the following primary tasks or delegation of them:

## *Internal Communication*

Communicate Unit's activities with members via: newsletters, flyers, and/or other means of local and national policy and programs. Don't assume members understand what the American Legion Auxiliary is all about. Keeping members informed is critical to keeping them motivated and active.

## *External Communication*

Inviting members of your community to attend a Unit ceremony or function. Having a membership drive or participating in one of our national campaigns, you may need to reach people who are not members of your Unit. This may involve coordination with one or more media outlets in your community and doing whatever is needed to reach those people.

## *Community Relations*

As good citizens of the community, Unit members should ask to be represented at various civic functions or meetings. While the Unit President will most often be the point of contact for civic and community functions, the PR Chairman should be the one to advise the President on specific issues and will act as spokesperson on occasion.

## *Media Relations*

Why won't your local newspaper run your story about the bake sale you're having this weekend? What is that TV reporter doing outside your Unit with the photographer interviewing your members? How did that story get printed without the PR Chairman (or the Unit President) knowing anything about it?

Effective media relations means that you and the various area media have a good working relationship. It's a mutual relationship based on trust and honesty. They call you when they need answers on veterans' issues, and you know who to call to provide a local angle to a national story regarding the American Legion Auxiliary.

Good public relations begins with the Unit President and PR Chairman establishing policies and practices that are ethical, honest and in keeping with the public interest.

# Important Public Relations Dates/Holidays

## January

New Years Day  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

## February

Four Chaplains' Sunday  
Lincoln's Birthday  
Presidents' Day  
Valentine's Day  
Washington's Birthday  
National Salute to  
Hospitalized Veterans

## March

The American Legion  
Birthday (15)  
Awareness Assembly  
Americanism Youth  
Conference

## April

Children & Youth Month  
Oratorical Competition  
American Legion Child  
Welfare Foundation Week

## May

National Military  
Appreciation Month  
V-E Day  
Armed Forces Day  
Poppy Day  
Memorial Day

## June

D-Day Anniversary  
Flag Day  
Girls State  
Department Conventions\*

## July

Girls State  
Independence Day  
Girls Nation

## August

National Convention  
Purple Heart Day  
Unit Members of the Year  
V-J Day

## September

National Preparedness Month  
Citizenship Day  
Constitution Week  
National Anthem Anniversary  
Patriot Day  
POW/MIA Recognition Day

## October

United Nations Day  
Halloween Safe Night  
Make a Difference Day  
National Veterans Creative  
Arts Festival

## November

American Legion Auxiliary  
Birthday (10)  
Veterans Day  
Election Day  
American Education Week  
National Family Week

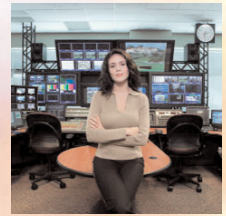
## December

Pearl Harbor Day  
Bill of Rights Day  
Christmas  
Hanukkah  
Gift shops at VAMC

\* As per your Department



# Who's Who in the Media?



**Media Contacts:** The first crucial step in beginning a publicity program is to compile a well thought out list of media.

## *Daily Newspapers*

**City Editor** – Generally the individual who makes reporter assignments for local stories and edits the copy.

**Reporter** – Besides being told what stories to write, reporters have a responsibility to suggest stories. If you can convince a reporter that your story is important, you are ahead of the game. (Education/Community Editors are a great source for Girls State programs, scholarships offered and Children & Youth programs).

**Editorial Page Editor** – An individual who works separately from the news writing side of the business. This individual helps develop editorial positions of the newspaper. (When you want to place a guest editorial written by your Unit President in a newspaper, this is where you will most likely be directed).

**Op-Ed Editor** – An individual who selects the commentary and opinion pieces that appear on the page opposite the editorial page. (Sometimes a column written by your Unit President can be used as an op-ed piece).

**Letters to the Editor** – Generally one individual in the editorial department handles the selection of letters. Most newspapers also have information on how to submit letters to the editor via mail, fax and e-mail. Never overlook the potential of a short, to-the-point letter reinforcing the positive community perception of our organization.

## *Weekly Newspapers*

**Editor** – Weekly papers have just a few staff members to handle all the jobs, so don't be surprised if the person who answers the phone is also the person you need to speak with. In the weekly newspaper business, the editor is a Jack or Jill of all trades.

## *Television Stations*

**Assignment Editor** – The person who is responsible for assigning reporters and photographers to cover a story.

**Reporter** – The person who talks with people and tries to find contacts to get the job done. Once you have been transferred from the assignment editor to a reporter, you can usually make future calls directly to the reporter.

# Who's Who in the Media?

**Community Affairs Director** – The individual who coordinates all the station's activities in the community. If you were looking to establish a partnership with a station for a special event, this is probably the person you will be told to contact.

**Public Affairs Director** – The individual who produces and often hosts station programs that tackle issues of interest to the public. If you have an event you want to promote, this is who you will most likely work with.

## *Radio Stations*

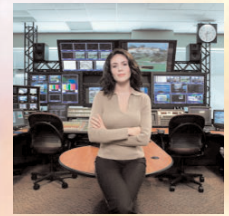
**News and Public Service Director** – Unless you live in a major city, the individual hired as the news director is generally also doing the job of the public service director.

**Promotion Director** – The individual who coordinates appearances by on-air personalities at events and develops other projects to increase listener participation and awareness.

**Continuity Director** – The individual who schedules the time of all commercials. At smaller radio stations, this person may also schedule public service announcements.



- Remember, talking to the top person in charge is seldom where you want to start. Don't try to figure out who to call; let the workers help you navigate job titles.
- Ask media contacts the best time of day to communicate. Media personnel are working with deadlines and have many demands on their time and attention.
- Every media contact should be thought of as an opportunity. Your personal relationship with the media reflects on the American Legion Auxiliary. Treating the media with courtesy and mutual cooperation will win respect for the organization. Be a resource for the media.
- You will not always get the coverage you want, but always maintain a positive attitude and be patient!



# Who's Who in the Media?

**Media Contact**



Media Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Media Contact**



Media Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Who's Who in the Media?

## **Media Contact Tips:**

### *Newspapers*

Newspapers differ in their emphasis on news and features. In general, smaller daily and rural weekly newspapers are more receptive to smaller, local stories like the election of officers. Each newspaper will have a set of guidelines to inform you of:

- type of news allowed
- size requirements
- frequency
- content of photos
- deadlines
- name of editor

Some publications have restrictions on the use of color photos. Record this information for future use in the *Note* section of your Media Contact sheet.

Your copy should be: typewritten, double-spaced.

Stories/photos current and newsworthy. (See Section 3) Use your name and phone number as contact person.

Public opinion and letter columns: are used to promote programs/special events, i.e. patriotic holidays, educate readers on proper Flag etiquette, poppies.

Advertising: Use for promoting special events. Keep your advertisements brief and specific. Consider graphics or large print for eye-catching appeal.

### *Periodicals*

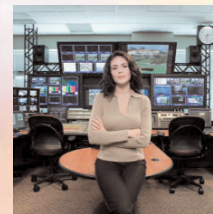
Various newsletters and small magazines in your area might publish the news or feature story you have to offer. Call or write these outlets to solicit their interest, i.e. promote scholarships in school newsletters.

Post/Unit publications provide an opportunity to promote upcoming events, meetings and activities. Use this space to stimulate interest, build excitement, and encourage member participation. This space should be used as a tool to promote the Auxiliary's upcoming programs.

### *Radio*

News and feature programs of about three minutes duration are quite popular. These broadcasts usually involve a brief interview with an authority on a particular subject and are often designed for automobile commuter audiences. Short programs on Flag Day and Veterans Day ceremonies are examples of particular subject matter.

# Who's Who in the Media?



Some local radio stations may offer a calendar of daily events for notices of regular meetings or special events, such as fund raising projects, celebrations of patriotic holidays, or Poppy Day.

### ***Television***

Television news directors are looking for stories, but in addition, are seeking dramatic angles and personalities who have visual impact. If the visual possibilities of a story are good, the news can be of lesser importance. If a TV station is interested, they will tell you whether to bring your people to the studio or whether a reporter and camera crew will visit your event.

### ***Public Service Announcements (PSAs)***

Since radio and TV stations are licensed public airwaves, they devote some broadcast time to public service announcements and educational material without charge. Talk with the public service director about using this free time well in advance of your event. PSAs provide more detailed information and possibly will use visual props to promote an event.

*(Contact The American Legion at: [pr@legion.org](mailto:pr@legion.org) for more information on available PSAs for use. Also logon to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) to find PSAs for use online)*

Electronic bulletin boards are available for announcements. Submit written copy containing facts and dates with adequate advance notice to allow for computer programming.

### ***Other Contacts***

Contact Public Relations directors of service and civic organizations, colleges and universities, and local governments. These individuals can give you excellent advice, particularly regarding media contacts.

Be alert to available bulletin boards and other public display areas. Does your grocery store or laundromat have a board on which you can put notices of your fund raisers or other local events? Remember to remove announcements after the event has been held.

Local businesses may provide window space for a poppy display. Public libraries may showcase a project or program, such as Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation or Children & Youth.





# What Exactly is News?

## Getting Your News Into Print

Everyone likes to see and read about their Units' and Departments' activities in the local newspaper. You may be planning an event that needs the support of your local newspaper and/or media. This guide will give you the basics of dealing with your local newspapers and media so that you can get your news or views into print or broadcast.

## Publicity Basics

It is often said, there are three rules of journalism:

1. Accuracy
2. Accuracy
3. Accuracy

Write everything down, check the spelling of names and never trust your memory. It is not enough to “believe” or “suppose.” Times and dates must be definite.

Always put contact information, including name, title, phone number and e-mail address at the top of a news release for convenient visibility.

## What is News?

- ★ Accurate, unbiased, timely, factual
- ★ Proximity, impact, prominence, conflict, bizarre, current, diverse
- ★ The 5 Ws: (who, what, when, where, why)
- ★ Information with the specific intent to inform, entertain, or sell
- ★ Something entertaining to the audience and something they want to know
- ★ A report of a current happening which is presented through a mass medium and is representative of all social groups, that will catch the attention of the viewer and expose the truth
- ★ A way of communicating information to the public
- ★ A way to raise social consciousness by exposing the public to opinions on various issues and allowing them to form their own opinions
- ★ News provides information that can be practical for a person's daily life
- ★ News is anything that sparks curiosity

# What Exactly is News?

1. Become a regular newspaper reader and observe writing styles.
2. Build a relationship with the newspaper staff, in particular, the writer assigned to cover your organization.
3. Submit only “fresh” news.
4. Use the 5 Ws of news reporting: who, what, when, where and why.
5. Use material that will be of interest to the general public.
6. Be accurate – check and recheck spelling, dates, locations and names.
7. Avoid technical terminology.
8. All copy should be typewritten or computer-generated.
9. Learn and observe deadlines. This is critical in the case of weekly or biweekly publications.
10. Don’t nag. Present your case well and then leave it up to the press.
11. Criticize only in the case of serious error.
12. Take the time to say “thank you” and let the press know the results of their efforts to publicize your needs or programs. Be grateful for any “free” publicity you can get.
13. If “news” is only news to your membership, offer the information as a paid advertisement.
14. Consider a letter to the editor or a viewpoint column as a forum for discussing an issue of importance to the community.
15. Photos
  - a. Weekly newspapers will use your photographs.
  - b. Daily newspapers often prefer to take their own photographs. Try to be present when such a photo is taken. Take with you a list of those to be photographed (check spelling!) At the site, rewrite the list, giving the names of the people, in order, from left to right. In the case of children, also have the names of the parents. If photographing will take place within your facility, photo releases, signed by photo subjects, are recommended. For some organizations, a release is required by accrediting bodies.
  - c. Do not write on the back of a photograph when sending your own photos in. Place a sticker with typed names (L to R) or include a separate sheet with the names listed.





# What Exactly is News?

- d. Editors may request a digital image of a photograph. Jpeg format is most often used in 300 dots per inch (dpi). This resolution level is required for print reproduction.
  - e. Send photographs denoting action. Example: If Angela Auxiliary has been presented an award for volunteering at the local VA hospital, a photo of Angela at work is much better than one of the mayor presenting her with the award.
16. Feature stories
    - a. Small newspapers may accept your copy. Remember to follow Auxiliary Style Guide format. (See Section Four, “Tools.”)
    - b. Daily newspapers generally write their own stories. If you feel you have a good story, don’t hesitate to contact either the regular staff writer or a feature writer. If the writer agrees to do a feature, prepare in advance a “fact sheet” giving all background information. (Auxiliary Fact Sheets can be obtained from National Headquarters-Public Relations or [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org). Your Dept. should also have a fact sheet on previous year’s accomplishments).
  17. Only one person from your Unit/Department should be in touch with the local media. Even if you are the chairman of the Unit’s biggest event of the year, the person in your Unit responsible for publicity should be informed and make the media contact.
  18. Get the story to the newspaper and local media no more than 24 hours after the event. Know the newspaper’s deadline. Whenever possible, let the newspaper reporter or editor know about an event before it takes place. Invite them as guests. Send complimentary tickets. Invite them to act as judges for essay contests.
  19. Use creativity (to a certain degree). Newspaper editors appreciate fresh ideas.



This photo shows an activity and carries greater reader interest. An editor is more likely to publish an appealing news or feature photo than the traditional posed shot.



Jillian Junior (Left) and Angela Auxiliary bake pies together to raise money for the local CMN Hospital in Indianapolis.

## SECTION THREE

# What Exactly is News?

**Sample News Release**  
( preferred structure and form)



Emblem

American Legion Auxiliary, Unit #  
Address

Contact Info: (Name, Address, Phone #, e-mail address)

HEADLINE: Proper Form For News Release

DATE release was distributed

### Body Copy:

The lead should include the 5 Ws and let the reader know right away what is being talked about.

Begin the body of your release about halfway from the top of the page. Use double spacing. Take advantage of spelling and grammar checks on your computer.

Be sure contact information is complete, including a home phone number and the date the release was distributed.

An identifying headline should summarize the gist of the story. Its function is to tell editors in capsule form what is in the release.

Use at least one-inch margins at the right, left, top and bottom. Indent paragraphs at least 10 spaces.

The first paragraph is the lead or summary of the most important fact(s) in the story. Paragraphs should be short, preferably no more than four lines, punctuated correctly, easy to read and understand. Sentences should average no more than about 15 or 16 words.

Remember to use active verbs and spell out numbers. (Follow Auxiliary Style Guide rules).

One-page releases are more likely to be printed or broadcast, but you can use additional pages as necessary. If you do, remember to insert “–more–” at the bottom of all but the last page.

–more–



# What Exactly is News?

Proper Form News Release, Add 1-

At the top of the second page, flush left the identifying “slug” (topic) line from the suggested head and “Add 1” for page 2, “Add 2” for page 3 etc. Never split a word, sentence or paragraph between pages.

Nowadays, some editors prefer releases electronically. Put contact information at the bottom of the file to eliminate the need for editors to scroll back to the front.

### or -30-

(Include one of these symbols at the bottom of the release to show the reader it is the end of the story)

# What Exactly is News?

## Writing Tips for News and Press Releases

- ★ Write tight and get to the point
- ★ Avoid vagueness
- ★ Don't be redundant
- ★ Write for your readers
- ★ Proofread, read aloud, and let it sit
- ★ Don't plagiarize
- ★ Story should answer the 5 Ws and H but not in one sentence

## Public Relations Tips During a Crisis

- ★ Try to use a single contact person to answer to the media.
- ★ Hold a press conference if necessary.
- ★ Always make positive statements about organization and programs.
- ★ Make it clear that any problem is of the utmost importance.
- ★ Have an action plan ready.
- ★ Know the media before you need to know them.
- ★ Be committed to open and honest communication.
- ★ Immediately notify emergency responders.
- ★ Don't immediately admit fault or try to spread blame.
- ★ Tell the facts as they develop. Rely on investigative sources for details.
- ★ Never say "no comment."
- ★ Issue a prepared statement to the media as soon as possible and follow-up.



# What Exactly is News?

## Planning Special Community Events

The success of any public relations project requires an effort to increase the awareness of The American Legion Family in the local community.

In recent years, Posts, Units, and Squadrons have joined together to create special local events supported by a cohesive public relations effort.

Using the basics drawn from these specific efforts, successful local events can be conducted using available volunteer resources. Let's look at the various elements of organizing a special community event.

- Step 1: Recognize the potential for an event and gather key planners for a meeting.
- Step 2: Write a mission statement. This will keep everyone focused on the mission throughout.
- Step 3: Develop an outline for the actual event. Answer 5 W's and the H. Put it in writing.
- Step 4: Contact other organizations, civic leaders, etc., to invite their participation and support.
- Step 5: Seek sponsorship.
- Step 6: Seek student participation (if appropriate).
- Step 7: Begin public relations efforts:
  - a) Write a proclamation (if appropriate) for mayor or other civic leader
  - b) Contact television public affairs director seeking promotional support
  - c) Contact radio public affairs director seeking promotional support
  - d) Advertise
  - e) Develop event script
  - f) Issue news release(s)
  - g) Issue potential guest editorial by your Unit President
  - h) Issue media advisory
  - i) Make final phone calls to media news desks
- Step 8: Conduct Event
- Step 9: Conduct Post-Event meeting of key planners. Evaluate the good and bad aspects of the event. Prepare for future events.

# What Exactly is News?

## Letters to the Editor

Public relations for the American Legion Auxiliary is a challenge. You may often become frustrated because your news releases are not used while you feel your message is important.

That's a good time to consider writing a letter to the editor or a guest editorial for the local paper.

A newspaper's editorial gives the position of the publication's editorial board, a panel comprised of those responsible for the content of various sections. Similarly, an op-ed or letter to the editor from an Auxiliary official states the position of the American Legion Auxiliary on an issue.

Every newspaper has its own guidelines for submission of letters to the editor and op-eds.

Know guidelines:

- ideal word count
- manner of submission
- author background
- Ensure also that a letter or op-ed is consistent with the American Legion Auxiliary policy (national/state/local). Do not take political stands. Address issues only.

Generally, a letter to the editor is approximately 200 words long and responds to an item published in a previous edition of the newspaper.

Letters most likely to be published follow a simple structure:

1. The first paragraph: state the position of the organization.
2. The middle section: explain key message points reinforcing lead paragraph.
3. The final paragraph: reiterate lead paragraph or give an “action statement.” explaining how the American Legion Auxiliary will address a situation.

# What Exactly is News?



When the letter is related to pending legislation, there is an easy way to send it to electronic media in your congressional district. Click on the *Legislative Action Center* icon on The American Legion's homepage: [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org). The CapWiz program through the Legislative Action Center, allows individuals to obtain local media contact information.

- ★ Once you open the *Legislative Action Center*, click on *Media Guide*. Plug in your Zip Code or any other pertinent information. You will get e-mail links to media in your area, as well as phone numbers and fax numbers. Sometimes, you can even paste in your press release and send it electronically to the media in your area.

<http://capwiz.com/legion/dbq/media/>

The screenshot shows the 'Media Guide' section of the American Legion website. The page is titled 'Media Guide' and includes the following sections:

- Local Media -- ZIP Code Search:** A search box with a 'GO' button and a checkbox for 'Show national media in results'.
- Individual Search -- Editors, Reporters & Producers:** A search box for 'Enter person's last name' with a 'GO' button.
- Organization Search:** A search box for 'Enter media organization name' with a 'GO' button.
- Map:** A map of the United States with a 'Select State' dropdown menu and a 'GO' button. The text below the map says 'Click on the map to view by state.'

Annotations with lines pointing to the screenshot include:

- Legislative Action Center:** Points to the 'Media Guide' link in the top navigation bar.
- Media Guide:** Points to the 'Media Guide' link in the top navigation bar.
- Zip Code Search:** Points to the 'Local Media -- ZIP Code Search' section.

# What Exactly is News?

## Op-Eds

An "op-ed" gets its name from the fact that it usually appears on the page opposite from the publication's editorial page. It is a highly focused opinion piece that aims to stir the reader's emotions while presenting facts that support the author's point of view.

To write an effective op-ed, one must be willing to seize an issue and to take a strong stand.

You must give a strong opinion and stay true to your message points. Here is a 5-step process for producing an attention-grabbing op-ed:

### 1. Seize an issue

Look for an issue that straddles the line between the public good and your self-interest. You must either be or become an expert on this issue.

Check and double-check your facts. Make certain you have the knowledge, the background and the supporting data to qualify as an expert on this issue.

One particular topic may be to write about the significance of the American Flag in connection with Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Armed Forces Day and Veterans Day observances.

### 2. Identify a significant problem

Within the context of your issue, search for a problem that clearly threatens the general public or at least some large segment of that public.

Clearly identify the problem, the audience it affects and how you might go about solving it.

### 3. Make a bold statement

Open the op-ed by making a bold statement that forces the reader to read on.

Opening statements are everything. They: dictate the headline, determine the focus of your article, and dictate the evidence you offer to support your statement.

Spend a lot of time honing your first paragraph. Ask yourself, "If I read this paragraph for the first time right now, could I resist the urge to continue reading this article?"

Use facts and statistics, but only those that apply directly to your statement. Ensure facts are correct. Rely on the same resources you would to write a letter to the editor. Opinion must be backed by factual knowledge on the subject. When editorializing for the Auxiliary, be sure to accurately state current official position on the subject.

Perhaps work with your American Legion Family members to submit Opinion-Editorials together.





# What Exactly is News?

## 4. Defend your statement

Use a total between 400 and 500 words (Know what word count your paper recommends). The opening statement should take up about 25 words. The conclusion should take up another 100. The remainder of the piece should defend the opening statement.

Introduce quotes from third parties. These would include documents, studies, surveys, public statements, books and articles.

Don't forget emotion. Facts provide the reasons to agree with the statement, but emotion provides the drive to take action.

## 5. Propose a solution

Wrap up the piece by proposing at least one clear, bold solution to the problem identified.

### *Format:*

- ✓ Use a common typeface, like Arial or Times, in 10 to 12 point type. Double space.
- ✓ Write in short sentences.
- ✓ Speak in a bold active voice that leans upon nouns and verbs, not adjectives and adverbs.
- ✓ Avoid jargon.
- ✓ Put your name, address and phone number at the top of the page.
- ✓ Suggest a headline based upon your lead paragraph.
- ✓ Include a paragraph at the end that explains your qualifications.
- ✓ Place a "# # #" at the bottom of the last page to indicate the end.
- ✓ Enclose a brief cover letter that summarizes the op-ed and your expertise.

# What Exactly is News?

## Sample Poppy Proclamation

WHEREAS, America is the land of freedom, preserved and protected willingly and freely by citizen soldiers;

WHEREAS, millions who have answered the call to arms have died on the field of battle;

WHEREAS, a nation at peace must be reminded of the price of war and the debt owed to those who have died in war;

WHEREAS, the red poppy has been designated as a symbol of sacrifice of lives in all wars; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion Auxiliary has pledged to remind America annually of this debt through the distribution of the memorial flower;

THEREFORE, I, (full name) (title), of the (city, town, county, state) do hereby proclaim this (date) day of (month), (year) as POPPY DAY and ask that all citizens pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom by wearing the memorial poppy on this day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of (city, town, county, state) this (date) day of (month,) (year).

(Full Name)

(Title)



# What Exactly is News

## Sample Letter for Poppy/PR Campaign

(date)

The Honorable (Name)

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Sen. (name):

I need your help to increase awareness about the memorial poppy and what it represents: a symbol of the price of war and the sacrifice of millions.

The nearly 1 million members of the American Legion Auxiliary, the world's largest patriotic service organization of women, are asking every elected and appointed official at the local, state and national level to wear a poppy on the observance of Memorial Day, (Date).

Your poppy is enclosed and we ask that you wear it in honor of the millions of Americans who have willingly served and who are currently serving our nation, all too many of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The poppy also honors the hospitalized and disabled veterans who make these red, handcrafted flowers. The poppy continues to provide a financial and therapeutic benefit to those veterans who construct them, as well as benefiting thousands of other veterans and their families by the revenues collected from poppy distributions.

In the battlefields of Belgium during World War I, poppies grew wild amid the ravages of war. The overturned soils of battle enabled the poppy seeds to be covered, allowing them to grow and forever serve as a reminder of the bloodshed of war.

We still recognize the sacrifice of our veterans and those serving our country today. Please help the American Legion Auxiliary honor these brave men and women by wearing the enclosed poppy on Memorial Day!

Sincerely,

(Your name)

(Your address)

(Include the poppy and any other poppy materials with the letter)

# What Exactly is News?

## **Sample *Make A Difference Day* Proclamation**

WHEREAS, serious social problems concern our nation and threaten its future; and

WHEREAS, connecting with others and working together through volunteer service can bridge the differences that separate people and help solve serious social problems; and

WHEREAS, we, the American people, have a tradition of philanthropy and volunteerism; and

WHEREAS, millions of self-sacrificing individuals touched and enhanced the lives of millions on *Make a Difference Day* of doing good by giving where there was a need, rebuilding what had been torn down, teaching where there was a desire to learn and inspiring those who had lost hope; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion Auxiliary has pledged to join USA WEEKEND Magazine and its affiliate newspapers, and The Points of Light Foundation to promote an annual national day of doing good that celebrates and strengthens the spirit of volunteer service; and

WHEREAS, volunteer service is an investment in the future we all must share;

NOW, THEREFORE, I (NAME/TITLE) do hereby proclaim (DATE), as *Make A Difference Day* in (CITY/STATE), and urge my fellow citizens to observe this day by connecting with friends, fellow employees and relatives and with religious, school and civic groups to engage in projects benefiting their community.

Signed this (DATE) day of (MONTH), (YEAR)



# What Exactly is News?

## Sample *Make A Difference Day* Press Release

CONTACT: (name and phone)

(DATE of release – a week or two prior to *Make A Difference Day*)

### **Local Auxiliary Volunteers Make a Difference on (DATE)**

(CITY) – Auxiliary members of Unit (NUMBER) are expected to spend Saturday, (DATE) – *Make A Difference Day* – performing volunteer projects to improve their communities and help neighbors in need. The day is the largest community service effort in the nation, rallying corporations, government leaders, service organizations like the American Legion Auxiliary and everyday Americans into one day of action.

On the last *Make A Difference Day*, a record # million volunteers nationwide participated and an estimated # million people-in-need benefited; more than \$(amt. of money) was distributed to the charities.

USA WEEKEND Magazine sponsors the day, held on the fourth Saturday of each October, in partnership with The Points of Light Foundation. The Points of Light Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.

The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest patriotic women's service organization in the world, with nearly 1 million members. Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a veterans' service organization with members in nearly 11,000 communities.

The American Legion Auxiliary organization sponsors volunteer programs on the national and local levels, focusing on three major areas: veterans, young people and the community. *Make a Difference Day* is a project under the Community Service committee of the American Legion Auxiliary.

For more information about *Make A Difference Day*, please call your local American Legion Auxiliary Unit or the *Make A Difference Day* Hot Line at 1-800-416-3824. More information and a national databank of local project plans are available at the Web site [www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com).

###





# Public Relations Tools



## American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters Style Guide

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*NOTE: The term "up" means begin with a capital letter, i.e., upper case; "down" means to use a small letter, i.e., lower case. Where there is a choice not listed, select the form to keep the manuscript uniform and consistent.*

- Apostrophe:** Omit in titles (except a few organizations that use it officially)
- Capital Letters:** Keep to a minimum; use in titles, proper names, places  
 Capitals special to Auxiliary usage:  
 The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary  
 Post, Unit, Department, District, Division  
 National (when referring to the National Organization)  
 President (when referring to National President)  
 Convention (when referring to National Convention)  
 Awareness Assembly
- Dates:** 2nd of June, 15th of December, etc., but use May 8, 1995, Aug. 29, 1996  
 When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb.,  
 Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. Spell out when using alone, or with a  
 year alone.
- Grammar:** committee, Department, and Unit take singular form:  
 the committee is (not are)  
 the committee that or which (not who)  
 the Department was (not were)  
 the Unit – is or its (not they or theirs)  
 the Unit that or which (not who)
- Numerals:** Spell out at the beginning of the sentence. Spell out up to and including  
 nine; from 10 on use figures. In enumeration, use all figures if any one  
 of the group is over 10 (even if some are lower; e.g., "6 boys, 12 girls,  
 and 107 adults"). For quantities and measures, use figures; e.g., \$50  
 (no decimal), \$3.65, 75 cents.
- Punctuation:** Use as little as possible to keep meaning clear. Remember, punctuation  
 marks are stop signs to the reader; use them judiciously.

# Public Relations Tools

## A

Allies  
Ambassador (as United States Ambassador)  
Awareness Assembly  
action (on the matter, not in)  
affect (to influence)  
aid (assistance)  
aide (assistant)  
already  
altogether  
anyone

## B

Boys State  
bill (up in title, with name preceding; down when alone)  
building (up only as part of proper name)  
bylaws (up as part of title; down when alone)

## C

Chairman (up as title when preceded or following by name of committee or organization,  
down when alone)  
Chef de Chemin de Fer (40 & 8 title)  
Convention (relating to the National Auxiliary Convention)  
capital (of a state)  
capitol (building)  
committee (was, not were) (down when alone; up with committee name)  
committeewoman (down alone; up when referring to specific group, i.e., NECs, etc.)  
community service (up as title)  
constitution (up for United States or as title)  
contest (up only with title of particular one)  
convention (down unless part of title or unless referring to National Convention)  
county (up when name precedes it)



# Public Relations Tools



## D

Department (refers to state organization)  
 Department Chairmen  
 Department Committeewoman  
 Department \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman (up when name of committee is given)  
 Department Presidents and Secretaries Conference (no apostrophes)  
 Department of Veterans Affairs (not Veterans Administration)  
 different (from, not than or to)  
 Departementaux (8&40 term, equivalent of Departments)

## E

education (down, except as part of title)  
 Eight and Forty or Eight et Forty or Eight & Forty or 8 & 40  
 essay contest (up only if title, as a particular one)

## F

Forty and Eighter (40 & 8 magazine) (underline or italicize)  
 federal  
 flag (down alone; up when referring to U.S. Flag)  
 Flag Code  
 foreword (meaning preface)  
 forward (meaning onward)

## G

Girls State  
 Gold Star Members  
 Gold Star Mothers  
 Gold Star Sisters  
 government  
 Grenada/Lebanon

# Public Relations Tools

## H

headquarters (down when alone; up when referring to National Headquarters)

high school (up only as part of proper name)

Homecoming (up when referring to National President's Homecoming)

## J

Juniors

junior activities (up as committee title)

## K

Korean War

## L

La Secretaire Caissiere (8 & 40 term)

Le Chapeau National (8 & 40 term)

Les Petis Salons (8 & 40 title)

Legionnaires

Lieutenant (always spell out; up when followed by name, as title; down when alone)

legislation (up only when part of title)

legislature (up only when part of title)

## M

major general (spell out; up as title)

membership drive (up only if special title of particular drive)

memoranda (plural)

memorandum (singular)

memorial (up when part of title)



# Public Relations Tools

## N

National Committee (committee name up)  
 National Convention  
 National Executive Committee  
 National Executive Committee Meeting  
 National Executive Committeewoman  
 National Headquarters  
 National Headquarters Staff

National Information Conferences (formerly Area Conferences, then Regional Conferences,  
 then National Leadership Workshops)  
 National News (*italicize*)  
 National President  
 National President's Citation  
 National President's Project  
 National President's Scholarship  
 National President's Theme  
 nation  
 national (up only if in a series with Unit, Department, and National)  
 National Anthem  
 national committee (up when title and name of committee are used)

## O

organization (up when part of title)

## P

Panama  
 Partners (8 & 40 members)  
 Past National President  
 Past President (name)  
 Past Presidents Parley (no apostrophe)  
 Persian Gulf War  
 poppy  
 Poppy Day (special day)

# Public Relations Tools

poppy distribution (not sale)  
poppy poster  
Poppy Poster Contest (special contest)  
poppy program  
Post  
president (up when referring to any Auxiliary President)  
presidential (except United States)  
Proceedings (of National Meetings)  
program

## R

regions of country when used as title: e.g., North, South, East, West

## S

Salon Nationale La Boutique des Huit Chapeau et Quarante Femme  
(official name of 8 & 40)  
Salons (8 & 40 term; equivalent of Unit)  
salute to the flag (up when referring to U.S. Flag)  
Seniors or Senior members  
serviceman (one word)  
session (of Congress or Convention)  
staff  
Soldiers' and Sailors' Home  
Star Spangled Banner  
state (in general sense, up when referring to a United States State)  
state legislature  
States Dinner

## T

The American Legion (up "The")  
the American Legion Auxiliary (down "the")  
The American Legion Magazine (italicize)  
titles (spell out; up as title; down when used alone; e.g., colonel)  
Tomb of the Unknowns

# Public Relations Tools



## U

Unit

United States (spell out)

United States Flag

USO (caps and no periods)

## V

Vice President (no hyphen; up in title)

Vietnam War

## W

World War I

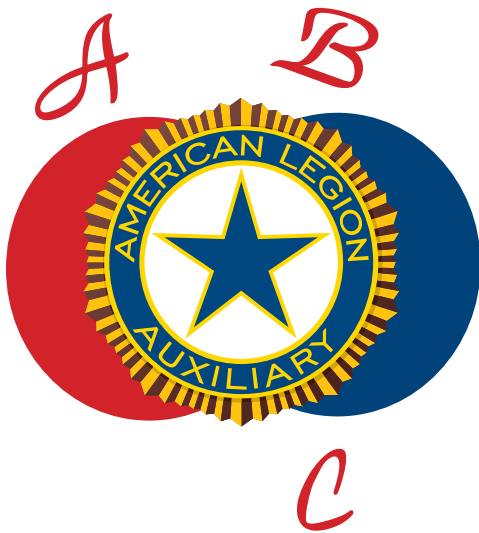
World War II

women's organization (not woman's)

*Note: For questions of usage, punctuation, spelling, etc., use the Associated Press Stylebook.*

# Public Relations Tools

## Auxiliary Alphabet of Writing Tips



### American Legion Auxiliary

National Headquarters  
777 N. Meridian St., 3rd Floor  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1189  
317-955-3845  
Fax: 317-955-3884  
[www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org)

**A**ttribution—Make sure to give credit to the source. “*According to the 2002-2003 Auxiliary Fact Sheet, members served more than 2.8 million people.*” In reports, give specific recognition by mentioning Unit names and numbers whenever possible: “*Unit 72, Aberdeen, Miss., donated . . .*”

**B**alance—There should be parallel structure in your sentences. “*Emily selected members for the committee, gave them assignments, and wished them well.*”

**C**apitalization—Be sure to properly capitalize proper nouns, but not common nouns. “*The committee decided that its chairman, Carol Member, would represent the Department at its convention.*”

**D**angling participles—Make sure your participle is modifying the right word, not dangling. Instead of, “*Assigning seats to everyone, the room was set for the meeting,*” make it “*Assigning seats to everyone, Susie set the room for the meeting.*”

**E**ffect v. affect—Effect is commonly used as a noun; affect is generally used as a verb. “*The effect of the bylaws’ change won’t be known for several years. It will affect the membership chairmen the most.*”

\* Brochure available for order from National Headquarters through Department Headquarters.



# Public Relations Tools

**F**act checking—Be sure you check your facts before passing them on as truths. Pay special attention to information taken from the Internet.

**G**et to the point—If you don't quickly make your point and tell your readers what to expect from the piece, you will lose them. Don't use vague words or sentences that fail to describe or inform.

**H**is/Her, He/She—There is no such thing as a his/her or he/she. You must write them both out. Also, don't substitute with "their." Their is plural, not singular. *"The person must sign his or her form before he or she will be admitted to the event."*

**I**nternet terminology—According to the Associated Press Stylebook, the following Internet words are spelled as: Internet, e-mail, home page, login, logoff, online, Web site, Web page.

**J**argon—Avoid use of vocabulary and idioms known by only those in a particular group or occupation when you are writing for a mass audience (PNP, NLIC, C&Y). Spell out abbreviations on first reference (Past National President, National Leadership & Information Conference, Children & Youth).

**K**now your readers—Be sure that you are communicating with your audience. Use appropriate language; keep to the facts they need to know; give suitable examples.

**L**atin abbreviations—When you use (etc., e.g., i.e.) know what they mean: Etc. = and so forth; e.g. = for example; i.e. = that is.

**M**isspelled words—Use a dictionary to spell check and proof your work. Commonly misspelled words include: harass, receive, desperate, definitely, occasion, judgment and liaison.

**N**umbers—Spell out numbers one through nine. Use numerals for 10 and beyond. However, if the number is at the beginning of the sentence, spell it out.

**O**ver v. more than—“Over” typically is spatial: *“The National President flew over Kansas City.”* “More than” is most often used with numbers and can imply a comparison: *“The National President flew more than 30,000 miles this year, which is much more than you did.”*

**P**ossessives—Possessive nouns show ownership. Most often they are formed for singular and plural nouns with 's; if the sentence already ends in s, it is usually s'. “Its” is possessive case. “It’s” means, it is. *“The children’s books, donated by the Whites, were donated to the hospital’s library.”*

**Q**uotations—Quote marks indicate a direct quote or signal a nickname, or unfamiliar terms. Punctuation goes inside the quotation marks. *“Sue Member said, ‘We’ve got to get more members to meet our target goal.’”*

# Public Relations Tools

**R**edundancies—Be sure you are not saying the same thing more than once. For example: ATM machine, PIN number, SAT test.

**S**ingular v. plural—There must be subject/verb agreement in sentences. If the subject is singular, the verb must be, too. Words such as class, committee, crowd, family, group and team are singular. *“The Unit reported its progress on the project. It has collected \$1,000 for the cause.”*

**T**oward—The word is “toward,” not “towards.” *“We moved toward our goal with 99.7 percent.”* Also for “forward,” “afterward,” “beside,” and “backward.” For example: “beside” means to be next to or in addition. “Besides,” means in addition to something.

**U**se of contractions—It is perfectly OK to use contractions in your writing. The apostrophe in the contraction takes the place of the letter that is being omitted: who’s (who is/has); he’s (he is/has); you’re (you are/were); it’s (it is); she’d (she had/would); isn’t (is it not?); don’t (do not).

**V**ague—Avoid using words that do not specify/define. Examples are many, very, good, nice, and thing.

**W**ords easily confused—Be sure to check the dictionary on words you might get confused: accept/except, advice/advise, all ready/already, principle/principal, then/than, a while/awhile, who/whom.

**X**erox and other trademarked products—Do not use a brand name when you don’t specifically mean that product. Examples: Kleenex-tissue; Q-tip-cotton swabs; Vaseline-petroleum jelly; Coke-soda.

**Y**ears—1990s means the entire decade; 1990’s is possessive of the year 1990. Centuries are not capitalized.

**Z**oom—Don’t zoom through your work. Take your time and plan it out. Make an outline or organize your thoughts in some way. Also, don’t be a speedy proofreader. Read it out loud. Look up words and figures you aren’t comfortable with. If you stumble on a sentence, your reader probably will, too.



Prepared by American Legion Auxiliary Public Relations





# Public Relations Tools

## Copyright and Trademark Information

Trademarks and service marks are valuable assets of any organization. They are very valuable to The American Legion Family. The marks of the American Legion Auxiliary identify the programs and services of the organization and distinguish it from those of other service organizations. The emblems of The American Legion Family also assure members and the public that the programs and services sponsored in conjunction with the emblems meet the high standards and values for which The American Legion Family is known.

Following the guidelines in this section will help protect the emblems and prevent public confusion as to whether a service or program is actually sponsored by one of the organizations in The American Legion Family. These guidelines are excerpted from the publication: “Name and Emblem Identification System Manual and Style Guide.”

On Sept. 16, 1919, U.S. Congress incorporated our organization and named it “The American Legion.” A formal “corporate name” is the official legal designation of a company or organization. Corporate names should always be spelled out in full. Standard typeface should be used and the same type style and letter case, all capital letters or initial capital letters followed by lowercase letters, must be used throughout the name.

Examples:

<u>Correct</u>	<u>Incorrect</u>
THE AMERICAN LEGION	the American Legion
American Legion Auxiliary	The AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Sons of The American Legion	Sons of the American Legion

A “trade name” is the name under which an organization promotes itself to its members and the public and under which it conducts business. In some cases, the trade name may be the same as the corporate name. In other cases, it may be a shortened version. Use initial capital letters or all capital letters for all of our trade names.

Examples:

<u>Correct</u>	<u>Incorrect</u>
The American Legion	the Legion
THE AMERICAN LEGION	the AL
American Legion Auxiliary	the Auxiliary
Sons of The American Legion	the Sons

# Public Relations Tools

## Copyright and Trademark Information

A “trademark” or “service mark” is a word, name, symbol or device, or any combination of these, adopted and used by a person, company or organization to identify its products or services and distinguish them from the products or services of others. If the mark is used to identify a product, then it is a trademark. If the mark is used to identify a service, then it is a service mark.

The following are service marks of The American Legion:

*The American Legion*

*American Legion Auxiliary*

*Sons of The American Legion*

*The American Legion Magazine*

*The American Legion Citizens Flag Honor Guard*

*Boys Nation*

*Girls Nation*

The following are trademarks of The American Legion:

*The American Legion Emblem*

*American Legion Auxiliary Emblem*

*Sons of The American Legion Emblem*

*The American Legion Magazine Masthead*

*The American Legion Baseball Emblem*

*Boys Nation Emblem*

*Girls Nation Emblem*



# Public Relations Tools



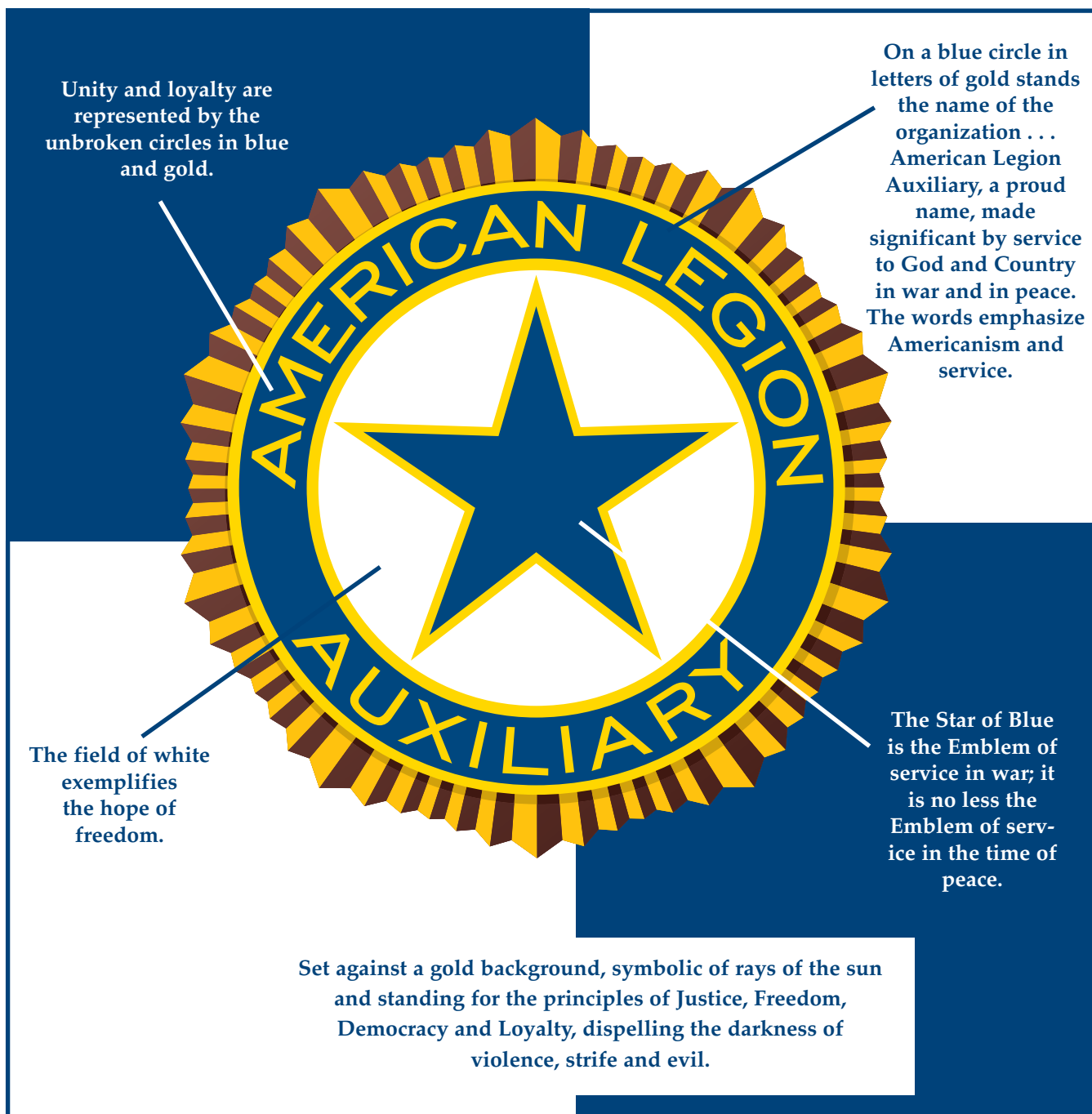
## Use of the American Legion Auxiliary Emblem

The official Emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary, approved samples of which are on file at National Emblem Sales, The American Legion National Headquarters, Indianapolis, Ind., are made in many types, including, but not limited to 1 1/4," 2," 4," and 6" diameters.

The Emblem also appears on Officer pins. Each of the Emblems consists of an accurate reproduction of the patented (Original 1920 Patent No. 55398, renewed by Acts of Congress, Aug. 1935, June 1949, June 1962 and April 1976) American Legion Auxiliary Emblem in four colors— gold, dark gold, Reflex blue and white. Each can be displayed on a background of a diameter slightly larger than the Emblem proper. The details of construction and general proportions as indicated in the example following are to be followed accurately in reproducing the Emblem.

Use of the American Legion Auxiliary Emblem is controlled by the National Headquarters. If a local Unit, Post, or Department wishes to use the Emblem on an item to be manufactured locally, a letter of request to duplicate the Emblem must be sent to the National Secretary of the American Legion Auxiliary. The letter must state who will perform the duplicating (the name of the salesperson is insufficient), the name of the product and the exact amount being ordered. Authority to duplicate is granted for the specific number. Additional quantities require new authority. Products must be of U.S. manufacture.

# Public Relations Tools



When the American Legion Auxiliary was formed to support the work of The American Legion, one of its first acts was to adopt an Emblem similar to that of the Legion, yet distinctive and true to the work of the Auxiliary. Under this Emblem, the Auxiliary has worked for more than eighty years with the Legion in constructive service to country, America's veterans, children and youth, and community.

# Message Points



## Key to Telling the Auxiliary Story

### The Interview

Make certain you have a story to tell. If you do not have a message to tell readers, viewers or listeners, forego the interview.

You convey the American Legion Auxiliary message.

Don't assume the reporter knows the history of the organization.

Simply answering questions with one's own opinion fails to serve the best interest of the organization. Do not take partisan (Democrat or Republican) stands. Talk to issues using the message points.

Nearly every conceivable interview topic gives a representative of the American Legion Auxiliary an occasion to point out the organization's position.

The American Legion Auxiliary's positions on issues are taken from resolutions passed by delegates to the annual National Convention or by action of the National Executive Committee, and/or the views of The American Legion. The American Legion Auxiliary has many positions on many topics that determine the legislative priorities of the organization. Getting them understood and reported is a challenge that local Unit officers can help meet.

In order to ensure that the important facts are included in an interview, one must study the message points prior to the interview.

Included in this section are a few examples of message points from the national organization. Use these message points to prepare for interviews related to the message point topics.

# Message Points

Most of us learned at a young age that when a question was asked, to answer it. Wait for another question to be asked. If we were asked another question, we followed the same process: answer and stop. A diagram of such a conversation would look like this:

Q, A. Q, A. Q, A. Q, A.

This is called a “Question-Answer – Question-Answer” dialogue. In this situation, the individual asking the question has complete control.

When being interviewed, one must go beyond answering the question. Take control of the interview and use information from pre-formulated message points.

To take control:

- answer the question and simply add relevant message points.
- “stay on message,” making certain the facts presented are important and relevant

A diagram of such a conversation would look like this:

Q, A. A. A. – Q, A. A. A. – Q, A. A. A.

This is called a “Question-Answer-Answer-Answer” dialogue. You take control. You answer the question and then bridge into your message points.

## **Bridging** (See page 50-51 samples)

What would happen if you were involved in an interview about a major event at your Unit? You were prepared with message points, but were never asked the question to give you the opportunity to “stay on message?” Taking control becomes natural when you understand the trick of “bridging.”

Bridging is used to move from a quick answer to one of your message points. It is as simple as moving from the answer to the question with a phrase.

Examples:

*“The real issue here is . . .”*

*“Yet, it’s really a case of . . .”*

*“What is important is . . .”*

*“That is just the first step . . .”*

# Message Points



With practice, you will soon learn how to take control without regard to the question asked. A common misconception is that you only need to make your point once. In fact, the more you make the same point, the better chance your message point will be aired on radio or television or printed in the newspaper. Interviews that last 15 minutes or more demand that you make your point over and over again because only a brief part of what you say will make it to the story.

**Flagging** (See page 50-51 for samples)

The technique to make it easy for a reporter to remember your key point is known as “flagging.” Think of flagging as a way of telling your best friend the most important point of an issue. When you’ve covered a lot of information over 15 or 20 minutes of an interview, flagging will help the reporter sort out the key points, quickly.

Many times, an interview will end with the reporter asking if you’d like to say something that hasn’t been covered. That’s the perfect time to “flag” by re-emphasizing the most important point. The simple phrase: *“Yes, if you only remember one thing in looking at this issue is . . . remember . . .”* is a flag to your main point.

Other examples include:

*“There are many facets to the problem – but what you must remember is . . .”*

*“The most important fact to remember is . . .”*

*“It all boils down to . . .”*

# Message Points

## Sample Membership Message Points

- The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women’s patriotic service organization in the world,with nearly 1 million members.
- There are more than 10,000 Units throughout the United States and several foreign countries.
- Every person on active duty today is eligible for membership in The American Legion. Female active duty service members are also eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary. Eligibility has been open since the Persian Gulf War, beginning Aug. 2, 1990.
- The American Legion Auxiliary is a growing organization with enormous growth potential.
- America has 19 million wartime military veterans, including females eligible for Auxiliary membership through their own service.
- Generally speaking, for every Legionnaire, there are three potential Auxiliary members in his or her family.
- The Junior program of the American Legion Auxiliary provides an early start to Auxiliary membership. Juniors are girls and young women under the age of 18 who participate in programs that reflect and support the work of the Auxiliary.
- At the age of 18, Junior members automatically are eligible for full, active Senior membership.
- The American Legion Auxiliary’s programs and policies are committed to our nation’s veterans, young people and community.

*\* See Legion and Auxiliary Web sites for current Message Points*



# Message Points



## Sample National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Message Points

- The American Legion Auxiliary believes in the rehabilitation and recovery that veterans can achieve through creative arts therapy.
- The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival allows gold medal-winning veterans to showcase their talents in art, dance, drama and music during a gala talent show.
- The American Legion Auxiliary is a national co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The other co-sponsors of the festival are the Department of Veterans Affairs and Help Hospitalized Veterans. The Non-Commissioned Officers Association is a national sponsor of the event.
- The American Legion Auxiliary has contributed over \$75,000 to the Creative Arts Festival annually.
- The American Legion Auxiliary pays for a third of the total cost split between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Help Hospitalized Veterans and the American Legion Auxiliary.
- The American Legion Auxiliary encourages local support in VA facilities for creative arts therapy. Members encourage patient involvement in the contest and donate needed supplies for competition. The competition is open to all veterans receiving medical treatment in Department of Veterans Affairs facilities across the country.

# Message Points

## Sample Interview Questions and Answers

- 1. What is the American Legion Auxiliary? Background on the organization.**
  - World’s largest women’s patriotic service organization
  - Nearly 1 million members
  - There are more than 10,000 Units throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries.
  
- 2. The number of veterans organizations, and veterans, especially WWII veterans, are declining each day. How do you maintain your membership numbers? How is the ALA dealing with this problem?**
  - Actually, the ALA is a vital organization with amazing growth potential.
  - Everyone who has served on active duty since 1990 is eligible for membership in The American Legion, meaning that female family members of that veteran or a female veteran herself are eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary– That’s enormous growth potential!
  - And, *it all boils down to* the fact that we support our service members.
  - In fact, we support our veterans through rehabilitation programs that help to bring out the talents of our veterans through the Veterans Creative Arts Festival, which will take place at XXXXX.
  - Another rehabilitative program, you are probably familiar with, is the poppy program where 100% of funds collected from donations are returned to the veterans themselves!
  - We also continue to recruit new members because we have so many wonderful programs like the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, Girls Nation, and Americanism Youth Conference at Freedoms Foundation.
  
- 3. What type of programs does the Auxiliary support in order to educate our young people?**
  - Again, *this all comes back to* educating our youth about supporting our service members.
  - Our American Legion Auxiliary members really know how to do this by going out into their communities and talking to schools about the type of programs the American Legion Auxiliary supports.
  - And educating youth about the type of scholarships that we offer to college-bound students, as well as, volunteer opportunities within the community at VA (veterans affairs facilities/medical centers).
  - You may have heard of Girls State and Girls Nation, two very educational programs that the Auxiliary offers for young women. Our counterpart, The American Legion also offers a Boys State and Boys Nation program.

# Message Points



## 4. Does the Auxiliary support the War on Terror?

- Well, *the real issue here is* supporting our veterans and service members, who in turn follow orders from our Commander in Chief.
- With the help of our American Legion counterpart, the American Legion Auxiliary supports the Blue Star Banner initiative. This is a program that has been brought back to life to let communities know which families have been affected by the War on Terror.
- Our National President XXXX would explain the importance of our National Security committee at this time.
- As a part of the Children & Youth committee, the Auxiliary supports the Family Support Network provided by The American Legion. This is for families that need help at home after a loved one has been called into active duty. Our local American Legion Auxiliary members volunteer their time and efforts to help support our troops currently serving overseas!

## 5. Do you support our President of the United States right now?

- Well, *the real issue here is* endorsing the issues, and serving our veterans.
- We support our Commander in Chief.
- *What you must remember is* that American Legion Auxiliary is that it is a non-partisan organization, meaning we do not affiliate ourselves with one political party or another.

## 6. Do you have anything you would like to add before we conclude?

- *If you don't remember anything else,* I just want to re-emphasize the fact that the American Legion Auxiliary is a vital and growing organization.
- *Our main goal is* to support our service members overseas right now, their families here at home, and our veterans that have previously served.
- If you, or anyone you know has a family member currently serving, contact your local American Legion Post or American Legion Auxiliary Unit for more information on Blue Star Banners.
- Find out how you can become involved in these wonderful organizations.
- Are you a veteran? Have you served your country? Are you a Legionnaire? If yes, do you have female family members?



# Speaker's Manual



The Speaker's Manual is a resource tool for any Auxiliary member who may be called upon to speak about the organization before an audience.

As the speaker becomes more familiar with her subject and gains self-confidence before an audience, we encourage her to rely on her own words and ideas.

## The Speech

Speeches are a powerful form of communication. They are an important means of conveying the Auxiliary message while contributing a positive organizational image to various audiences.

Audiences are very perceptive. They respond best when a speaker can offer them useful or interesting information with credibility in an entertaining fashion.

Auxiliary members are usually asked to speak for the following reasons:

- To inform the audience or fellow members about a particular topic, program, issue.
- To motivate the audience into positive action (internal public relations).
- To introduce the American Legion Auxiliary and its role in the community (external public relations).
- To bring greetings or act as a representative on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary during formal occasions.

## Public Speaking Guide

If a verbal invitation is extended, ask your host to confirm in writing the speaking date, time, location, requested speech content, length and any special arrangements. Prepare a brief introduction of yourself and send it to the program director.

Sample pre-written speeches for the American Legion Auxiliary can be found online at: [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org). Logon to the home page and click on Public Relations on the left hand side of the screen. Under Public Relations, Sample Speeches will be listed.

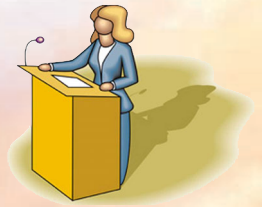
Also use the Legion Web site, [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) to find speeches and use them to create your own version of a speech.

# Speaker's Manual

## Successful Presentation Tips

- Rehearse numerous times prior to the presentation.
- Arrive on time or a little early.
- Underline your key points.
- Dress comfortably in professional attire which will not distract the audience.
- Walk erect and with confidence when approaching the podium.
- Make eye contact with your audience and make sure to smile and keep a positive attitude.
- Your notes should be double-spaced and in large print. Number the pages.
- Speak slowly, distinctly, with confidence and sincerity. If you are positive and confident, the audience will find you credible.
- Keep your movement at the podium to a minimum.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Do not let visual aids dominate in your presentation. Stand to the left of the screen if one is used.
- Dim, but do not completely darken the room.
- Face your audience, not the visuals.
- Use gestures to enhance your presentation, being careful not to rattle papers or hit the microphone.
- Avoid using jargon, obscure technical terms or unfamiliar words. Keep it simple, concise and conversational.
- Inexperienced speakers are advised to avoid long stories, jokes or humorous anecdotes.
- Limit your speech to no longer than 20 minutes unless your host specified otherwise.
- Try to end your speech with an idea, not a quote. Never end with “Thank you.”
- Most importantly, relax and be yourself!

# Speaker's Manual



In order to take control when giving a speech or presentation, follow these guidelines:

- Prepare in advance
- Keep a positive attitude
- Show enthusiasm
- Tell the American Legion Auxiliary story in a way only your experiences can express.

Written guidelines:

- Use 18-point type
- Double space type
- Underline your key points
- Don't carry sentences from one page to another
- Don't staple pages together
- Don't keep your pages in a binder
- Number your pages
- Leave a decent margin on the left side for your last minute notes or directions, i.e. smile, emphasize this point.
- Avoid organizational jargon and acronyms. Keep it simple, concise and conversational.

*Many people use on-line resources to find quotes and other information for a speech. A word of caution: Check the source. Many stories and quotes can not be validated. If you're not confident of the source, don't use it. In all cases of using a quote, you must be sure to credit the source.*

(See Reference Material, Section Eight).

# Speaker's Manual

## Elements of a Speech Checklist

### *Opening or Introduction:*

- ✓ Thank the person who introduced you, and if necessary, address the highest ranking person present.
- ✓ Open the speech with a provocative idea or dramatic statement to gain attention. A quote from a famous person (particularly a woman) or document is an effective way to set the stage for your speech.
- ✓ Let the audience know exactly what you intend to talk about and why it is important.

### *Body of the Speech:*

- ✓ Check your facts, know your sources and have them available.
- ✓ Develop 3-5 main points, one at a time. Too many points will not be remembered. If more are necessary, use visual aids and hand out materials to reinforce them.
- ✓ Use smooth transitions to flow from one point to another. Don't move back and forth between points.
- ✓ Use clear, precise information.
- ✓ Vary sentence length and the intensity of delivery, raising and lowering your voice to regain attention.
- ✓ Give examples to prove your points and drive home the facts.
- ✓ Ask rhetorical questions to involve the audience.
- ✓ Use personal experiences.

### *Conclusion:*

- ✓ Have a strong finish. Summarize and restate your key points.
- ✓ Challenge the audience to take action and do something constructive.
- ✓ Praise and affirm their effort.



# Speaker's Manual



## Explanation of the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary

*"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America ..."*

The first of the 10 principles of The American Legion and Auxiliary is a sacred pledge of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. It is most appropriate that the first ideas presented in the Preamble be dedicated to the continued defense of our nation by those very persons who have either served in wartime or had a close relative who served. The pledge to uphold and defend America is the first obligation of every Legionnaire and Auxiliary member.

*"To maintain law and order ..."*

Law and order must be maintained if freedom is to be maintained. Liberty is not license. Good government means that all citizens are secure in their lives and property. To this, the Legion and Auxiliary are pledged by the second principle stated in the Preamble.

*"To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism ..."*

The term "Americanism" covers all of the things that have made the American nation great and the American people free. It implies qualities of character as well as principles of government. Under this Constitution's principles, the Legion and Auxiliary have worked, and are continuing to work, to defeat the attempts of subversive organizations to undermine our system. We attempt to build loyalty to and confidence in American ideals, and to develop an American citizenship capable of making America's free form of government a constantly greater success.

*"To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during the Great Wars ..."*

Every member of the Auxiliary has close personal associations with the sacrifice of war, be it World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada/Lebanon, Panama and Persian Gulf War. The associations and incidents of these struggles are to be remembered not only for their heroes, their victories for freedom, but also to remind us of the awful implications and inevitable tragedies accompanying war.

*"To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation ..."*

The individual is the basis of the American nation. Unlike other ideas of government, the American ideal places the individual first. The nation belongs to the individual, not the individual to the nation. The government exists for the purpose of serving the individual, not the individual for the purpose of serving the nation. If this ideal is to survive, there must be a voluntary sense of obligation of the individual to the nation and its component parts, the community and state. The American citizen serves his community, state and nation, not as a driven slave, but as a free man guided by his own sense of duty. To inculcate this feeling among all Americans is one of the great purposes of the Legion

# Speaker's Manual

## Preamble Explanation Cont.

and Auxiliary.

*"To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses ..."*

If America is to remain "the land of the free," the government must always be a government of all the people and for all the people. No classes are recognized in America. No masses of downtrodden people exist. Neither must be permitted to develop, but America must be kept the country of opportunity for all, where every citizen's first allegiance is to the nation, not to some social or economic class or mass. Dominance must not be gained by any such grouping of Americans. This is another basic pledge of the Legion and Auxiliary.

*"To make right the master of might ..."*

The American form of government guarantees equal rights to all citizens. The American Legion Auxiliary, born from a struggle against ruthless might, pledges their strength to a continued struggle to prevent invasion of the rights of any citizen by any force, no matter of what character.

*"To promote peace and goodwill on earth ..."*

The men and women of the Legion and the women of the Auxiliary know well the ghastly futility of war. We know that war brings only misery to any nation, which engages in it, to the victor as well as the vanquished. With the lessons of war constantly in mind, we pledge ourselves to promote peace and goodwill among nations. We have worked steadily in the cause in the face of forces, which have sought to sow enmity and war throughout the world.

*"To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy ..."*

These were the principles that inspired America's great war efforts over the decades, and the Legion and Auxiliary stand determined that these principles should not be lost to America in time of peace. Following this pledge, the Legion and Auxiliary work to safeguard justice, freedom and democracy against the dangers of indifferent citizenship and undermining by their enemies. It strives to give understanding of and devotion to these principles to the younger generations of Americans so that they will endure for the future of the country.

*"To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion ..."*

Thus, the Auxiliary pledges its full strength to the support of The American Legion, and affirm its character as an auxiliary to the Legion. It has always been faithful to this pledge, never developing programs or policies of its own, but directing all of its activities towards the "accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion."

# Speaker's Manual



*"To consecrate and sanctify our association by devotion to mutual helpfulness."*

In this final phrase of the Preamble is set forth the purpose which has guided the Legion and Auxiliary in all of their vast rehabilitation and youth work; in everything they have done to lighten the burden for those suffering from the results of wars; and to bring full justice to those paying the human price for America's victory. In this work of mercy and relief, the Auxiliary has made great contributions toward the achievement of the Legion's purpose.

###

## Sample Memorial Day Speech

It is appropriate that we speak of the Flag this day as we are gathered to honor those Americans who distinguished themselves by their sacrifice while serving under that Flag.

We pause to reflect on the enormity of that sacrifice, the high cost of liberty. The freedom we hold dear has been continually defended with courage, faith and loyalty. While this is a day to honor those who fell in battle, it is also a day to cherish that symbol under which they fought and died.

The following reading is by an unknown author, but I believe if the Flag could tell a story, the message would sound something like this:

"I remember the stillness of the cold night and the quiet frosty breathing of the men as they guided their small boats around the ice floes as we crossed the Delaware to make our attack on Trenton. . .and the summer hell of Gettysburg, as hundreds of miniballs tore at my fabric and brave men fell like wheat before a scythe.

"I remember the foul stench of poison gases and the barbed wire and bodies that littered the nightmare landscape of no man's land in the Great War . . .and those marines who fought their way up the slopes of Suribachi to fly me from the highest point on Iwo Jima for all to see.

"I remember the trembling, frostbitten hands, with barely enough strength to hold my staff, as I led our men out of the frozen Chosin Reservoir, bringing all our dead with us. . .the dark, damp, suffocating air and the sudden blinding flashes of the booby traps and ambushes of the jungles of Vietnam. . .and the scorching heat, the burning oil, and the choking sands of the deserts of the Persian Gulf.

"I have seen fear and great valor. I have seen acts of bravery and self-sacrifice that defy description. Yet the greatest thing I have seen, so many times over, is the face of a young American, about to breathe his final breath, turning to take his last look at me, his flag.

"I remember those faces, each and every one. It is my sacred obligation and the duty of all Americans to remember, because without those young Americans throughout our history I would stand for

# Speaker's Manual

## Memorial Day Speech Cont.

nothing.

There would be no America, no democratic ideals, and no need for a flag to be their symbol.

"So, whenever you see me at a ball game, flying atop a building or hanging in the corner of a classroom, take a good look at me and remember those for whom I stand.

"The white of my stripes is for the pureness of their patriotism and the unselfishness of their service. The red is for the blood they spilled so that others might live and be free. The blue is for their true loyalty to our land and their dedication to their fellow Americans. The stars are for the light of hope and freedom they brought into the lives of all the peoples they have fought for around the world.

"When you see me draped across a casket, you know that there lies the most honorable of all Americans. I fly high above their cemeteries for all to see so that everyone will know that this is the place of heroes.

"When I pass by, take off your hat and be silent; not for me, but for those I represent.

"When you salute, it is not for this cloth, but for the souls who gave me something for which to stand.

"When you pause today to look at me, think only of them."

The individual who wrote this piece had a true understanding of the value Americans place on "Old Glory." Our Flag has become a beacon of hope and liberty only because of the sacrifices of the men and women who have served that Flag so well.

Our Flag tells the struggle for independence, of Union preserved, of liberty and Union one and inseparable, of the sacrifices of brave men and women to whom the ideals and honor of this nation have been dearer than life. It tells the world, "America is strong and equal to her tasks."

Today, in tens of thousands of homes, carefully folded and lovingly preserved an American Flag rests in a place of honor. . . a token of a loved one's sacrifice. That Flag once draped the coffin of a service man or woman; it holds tears and a lifetime of memories. It offers pride to accompany the pain and sorrow of those whom the fallen have left behind.

It is altogether fitting that we celebrate on Memorial Day the freedom that has been won and sustained by these fallen heroes. You won't find their name in history books, but they are heroes none the less.

Those who answered their country's call and placed themselves in harms way; who put the welfare of their comrades ahead of their own safety; who placed duty ahead of personal interests, are heroes.

# Speaker's Manual



## Memorial Day Speech Cont.

When war came, they gave up the joys of youth and set aside their personal goals for their country. They traded the comforts of home for the horrors of the battlefield.

These patriots have established with their lives, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press and our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our country has endured because it was founded on principles that are right and true and worth dying for.

Memorial Day should be a day of tribute . . . a day of flags, wreaths, crosses and flowers decorating the graves of our deceased. As the lonely notes of taps are played, we must all remember the cost of human life to preserve our freedom.

We must never take for granted what America's veterans have died to preserve. We owe a great debt to them, one that we can never repay. However, we must never forget that debt and never forget to honor them.

Some veterans came home draped in Old Glory . . . some never came home! They disappeared without a trace. Men and women died or were captured for their country.

We remember friends and relatives who survived the battle, came home and since have gone on to post everlasting. Today, we honor their fighting spirit as it has allowed us to live in peace.

Memorial Day is not only about remembering the men and women who made that supreme sacrifice while defending the American way. It is about acknowledging and protecting the ideals they died for so their sacrifice shall not be in vain.

Let each of us renew our determination to keep faith with those who have dedicated a portion of their lives toward defending our individual liberty and our right to be a free democratic government.

With a little effort, we can acknowledge that we gratefully remember those Americans who proved this nation to be indeed, "the home of the brave;" yesterday, today and always. We need to honor them on this day and vow they will not be forgotten.

God bless our fallen comrades and may God continue to bless this United States of America!

###

# Speaker's Manual

## Sample Girls State Speech

On behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary, I welcome you to Girls State and congratulate you on being selected to participate in this prestigious American Legion Auxiliary program. You are about to embark on a wonderful journey of self-discovery and learning.

During this exciting time in your life, the things you choose to do today will have a lasting impact on your future. The next few days will be a memorable and rewarding experience for you – just as they have been for those that attended before you. This is a once in a lifetime experience – make it all that it can be!

Since 1937, over one million exceptional young women, just like you, from every state in the Nation have participated in the American Legion Auxiliary's Girls State program. With your arrival here, you are a part of your state's proud tradition of women who have stood where you are now – at the threshold of young adulthood. Girls State has been the source of many lifelong friendships and professional relationships. Girls State citizens have taken their rightful place as America's "movers and shakers" raising families, serving their communities, and working in a multitude of different professions.

The American Legion Auxiliary believes that good government begins with informed involvement by responsible citizens. You are encouraged to make the most of this special opportunity to learn firsthand about the democratic traditions of our great Nation and to explore the inner workings of your city, county, and state government.

The Girls State program is a special gift from the nearly 1 million caring members of the American Legion Auxiliary to you, who will inherit the great responsibility and privilege of citizenship and to our nation, the greatest country on earth.

We offer you our very best wishes for a happy and successful week. Enjoy it!

###

# Speaker's Manual



## Sample Girls State/Girls Nation Speech

For over 60 years, the American Legion Auxiliary has provided an unique opportunity for young women who will be entering their senior year of high school to learn first hand how our system of government works through the Girls State and Girls Nation programs. Over 1 million "citizens" have participated since the first Girls State session in 1937, and thousands have attended Girls Nation since it began in 1948.

Each summer in 49 states approximately 25,000 enthusiastic young women participate in Girls State sessions where they learn responsible citizenship and the mechanisms of their city, county, and state government. Two outstanding young "citizens" from each state are selected to attend Girls Nation, held annually in the Washington, DC area. At Girls Nation, 98 "Senators" are introduced to the complexities of the federal government. With the guidance of experienced Auxiliary volunteers, the Senators gain a new perspective on democracy and develop the leadership, confidence, and poise that will be their foundation for successful and responsible adulthood. Running for an elected office teaches candidates how to win (or lose) gracefully. Political campaigning molds leaders and dependable team players. Working to enact legislation teaches valuable communication skills. Leadership qualities are gained through every Girls State/Girls Nation experience.

A possible highlight of Girls Nation is the visit to the White House and personal audience with the President of the United States. The Senators may present the President with the bills they enacted during their own congressional sessions. The Senators may also meet with various high-ranking government officials and spend a day on Capitol Hill which affords them the opportunity to meet with their own state's legislators.

Girls State/Nation participants are outstanding rising seniors in high school. They may attend large schools with thousands of students or small schools with only a few hundred students. They may be only children or from large families. They include every income level, racial and religious background and live in the inner cities, suburbs, small towns, and farms of every state in the Nation.

Many of the participants, but not all, are recommended to the American Legion Auxiliary by their high school faculty. Some schools require submission of applications or essays and other teacher recommendations. Qualifications are based on the following characteristics: leadership, initiative, character, cooperation, honesty, physical fitness, and scholarship. Although schools may recommend participants, it is ultimately the American Legion Auxiliary's responsibility, in coordination with contributing organizations, for the selection of Girls State citizens. Units may select applicants from other than high school recommendations, which include home-schooled young women. American Legion Auxiliary Units often conduct personal interviews with each candidate to determine their interest in government and aptitude for the program before making a final decision.

Despite the great diversity of their interests and backgrounds and no matter what their specific talents might be, the young people who attend these sessions are all extremely bright and accomplished indi-

# Speaker's Manual

viduals. Most have public speaking experience and hold leadership positions in their schools and com

## **Girls State/Girls Nation Speech Cont.**

munities. They are high achievers, academically and socially, and are involved in many extracurricular school and community activities. Many have already received recognition for their achievements and many have already decided on a career path.

Girls State and Girls Nation have been the source of many lifelong friendships and professional relationships through the years. Past participants include scores of extraordinary women of all ages, married and single, working in a variety of occupations. Despite their differences, these women all share a never-to-be-forgotten experience and provide living proof that everything is possible when talent, ability, and enthusiasm are combined with sound principles, discipline, hard work, and loving guidance along the way.

The American Legion Auxiliary has long been recognized by Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, for the Girls State and Girls Nation programs. The programs have received several prestigious awards including the Americana Award, the Distinguished Service Award, and the George Washington Honor Medal for Excellence. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the NASSP National Advisory List of contests and activities. Most colleges and universities include attendance at Girls State in their college applications.

An added benefit of attending Girls State is the opportunity to compete for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. One citizen from Girls and Boys State is selected and receives a \$1,000 scholarship and their application is submitted to the National Headquarters of The American Legion where they will compete with other students across the nation for additional monetary scholarships.

Girls State and Girls Nation are a gift from the American Legion Auxiliary to the nation and to our young people – the citizens of the future.

Direct all inquiries and requests for additional information about your state's Girls State program to the attention of the Department Secretary, American Legion Auxiliary Department Headquarters:

###

(See [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org) to find updated copies of speeches)





### **National American Legion Press Association (NALPA)**

The National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) is an association of editors, writers, business managers, historians, public relations officers and staff personnel who are members of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, The Sons of The American Legion and other subsidiary organizations.

Founded in 1923 as an adjunct to the Legion's early publications committee, NALPA was established to facilitate communications, from the National organization to the Post level, within The American Legion. Through a network of active members, NALPA fulfills the mission by encouraging idea exchanges among members; promoting the development of local communications; advancing training through information dissemination; enhancing professional development; promoting the Legion's goals; and, acting as a voice of the association's membership.

NALPA is a professional association of Legion public relations officers, editors and staff members of publications who come together to enhance their trades. Through local publications, NALPA encourages Posts and Departments to promote local Legion objectives to the membership. All members hear about the National agenda from National Headquarters' publications and mailings, but many don't always know what is happening in their own backyards. NALPA helps Posts and Departments get their message out.

NALPA's association with the National Public Relations Division and The American Legion Magazine has made it easier for the average NALPA Legionnaire to keep up-to-date on the happenings of The American Legion Family if he or she is a NALPA member. By becoming a NALPA member, you are eligible for a discount on a subscription to The American Legion's *Dispatch* newspaper.

## SECTION SEVEN

# NALPA

### **Department Press Associations**

A Department Press Association is just as vital and necessary as the Department itself in the set-up of The American Legion organization.

Department Press Associations can tie all its papers together for the purpose of mutual helpfulness. It can encourage its editors to exchange papers. It can supervise existing publications to help improve effectiveness. It can carry on an active campaign, Post by Post, to create new publications. It can publish its own monthly newsletter, designed to help Post publications through suggested material, suggested editorials, and calling attention to various programs and events that Posts should publish. It should spearhead the yearly Legion membership drive by seeing that all its Post publications use all printed methods to stimulate these drives.

A Department Press Association is a subsidiary of the National American Legion Public Association (NALPA), and wherever possible, collects national dues at the same time it collects department dues and forwards them to the NALPA headquarters.

It is suggested that a Department Press Association meet at least twice a year – the Department Convention and Mid-Winter Conference have been found to be the best times. A Public Relations and Publicity Workshop should be held at each meeting.

A Department Press Association can make yearly awards to the best publications as an incentive to increase effectiveness, as well as an award for a job well done. The suggested time to make these awards is at the annual meeting in conjunction with the Department Convention.

For planning purposes, the close of the fiscal year for a Department Press Association coincides with the annual Department Convention. Yearly reports should be made at this time, and officers should be elected for the coming year. The president should appoint a nominating committee and an auditing committee at least two months prior to the annual meeting.

A Department Press Association can be organized even though there are only two or three Post publications in the Department. The prime purpose of a Department Press Association shall always be the creation of new post publications.

Increased membership is needed to carry on programs and insure the future of The American Legion. Department Press Associations, with initiative and determination, can lead the way to a greater American Legion Family that will be more effectively represent the majority America's veterans.

If your Department is interested in starting an association, refer to the National American Legion Press Association Web site at: [www.legion.nalpa.org](http://www.legion.nalpa.org). Or write to: NALPA, Public Relations, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055



**NALPA Membership Application**

New

Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept./Detachment: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of:

\_\_\_\_ The American Legion Post: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ American Legion Auxiliary Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Sons of The American Legion Squadron: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

Print and return this form with your \$10 check, payable to NALPA. (If you'd like to get the Dispatch at a discounted rate, please fill out the below form and include \$16 total payment).

Mail to: NALPA, Public Relations, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206

**For NALPA members: \$6 Dispatch Subscription (a \$9 savings)**  
 Fill out this form & mail it with your check or money order to:  
 The American Legion Public Relations Division, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
 Total NALPA Annual Dues \$10 (\$16 if including *The Dispatch*)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: Renewal  New  Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

Order Dispatch (\$6 additional ) Yes  No  Total amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



# SECTION EIGHT

## Reference Material



### American Legion Auxiliary

- ★ To support The American Legion and its programs for veterans, young people and community
- ★ To provide for today's needs while being advocates for a brighter future
- ★ To advance the understanding of patriotism and responsibility of citizenship
- ★ To promote individual integrity and family values
- ★ To ensure as volunteers, that Auxiliary members continue to be the leaders in all that is good in the nation today, tomorrow and for generations to come through serving others first and not self

The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest patriotic women's service organization in the world, with nearly 1 million members. Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a veterans' service organization with members in nearly 10,000 American communities. The organization sponsors volunteer programs on the national and local levels, focusing on three major areas: veterans, young people and the community.

Auxiliary members believe in the ideals and principles of America's founding fathers and pledge to foster patriotism, preserve and defend the Constitution, promote allegiance to God and Country, and uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. The Auxiliary embodies the spirit of America that has prevailed through war and peace and continues to stand firmly behind America today, as it did when the organization was first founded.

Initially, the Auxiliary was organized by concerned women who took on the day-to-day responsibilities of life when their male family members went across sea during World War I. Aware of the many fatherless families and the needs of returning veterans, Auxiliary women vowed to continue their supportive roles when the veterans of World War I founded The American Legion in 1919. Auxiliary members today are wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of these courageous veterans. Some members are veterans themselves.

The Auxiliary has conceived and implemented hundreds of programs for veterans, their families, young people and the community at large. Many programs have been expanded, creating commonly accepted institutions within the community and nation.

Two of the American Legion Auxiliary's showcase programs are Girls State and Girls Nation. Both are intended for young women entering their senior year in high school with an interest in local, state and federal government. As a result of participation in these programs, these young women take responsibility for good citizenship and develop an understanding of government.

In addition to the Girls State and Girls Nation programs, the Auxiliary takes part in many community service projects and activities, while providing a focal point for citizens' involvement within their own communities. The Auxiliary raises more than \$18 million every year and reinvests these funds in VA medical centers and community programs. Thousands of hours are devoted to crime prevention, instructing children, elderly and the general public on safety and protection within the community. The Auxiliary supports programs for drug and alcohol abuse, missing children, teen suicide and teen pregnancy while working with organizations like the Children's Miracle Network and Red Cross.

Auxiliary volunteers are the backbone of assistance in 171 VA Medical Centers. These volunteers not only provide diversion and entertainment for patients, but assist the hospital staff in physical and psychological therapy. There are more than 20 programs nationwide that receive support and financial aid from the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Auxiliary is a national co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Along with The American Legion, the Auxiliary has helped to lead the movement to return to the people their right to protect the American Flag from physical acts of desecration. The American Legion Family is working in Washington for passage of a Constitutional amendment to help protect and preserve the fabric of the nation.

The services of the American Legion Auxiliary directly and indirectly touch the lives of all Americans. With the philosophy of "Service, not Self," the American Legion Auxiliary develops a strong spirit of volunteerism in its members, who have joined together in the fellowship of giving to others.

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## American Legion Auxiliary Programs

### AMERICANISM

The Auxiliary's Americanism program promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship and strives to uphold and promote American ideals and the principles of democracy.

The goal of the Auxiliary's Americanism program is to educate every citizen on the fundamentals of American government, the Bill of Rights and the value of active, informed involvement in the home, in the Auxiliary organization and in the community. Most successful Americanism programs are cooperative efforts between an Auxiliary Unit and its community. Contributions donated to the Spirit of Youth Fund by individuals, organizations and members' estates, benefit young people through such programs as the Americanism Youth Conference at Freedom's Foundation and the National President's Scholarship program.

The Citizens Flag Alliance is a non-partisan confederation of organizations and individuals who wish to protect the United States flag from acts of physical desecration. The Citizens Flag Alliance's goal is to pass a Constitutional amendment prohibiting flag desecration. The American Legion Auxiliary joined this effort in 1994 due to its belief that the flag is unique, deserving proper respect, care and protection.

### AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund is an excellent example of the Auxiliary's dedication to "Women Helping Women." The fund, established in 1969, is supported by contributions from Auxiliary Units and members. It provides temporary emergency financial assistance to Auxiliary members who have exhausted all other personal and community resources. For members who find themselves suddenly single, deserted, divorced, or widowed, with no skills to support themselves or their families, the Displaced Homemakers Fund provides immediate aide to help the member acquire new job skills through schooling or job training.

### CAVALCADE OF MEMORIES

Auxiliary members feel an obligation to preserve the history and traditions of their organization. The Cavalcade of Memories was established in 1972 at the Auxiliary's Indianapolis Headquarters to house valuable, historical keepsakes collected and contributed by different Departments throughout the years. Today, more than 80 year's worth of Auxiliary memorabilia is on display in the Cavalcade and throughout National Headquarters.

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Auxiliary's Children and Youth program provides care and strives to improve conditions for all children. The program works to preserve the integrity of the family unit and takes a realistic approach to the needs of children by considering the physical and spiritual, as well as the emotional and educational aspects, of each situation. The Children and Youth program cooperates with many other public and private community agencies and organizations and supports essential legislation for children at the national, state, and local levels. In some cases, the program offers direct financial assistance and services to individual children or to the families of veterans. Auxiliary members also contribute to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, which was established in 1954 to fund special programs and projects which emphasize preventative solutions to difficult children's issues. Educating members and the general public about these issues is a primary goal of the Auxiliary's Children and Youth program.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Auxiliary's Community Service program is based on the premise that no organization has a right to exist within the community without giving something to that community in return. Community service helps to make our communities better places in which to live. Auxiliary members study community needs, recommend projects, raise funds and donate their time to accomplish their specific objectives. Special attention is given to the selection

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of each project to ensure that the work of other organizations is not duplicated. Auxiliary Units also provide assistance on Community Service projects sponsored by American Legion Posts and work with other organizations to implement practical, worthwhile projects for the benefit of the community.

Some examples include, blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, support for women in shelters, donations to shelters for the homeless, tree plantings, recycling programs, and disaster and emergency preparedness programs.

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The Auxiliary's Constitution and Bylaws program encourages Auxiliary members to study and understand the organization's formal written policies and procedures, particularly as they relate to the rights and benefits of membership. Members are encouraged to review the Auxiliary Constitution and Bylaws on an annual basis and may submit ideas for review and possible change.

## EDUCATION

Auxiliary members believe that a solid educational foundation is the cornerstone of American freedom. The Auxiliary's Education program promotes quality education for every child and supports students in their desire to continue their education beyond high school. Auxiliary members work actively with educators and local schools to develop and maintain an educational system that serves the needs of all children at every level. Auxiliary volunteers sponsor and support state and national education legislation; establish new scholarship opportunities for students; alert eligible students to existing scholarship resources; help students identify career opportunities and professional job requirements; and encourage students to plan early for college and apply for scholarship opportunities.

## GIRLS STATE/GIRLS NATION

Girls State is a nonpartisan program that teaches young women responsible citizenship and love for God and Country. Since the inception of the Girls State program in 1937, nearly one million young people have had the opportunity to learn first-hand how their state and local government works. High school girls, who have completed their junior year, spend an intensive week of study, working together as self-governing citizens at Auxiliary sponsored Girls State programs in every state, with the exception of Hawaii. They learn how to participate in the functioning of their state's government in preparation for their future roles as responsible adult citizens. Two girls are selected from each Girls State program (with the exception of Hawaii and Louisiana) to attend Girls Nation, a national government training program. Girls Nation "senators" meet for a week in Washington, D.C., where they run for political office, campaign for the passage of legislation and possibly meet with state Representatives and Senators. Capping off the week of Girls Nation is a meeting with the President of the United States at The White House.

## JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

Junior Auxiliary membership for girls under the age of 18 is a training ground which prepares young women for active adult membership. Junior activities and programs reflect and support the work of the Auxiliary and instill the ideals of the organization. The Junior program is an important step in the transition from childhood to responsible adulthood. At age 18, Junior members automatically are eligible for full, active membership.

## LEADERSHIP

The success of any organization depends largely upon the skill and competence of its leaders. Auxiliary members are vitally concerned with developing present and future leadership within the organization. Comprehensive training courses and materials are offered in every Auxiliary Department and by the National organization. Courses focus on fundamental management and communication skills and outline the basic

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responsibilities and leadership opportunities which are available within the many programs of the Auxiliary. Units and Departments conduct leadership workshops with motivational speakers to increase enthusiasm for all Auxiliary programs.

### LEGISLATIVE

Auxiliary members are encouraged to get involved and stay informed on local and national issues of special interest to the organization. They keep in close contact with their legislative representatives about issues which concern veterans, young people and entire communities. Auxiliary members know there is strength in numbers. Many beneficial laws have been passed because of Legion and Auxiliary support.

### MEMBERSHIP

The Auxiliary's Membership program conducts ongoing recruiting to ensure the future growth and prosperity of the organization. Unit members work diligently to publicize and promote the benefits, objectives and activities of the Auxiliary and seek out those eligible women who might be interested in membership and active involvement in Unit activities. Units, Departments and Divisions vie in friendly competition against one another as they work toward reaching their individual and organizational membership goals.

### NATIONAL SECURITY

The Auxiliary believes in maintaining a strong national defense and endeavors to educate its members on all vital national security issues. In cooperation with The American Legion, Auxiliary members are briefed on a wide range of topics at local and national meetings and through publications and bulletins. Topics include national and civil defense; crime prevention; emergency and disaster preparedness; and environmental protection. The member's clear understanding of the issues helps to lay the groundwork for community-wide mobilization and support of various national security activities. National activities include the annual Awareness Assembly, a legislative forum in Washington, D.C.; POW/MIA Awareness; crime prevention; and local and worldwide support of USO activities, the military and the ROTC/JROTC programs.

### PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY

Members who have served the Auxiliary as Unit, Department and/or National Presidents are a valuable resource to the organization. As members of the Past Presidents Parley committee, they put their leadership experience to good use, offering guidance and/or counsel on any activity or problem requiring special support or emphasis. Committee members also maintain a scholarship fund for nurses and contribute to the "Women in Military Service" memorial. The Past Presidents Parley is a primary source of support for hospitalized women veterans.

### POPPY

The Poppy Program is the oldest and most widely recognized Auxiliary program. Each year around Memorial Day, Auxiliary volunteers distribute millions of bright red crepe paper poppies in exchange for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans. The program provides multiple benefits to the veterans and to the community. The veterans who make the flowers are able to earn a small wage which helps to supplement their incomes and makes them feel more self-sufficient. The physical and mental activity provides many therapeutic benefits as well. Donations are used exclusively to assist and support veterans and their families. The poppy also reminds the community of the past sacrifices and continuing needs of our veterans. Auxiliary members endeavor to explain the true meaning of this little flower to all those who receive it. The poppy has become a nationally known and recognized symbol of sacrifice and is worn and used by Auxiliary members to honor the men and women who served and died for their country in all wars.



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## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Auxiliary's positive public image and excellent reputation in the community is no accident. The Public Relations program works to establish and maintain good will within the organization and with the general public and promotes the Auxiliary's many worthwhile programs, events, activities and accomplishments through every available medium. Public Relations performs a dual function. Doing things well and making sure that the public is aware of the efforts and the results ensures continued community support and awareness of Auxiliary programs. Good publicity augments and supports the Auxiliary's recruiting efforts by attracting interested, eligible women and motivating them to become active members. A major communications vehicle is the Auxiliary's bi-monthly national magazine, *National News*. This publication is a primary source of information and means of communication between the local Unit members and the organization's national leadership.

## VETERAN'S AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

The Auxiliary's Veteran's Affairs and Rehabilitation program provides service and financial assistance to veterans and their families. Auxiliary members are interested in restoring the veteran and his family to normal function — physically, mentally, socially and vocationally. Members provide emotional support and cheerful companionship while attending to the hospitalized, disabled and homebound veterans' physical comforts. In a single year, veterans' programs utilized the services of more than 100,000 hospital field and home service volunteers who donated millions of dollars and millions of hours to assist veterans. The Auxiliary's gift shops and holiday parties have become an essential part of the VA program. The Poppy program provides therapy and a means of earning money for handicapped and hospitalized veterans and their families. Members work with legislators and congressmen to pass legislation to increase government benefits and assistance for veterans. Essential equipment and supplies are purchased by caring members to upgrade and facilitate the level of care provided in veterans' facilities. Members furnish job assistance, transportation, food, clothing and medicine to thousands of needy, handicapped and homeless veterans. The Auxiliary plays a necessary and important role in the life of America's veterans.

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## American Legion Auxiliary Questions and Answers

### 1. What is the Auxiliary's primary purpose?

Auxiliary members believe in the ideals and principles of America's founding fathers and pledge to foster patriotism, preserve and defend the Constitution, promote allegiance to God and Country and to uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom to choose. Auxiliary programs were created to provide assistance, education and financial support for veterans and their families, and in the community, the organization focuses on helping to create a better society, particularly for the nation's citizens of the future, our children and young people.

### 2. What are some of the Auxiliary's major programs and activities?

*(See American Legion Auxiliary Programs sheet)*

### 3. What is the relationship between The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary?

The Legion family includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. Local Auxiliary Units are usually, but not always, affiliated with an American Legion Post through volunteer service and fund raising activities. Most programs complement The American Legion programs. The Auxiliary has expanded some of its programs and initiated others to meet the special needs of women and their families.

### 4. What is the difference between the Auxiliary and other veterans organizations?

The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world. Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a women's veterans' service organization with volunteer representation in all VA Medical Centers, hospitals and clinics. Nearly 1 million Auxiliary members in nearly 10,000 American communities provide a rich and varied resource pool of ability, talent and leadership experience.

### 5. Who can join the Auxiliary?

Membership is open to female veterans and to the wives, sisters, daughters, mothers, grandmothers, granddaughters or great-granddaughters to members of The American Legion or deceased veterans who served in the Armed Forces during World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, and/or Lebanon conflicts, and the Persian Gulf War. Step-relatives are also eligible. Descendants of veterans (great-granddaughters, etc.) are often presented with Junior memberships at birth or during childhood through the generosity of an older relative and Auxiliary member. Many of these young women continue their membership as Senior members after they reach age 18.

### 6. What do Auxiliary members have in common?

Auxiliary members are women of all ages, from all walks of life. They are service-oriented and have a variety of outside interests, activities and lifestyles. They are active in their communities. Auxiliary members share a deep and abiding concern for their fellowman, great compassion for those in need and a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to God, country and community. Auxiliary members are patriots in every sense of the word. Patriotism is not mandated through legislation or instilled by force. It is a chosen characteristic of an individual. A member's primary goal is to serve our veterans, to safeguard and nurture our nation's children and to educate all citizens, young and old, about the benefits, privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship.

### 7. What are the advantages of Auxiliary membership?

The Auxiliary is a highly visible, remarkable organization, with more than 80 proud years of service to veterans and the nation's communities. In addition to the personal gratification and rewards gained in volun

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tary service, there are many tangible benefits for members of the Auxiliary. Members receive a complimentary subscription to the Auxiliary's bimonthly publication, *National News*, special MasterCard and money-market investment plans, free travel and accident insurance, low-cost life and health insurance coverage, and discounts on interstate moves, eye-glasses, hearing aids, prescriptions and rental cars, in addition to other benefits. Auxiliary members who find themselves without other resources can obtain temporary, emergency financial assistance or money for schooling to re-enter the job market.

## 8. What types of membership are available?

Membership applications can be obtained from local Units, Department offices or National Headquarters in Indianapolis. There are two forms of membership available to eligible women. Junior membership is open to females 17 years of age and younger. Senior membership is open to women 18 years of age and older. Members can renew their membership each year or purchase a lifetime membership called "VIM" (Very Important Member). Some Units confer Honorary "Life Memberships" to outstanding members. Members wear special Honor Guard pins denoting continuous membership for a period of 5 to 80 years. Many women veterans are members of both The American Legion and the Auxiliary.

## 9. Where will new members come from?

One day a lasting peace may eliminate the need for veterans organizations like the Auxiliary. Until then, the Auxiliary continues the battle against poverty, ignorance and numerous social problems in our communities and the nation. There will always be the need for new Auxiliary volunteers who are willing to help with the important volunteer work needed. The Auxiliary seeks every opportunity to attract new members and to tell the nation about the valuable community service work of the organization.

## 10. What kinds of services does the Auxiliary provide for homeless veterans?

Auxiliary volunteers across the nation offer their support to homeless veterans in a variety of ways, depending on the preferences of individual Units and the needs of particular communities. Many local Units work closely with other organizations in their community, dedicated to helping the homeless. Individuals and entire Units may volunteer time and/or financial support to local shelters and coordinate or participate in food or clothing drives. Units may serve as a referral service to the homeless veteran as well, offering individuals in need the names and telephone numbers of local, available resources in their communities.

## 11. What is the Citizens Flag Alliance?

The Citizens Flag Alliance is a non-partisan confederation of organizations and individuals who wish to protect the United States flag from public physical desecration. Stressing education along with rallying public support, the Citizens Flag Alliance goal is to pass a Constitutional amendment, making it illegal to publicly desecrate the flag. The American Legion Auxiliary joined this effort in 1994 due to its belief that the flag is unique among our national symbols, deserving proper respect, care and protection.

## 12. How does the Auxiliary support American servicemen and women during overseas deployment?

When thousands of men and women on active duty and in the reserves are called to overseas ventures, many service families need help to cope with the emotional and financial burdens caused by the sudden separation and disruption to their lives. The American Legion and Auxiliary pledge their "mutual helpfulness" to support the families of American servicemen and women while they serve overseas through the Family Support Network, a national emergency assistance program, in which military families call a toll-free number manned by Auxiliary and Legion members with requests for help.

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## American Legion Auxiliary Chronology of Events

- 1919** The American Legion Auxiliary was first established to support The American Legion and our nation's veterans.
- 1920** Minnesota is the first Auxiliary Department.
- 1921** First National Convention convenes in Kansas City, Mo. The Poppy of Flanders Fields becomes the memorial flower of the Auxiliary.
- 1922** Gold Star Mothers and Le Societe des Huit Chapeaux et Quarante Femmes (Eight et Forty) are established.
- 1923** The four-petaled crepe paper poppy became the official memorial flower of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary and an Auxiliary Poppy Committee was appointed to define the manufacture and distribution of the official Memorial Poppy. Auxiliary Child Welfare Committee is established.
- 1925** The Auxiliary moves its National Headquarters to the War Memorial Plaza in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Auxiliary joins the Federation Interalliee des Anciens Combattants (FIDAC), formed by WWI Allied nations to promote peace.
- 1927** At the Paris Convention, it was decided that only veteran-made poppies would be distributed by the American Legion Auxiliary. *The National Auxiliary Bulletin* is distributed monthly.
- 1928** Christmas Gift Shops are set up in veterans' hospitals to provide veterans with gifts for their families.
- 1930** The Auxiliary celebrates its 10th year and begins community construction programs to employ the jobless.
- 1931** The National Poppy Committee announced that 11,272,189 poppies were made by disabled veterans and distributed by Auxiliary volunteers. Membership reached 412,063 members.
- 1933** Congress passes legislation like The Legion/ Auxiliary Four Point Program to protect the benefits of veterans.
- 1934** The Auxiliary establishes Junior membership.
- 1935** The Auxiliary sponsors a radio program, "The American Legion Auxiliary on the Air."
- 1936** *The National Auxiliary Bulletin* becomes the *National News*. The Auxiliary created its first media award, highlighting the producer of a program, which would typify America, appeal to patriotism and benefit the nation's children.

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- 1937** The American Legion Auxiliary's Girls State program is created. Auxiliary members observe the 20th anniversary of WWI with a pilgrimage to France.
- 1939** The Auxiliary severs ties with FIDAC as war in Europe intensifies. The Auxiliary's Pan American program is established.
- 1941** Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and America declares war on Japan. The Auxiliary donates six mobile blood units to the Red Cross and creates the Emergency Voluntary Committee to support the war effort.
- 1942** The National Defense Committee focuses on recruiting Army and Navy nurses. The Auxiliary establishes scholarships and sponsors 1,000 student nurses to fulfill this growing need.
- 1943** The Auxiliary donates Red Cross Club Mobiles to Italy and India. The Auxiliary mourned the passing of Moina Michael, "The Poppy Lady."
- 1944** The Auxiliary rehabilitation program for disabled veterans is created. The Auxiliary celebrates its Silver Anniversary in Chicago.
- 1945** The Auxiliary's Red Book directory of officers and chairmen is first published.
- 1946** The Auxiliary and Legion support action to expose and combat the growing influence of communism. A five-point program is developed to strengthen Americanism. The Child Welfare program directs assistance to children in war-ravaged France. Delegates at the San Francisco convention increase national dues to 50 cents for Senior members to finance distribution of the *National News*.
- 1947** The Community Service Committee proposes youth recreation centers to help solve the growing problem of juvenile delinquency and incorporates the Red Cross blood donor program in Community Service. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors the first Girls Nation session conducted in Washington, D.C.
- 1948** *National News* circulation increases to more than 900,000 and changes to tabloid newspaper format. The Auxiliary escalates its Americanism program to counter communism in Europe and Asia and sponsors the special "Freedom Train" exhibit.
- 1949** The Auxiliary and Legion support the House Un-American Activities Committee and urge legislation to curb suspected communist activities in the U.S. The Legion/Auxiliary's "Tide of Toys" program collects and ships more than 3,000,000 donated toys to Europe.
- 1950** The first Golden Press/Golden Mike media awards are presented. The Auxiliary celebrated its 30th year; membership reached 980,205.
- 1951** *National News* returns to a pocket-sized format. The combined efforts of the entire Legion family yield donations of \$7,000,000 to assist veterans' children. The 8 & 40 establishes tuberculosis clinics at VA hospitals and contributes to child welfare projects.

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- 1952** The Auxiliary airs poppy television spots. More than 26 million poppies are made by 9,693 veterans, earning \$366,284 and contributions of nearly \$2 million for disabled veterans and their children. A new "G.I. Bill of Rights" grants benefits to Korean War veterans. Helen Hayes receives the Distinguished Service Award for her films and her work against polio.
- 1953** The first Women's Forum on National Security convenes in Washington. Community Service supports the "Crusade for Freedom," Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia. The Auxiliary sends clothing to Korean orphans. Ten new VA medical centers are built for a total of 170 hospitals. Departments conduct training schools, adding 4,020 new hospital volunteers for a total of 12,200.
- 1954** Child Welfare assists more than 130,000 children. "I Love Lucy" wins the Golden Mike award.
- 1955** Auxiliary membership peaks at 998,103 members.
- 1956** The Auxiliary opens its Washington office. Youth self-help projects, part of the Pan-American Study program supported by CARE, provide 91 young carpenters in Haiti with tool kits.
- 1958** 11,015 hospital volunteers serve in 174 VA hospitals and 292 non-VA hospitals. Edith Hobart, first National President of the Auxiliary, dies.
- 1960** The VolunTeens program is established.
- 1961** Auxiliary bulletin, "Color the Picture, Memorize the Rules," alerts parents and children to the threat of child molestation.
- 1963** Auxiliary helps build 13 rural schools and sends tool kits to the Dominican Republic. Child Welfare assists 941,771 abused and neglected children.
- 1964** A fresh water system and equipment are donated to Ecuador. The Auxiliary contributes disaster relief to Alaska after the state suffers a destructive earthquake.
- 1965** The Auxiliary sets up 12 vocational training centers in Costa Rica.
- 1966** The Auxiliary's Foreign Relations program finances a water system and community development project in the Philippines.
- 1968** Foreign Relations program equips a hospital maternity/pediatrics ward in Malaysia.
- 1969** Auxiliary Community Service volunteers donate 15,070 gallons of blood and 2,600 pairs of eyeglasses to Lions International. Leadership courses are offered at area conferences.
- 1970** The Auxiliary marks 50 years of service. Foreign Relations finances construction of 55 classrooms in Nicaragua. The new Past Presidents Parley presents 157 nursing scholarships. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is established for Auxiliary members in crisis. An Auxiliary life insurance plan is created. Eligibility is extended to granddaughters of veterans. Apollo 11 astronauts are honored at the Women's Conference in Washington.

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- 1971** The Auxiliary builds a bridge and conducts vocational training in Panama. Juniors, now 100,000 strong, sponsor a teacher at Freedoms Foundation, hold rummage sales where needy families shop for free, and contribute to handicapped and native Americans.
- 1972** Children and Youth focuses on drug abuse prevention, assistance and education for the handicapped, rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and pre-school immunization programs. One quarter million dollars in scholarships is awarded by Auxiliary Education programs. Children and Youth programs receive \$942,000 to benefit 4 million children. The Cavalcade of Memories is established at National Headquarters.
- 1973** CATs (Community Action Teams) spend \$1,000,000 and 2.25 million hours donating blood and supplying playground equipment, and wheelchairs and crutches for the handicapped. Foreign Relations brings electricity to 15 rural villages in South Korea. The poppy program reports 14.5 million poppies made, earning \$1.8 million from distribution and \$314,000 for 2,232 hospitalized veteran poppy makers.
- 1974** The poppy program reported 14,472,000 poppies were made by 2,232 hospitalized veterans who earned \$314,000 and \$1.8 million was donated from the distribution.
- 1975** The Americanism Committee sponsors 45 teachers at Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pa. Senior membership dues increase to \$1.50. Foreign Relations donates construction materials to build classrooms in West Java.
- 1976** The nation celebrates its 200th birthday. The "Spirit of '76" Committee completes a two-year project to erect a stage and Proscenium Arch on the grounds of Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pa. The Auxiliary supports the Legion-sponsored Freedom Bell project. Foreign Relations purchases seed and fertilizer in Belize.
- 1977** The Auxiliary helps to rebuild homes in earthquake-ravaged Guatemala.
- 1978** The Auxiliary donates money to build 40 classrooms in Peru. In 172 VA hospitals and nursing facilities, 2,850,000 service hours are given by 62,991 volunteers to help 633,000 veterans.
- 1979** President Jimmy Carter signs a bill extending Legion eligibility to Vietnam-era veterans.
- 1980** The Awareness Assembly, formerly The Women's Forum on National Security, is established to inform members about national and international issues pertaining to defense, security, women and the aged. A French crystal plate etched with the Poppy commemorates the Auxiliary's 60th year, and proceeds fund youth programs. Foreign Relations contributes to school reconstruction and community centers in the Dominican Republic after Hurricane David. The Past Presidents Parley awards \$69,000 in nursing scholarships.
- 1981** Foreign Relations builds and equips kitchens and warehouses for Cambodian refugees in Thailand.
- 1982** In February, the newly-created American Legion Auxiliary Awareness Assembly is conducted in Washington, D.C. Foreign Relations donates to the Eluwa School for the Deaf and Blind

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in Namibia.

- 1983** The National News accepts paid advertising.
- 1984** The "Friends of Our Little Brothers" Children's Home in Mexico receives \$90,000 for irrigation wells.
- 1985** Foreign Relations raises \$66,366 for Father Flavian Nucci's Home for Special Children in El Salvador.
- 1986** The Auxiliary funds and dedicates the Job Nave Clerestory Window in the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.
- 1987** The National President's project, *The Secret of Animal Island*, a comic book illustrating safety tips for children, set Auxiliary records for response from the general public.
- 1988** Legion/Auxiliary members hold an open forum on the MIA/POW issue. The Auxiliary presents the Public Spirit Award to rescue personnel of Midland, Texas, for saving Jessica McClure. The Golden Press/Golden Mic Awards are retired—the Heart of America Awards are initiated.
- 1989** The Supreme Court rules that burning the U.S. flag is protected under the First Amendment.
- 1990** The National Emergency fund is established for disaster victims. The Auxiliary's Washington, D.C. office closes. The Auxiliary celebrates its 70th year. The Family Support Network assists families of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf. Eligibility dates include veterans of Grenada, Lebanon and Panama. Marilyn Quayle is Woman of the Year.
- 1991** Dr. Robert Schuller receives the Public Spirit Award. Erma Bombeck is Woman of the Year.
- 1992** The Auxiliary introduces the "Young People and Relationships," video. The Auxiliary builds the "All Woman" House at Habitat International's Jimmy Carter Work Project in Washington. Auxiliary Public Spirit Award winner is Mrs. Robin Higgins, widow of Lt. Col. William Higgins, who was killed by terrorists in Lebanon. Eligibility dates are extended to include veterans of the Persian Gulf War.
- 1993** The Auxiliary enhances its focus on homeless veterans. More than 1 million pounds of food are collected and donated to assist homeless veterans across the nation.
- 1994** Teen Court, which offers an alternative to the formal juvenile justice system, is introduced to Auxiliary members. Teen Court allows young offenders to be tried and sentenced by a jury of their peers. Auxiliary members initiated 17 Teen Courts around the country. The Citizens Flag Alliance is formed to pass a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from intentional physical desecration.
- 1995** The American Legion Auxiliary celebrates its 75th anniversary.



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- 1996** Samsung endows a scholarship for a Girls State or Boy State citizen who is a descendent of a Korean War Veteran. Elizabeth and Zachary Fisher receive the Public Spirit Award for recognition of the Fisher House Foundation. Fiftieth session of Girls Nation is celebrated.
- 1997** First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton receives the Public Spirit Award for her promotion of children and youth issues. Past National President Linda M. Newsome cut the ribbon for the dedication of the Woman in Military Service Memorial in Washington D.C. The Auxiliary became involved with the President's Summit for America's Future and the Children's Miracle Network. Maryland Lt. Governor, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, was named Woman of the Year.
- 1998** Auxiliary emphasizes a family theme through embarking on a year of service to the family. Taste of NFL was the recipient of more than \$30,000 to help feed the hungry. The Auxiliary also became an official sponsor of the Children's Miracle Network. National President Barbara Kranig appeared on the nationally televised telethon. Miss America, Kate Shindle, was a special guest at Awareness Assembly.
- 1999** National President Virginia Hobbs calls for members to become more aware of the desperate need for organ and tissue donations. Public Spirit Award winner James Redford brings further awareness with his documentaries on the miracle of transplantation. Washington Attorney General Christine Gregoire is recognized as the Woman of the Year. Program highlights include fund raising for the World War II Memorial.
- 2000** Auxiliary members celebrate the new century and millennium under the theme, "Celebrate America 2000." Through an aggressive fund-raising campaign, members raise more than \$660,000 for the World War II Memorial—nearly tripling its two-year goal of \$250,000. National President Elizabeth Stewart uses her national platform to promote breast cancer awareness.
- 2001** Under the leadership of National President Kristine West, the American Legion Auxiliary becomes a host sponsor of the Department of National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The National President and National Vice President Sherry McLaughlin witnessed the ground breaking of the World War II Memorial in November 2000, and the inauguration of George W. Bush in January 2001 as the 43rd President of the United States. Woman of the Year honors went to First Lady Laura Bush at the 2001 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas.
- 2002** In response to the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, Auxiliary members donated nearly \$100,000 to various relief efforts. The first Unit Development and Revitalization seminar is held to educate members from each Department about helping struggling Units, creating new Units, and retaining members. National President Sherry McLaughlin's Special Project, the Spirit of Youth Fund, raises over \$70,000 for scholarships. Retired Foreign Service Officer Kathryn Koob is honored as Woman of the Year.
- 2003** American Legion Auxiliary members respond to the wartime deployment of U.S. troops overseas in "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Members donate hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal items shipped to U.S. forces, and assist the families of those deployed through The American Legion Family Support Network. National President Elsie Bailey's project, the

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"Veterans' Pot of Gold," directed funds to VA facilities, homeless veterans programs and other critical need areas affecting veterans. The National President presented the Auxiliary's Public Spirit Award to Secretary of State Colin Powell; bestowed an "America's Hope" Award on the Quecreek miners rescued in July 1992. Country artist Chely Wright received "Woman of the Year" honors.

**2004** During National President Katherine Morris's 2003-04 administrative year, her theme, "H.E.A.R.T.S. in Service" to America was a heartfelt call to action. Auxiliary members rallied around the troops fighting the War on Terror by donating frequent flyer miles so troops could travel home during leave; and by collecting, boxing and shipping thousands of comfort items for troops on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other overseas locations; Morris attended update briefings about the War on Terror at the Departments of State and Defense; and she presented the Auxiliary's "Public Spirit Award" to America's Promise co-founder Alma Powell, wife of Secretary of State Colin Powell. National President Morris conducted the first-ever joint Homecoming with her Texas counterpart, American Legion National Commander John Brieden. She encouraged Auxiliary members to continue their generous donations to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (which the Auxiliary co-sponsors nationally); and the Children's Miracle Network. The American Legion Family led the only concerted, nationwide campaign to commemorate dedication of America's only national World War II Memorial, dedicated May 29, 2004 on the Mall in Washington, D.C. "Woman of the Year" honors went to Audrey Fisher of Fisher House Foundation.



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### Helpful Web sites:

- ★ Google.com - <http://www.google.com/>  
Giving the ability to search 1.3 billion web pages. This search engine is easy, flexible and can filter through the clutter to locate the information you seek.
- ★ Yahoo Reference Access - <http://dir.yahoo.com/reference/>  
4,739 libraries, 146 dictionaries, 249 quotation sites, and hundreds more reference sites from one spot.
- ★ Refdesk.com – <http://www.refdesk.com/>  
A general purpose information page with links to hundreds of helpful sites.
- ★ American Journalism Review News Link – <http://www.ajr.org/>  
A mega news resource, featuring up-to-the minute news, plus links to nearly 5,000 newspapers and thousands more on-line news resources and publishers from around the world.
- ★ About.com – <http://www.about.com/>  
Called “The Human Internet,” this site is built around links and articles contributed by Internet users who are experts in their fields.
- ★ Congressional Research Service Internet Reference Desk – <http://www.cnire.org/nle/info-7/>  
Concise links to speech collections, writer's aids and reference works.
- ★ Newsdirectory.com – <http://www.newsdirectory.com/>  
Starting place to locate thousands of online newspapers around the world.
- ★ The Drudge Report – <http://www.thedrudgereport.com/>  
Links to hundreds of news and public affairs sites, wire services, columnists, newspapers, magazines, television news operations.
- ★ One Look Dictionaries – <http://www.onelook.com/>  
Search for a definition simultaneously across 209 indexed dictionaries and glossaries.
- ★ Harvard University - <http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu/ideasatwork/managersites.html>  
Harvard site for business information; includes links to book sites.

### *Quotations and Anecdotes*

- ★ "IdeaBank®" – <http://www.idea-bank.com/ib/html/>  
Multi-feature subscription service for speechwriters, researchers and comedians. Includes databases of quotations, anecdotes, humor and calendar events and birthdays. A free trial subscription is available.
- ★ Anecdorage.com – <http://www.anecdorage.com/>  
Carefully selected, well-organized, and attributed collection of anecdotes.

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★ Bartlett's 10th edition – [http:// www.bartleby.com/100/](http://www.bartleby.com/100/)

Free use of older version of venerable quotation book.

★ Chiasmus.com – <http://www.chiasmus.com/>

Postings devoted to one of the most effective and memorable figures of speech. Available as a weekly e-mail letter.

★ Thinkarete.com – <http://www.thinkarete.com/>

Good selection of inspirational and motivational quotations. Also searchable by author's name.

### *Speech Anthologies*

★ Outstanding speech and transcript center– <http://www.freepint.com/gary/speech.htm>

Compiled by Gary Price, MLIS, George Washington University. Links to corporate speech sites, federal government, state & city government, professional/trade organizations, historical speeches, TV & radio transcripts, Supreme Court hearings, international governments, non-government organizations, think tanks.

★ Executive Speaker Internet Library – [http://www.executive-speaker.com/lib\\_m.html](http://www.executive-speaker.com/lib_m.html)

Over 500 full texts of the best speeches by executives.

★ Winstonchurchill.org – <http://www.winstonchurchill.org>

All things Churchill, including many of his speeches.

★ PBS Great Speeches – <http://www.pbs.org/greatspeeches/>

Texts and videos of famous 20th Century speeches.

★ Federal Government Speech Sites

*Defense Department:*

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/>

*Department of Veteran's Affairs:*

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/feature/speeches/index.htm>

### *Speech writing, Speech making*

★ Unaccustomed as I am – <http://www.speeches.com/>

Features speech writing tips, speech writing workshops, a library of speeches, plus an "auto speech writer."

★ The Writing Works – <http://www.thewritingworks.com/>

Professionally written (generic) scripts, outlines, themes, product intros and proposals that one can cut, paste, copy, revise, rework, rearrange, reassemble, or rewrite.





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