



PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDE

2009 – 2010

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Public Relations Committee is to work collaboratively with all levels of the organization to create, implement and support a proactive communications network that advances the objectives and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and positively projects our image and programs to the general public.

Public Relations Committee Department of Michigan

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WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY?

Public Relations involve the promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs with outside media such as newspapers, radio and television. It involves using press releases to get the information to this media. It can, and should, include personal contact with other groups and organizations – veteran’s groups, churches, schools, etc. – that do much the same as we do for the same causes – veterans, children and youth, community, etc

WHO CAN BE INVOLVED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS?

ANYONE can be involved. The more involved our members are in getting the word out about our organization, projects and ideals, the better we will get people to know just what we do and will more than likely help us in our endeavors. With the size of our organization, EVERYONE should know about us but many people have no idea of who we are and what we do. We can let people know on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting. But we must *ALL* get involved with Public Relations! It’s as easy as talking to a neighbor, friend or family member.

WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION SO I KNOW WHAT I’M TALKING ABOUT?

There are several publications available. The best place to start is at our Department Headquarters. They have several items available about Public Relations. The National web site (www.legion-aux.org) has a “Press Room” where all sorts of information can be obtained for your use, including press releases that can be given to your local media. The American Legion web page (www.legion.org) also has much about Public Relations. Check out the *Public Relations Handbook* on the American Legion’s web page.

Whatever you do, be a good representative for the American Legion Auxiliary. Who knows, you may get new members from some of your contacts, get outside help with some of your Auxiliary projects or find projects that your Unit can do to help someone else.

NATIONAL-LEVEL OBJECTIVES – and actions we can take here in Michigan

- 1. Objective:** Promote and publicize the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs, collecting baseline data regarding number and types of publicity during the 2009-2010 fiscal year with a goal of 500 events/records at the Department level and 40,000 event/records at the Unit level.

Action Steps: In Michigan we would like each Unit to promote the sale of gift subscriptions of *HomeFront* magazine for public locations (i.e. doctor's offices, public libraries, community centers) and to share their copy of *HomeFront* with family and friends. We want to promote our ALA programs and activities – including the upcoming 90th Anniversary of the American Legion Auxiliary – and make the public more aware of our organization through the strategic use of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem.

- 2. Objective:** Increase electronic communication with members by achieving a 100% increase in the number of email addresses on file with National Headquarters by opening day of the 2010 National Convention.

Action Steps: We are encouraging all Units to ask their members with email to sign up for and then forward the ALA eNews or Spirit of America eNews to friends, asking them to sign up to receive these communications. These two eNews are excellent ways to get information regarding the Auxiliary.

- 3. Objective:** Achieve a 15% increase in the total of Press Books submitted by Department Chairmen.

Action Steps: With the help of all Units submitting articles to the Department Chairman, a press book will be submitted by the Public Relations Chairman for the Department of Michigan. In turn, we are encouraging more Units to submit press books this year for competition.

- 4. Objective:** Achieve a 25% increase in the number of both Unit and Department Web sites by August 15, 2010.

Action Steps: We will provide information to enable Units to establish and maintain Web sites and provide links in Web sites related to the American Legion Auxiliary such as: The American Legion, the Girls and Boys State Programs and Military Family Support services and organizations.

NATIONAL UNIT AWARDS

1. Award: Program Emphasis-Best Three Published Press Releases

A \$50 award will be presented to one Unit chairman in each division.

Materials and Guidelines:

- These press releases will be used in the National President's Press Book.
- Include three different articles, highlighting different ALA committees, published in three different months (Nov. 1, 2009 – May 1, 2010)
- Deadline: May 15, 2010

2. Unit Award: Community Display-Most Unique Community Display

A citation will be presented to one Unit.

Materials and Guidelines:

- Photo of the display set up in any location other than an American Legion Post home.
- Narrative of no more than 250 words describing where, when, how and why the display was created.
- Deadline: May 15, 2010

3. Unit Award: Web site- New Web site Launch

A citation will be presented to one Unit.

Materials and Guidelines:

- Web site URL, web master name and contact info
- Web site must have been created since September 1, 2009
- Judged on 33% each for: design, ease of use, content
- Deadline: May 15, 2010

4. Junior Public Relations Award: Best Press or Media Coverage of Activity or Project

A \$50 award will be presented to one Junior Group (Dept., District or Unit)

Materials and Guidelines:

- Articles, newsletters, pictures or displays promoting the event, etc.
- Deadline: May 15, 2010

***Send all entries for the above awards by May 15, 2010 to:
Phyllis Corner, Department PR Chairman, 15291 32nd Ave.
Coopersville, MI 49404***

DEPARTMENT UNIT AWARDS

- 1. IVY LEE REINHARDT CITATION** – To the Unit with the best all-around press book.
- 2. ADA BOGART CITATION** – For the best Junior publicity press book.
- 3. GLADYS LEE CITATION** – To the Unit with the most articles of publicity in a WEEKLY newspaper, substantiated by articles in the press book.
- 4. LESLIE F. KEFGAN CITATION** – To the Unit with the most articles of publicity in a DAILY newspaper, substantiated by articles in the press book.
- 5. ALMA VIERGEVER CITATION** – To the Unit under 75 members with the most articles of publicity in daily, weekly or monthly papers, substantiated by articles in the press book.

CRITERIA FOR PRESS BOOK ENTRIES

- Material must be prepared in a press book no larger than **12" x 15"**.
 - The first page of the entry must include the name, address and phone number of the Unit Chairman, name of the Unit and the total number of articles and pictures in the press book.
 - The entry must also include a completed copy of the Unit's Annual Report Form.
 - Photostat copies of articles may be used.
 - The name of the newspaper, date and page number must be at the top of each article.
 - Newspaper articles and photographs concerning an Auxiliary and/or Legion Family function/program should be included in chronological order.
 - Paid articles are not to be included.
 - The press book should tell the story of how the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary were promoted in the Unit.
 - *DO NOT UNDERLINE ANYTHING.*
 - *American Legion Auxiliary or American Legion* should be included in each article.
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- 6. KANABY BROADCAST CITATION** – For the best script for either radio or TV program by a Unit. Script verification from radio and/or TV with the written confirmation from said radio and/or TV station.

- 7. VIOLA STARKEY CITATION** – To the Unit with the best “Unit of the Month” article. (Does not have to be printed in the Auxiliaire to be eligible.)

CRITERIA FOR “UNIT OF THE MONTH” ARTICLES

- Must be in narrative form, not to exceed 300 words.
- Articles must be of some outstanding activity pertaining to American Legion Auxiliary programs or some special community event that involved the Auxiliary. Activity must have taken place in the current Auxiliary year (April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010).
- Unit may submit more than one entry in any given year.
- Articles must be signed by Unit President and Secretary or Unit Public Relations Chairman.
- Send one copy to the Auxiliaire for publication. Enter the other copy for District judging.

DEPARTMENT WEB SITE AWARD

- 1. MARION “PIC” WEBSTER CITATION** – To the Unit creating/maintaining the best web site.

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER AWARDS

- 1. UNIT “LETTER STYLE” NEWSLETTER** – This award is for those Units who are unable to publish a large newsletter but send out a newsletter in the form of a letter. Can use
- 2. DISTRICT “LETTER STYLE” NEWSLETTER** – This award is for Districts who prefer not to publish a large newsletter but wish to get the news out to members.

CRITERIA FOR “LETTER STYLE” NEWSLETTERS

- Send one copy each of three (3) issues to be judged (published from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010), to the District Chairman postmarked no later than March 31, 2010.
- Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.

(Criteria continued on next page)

- Entries will be judged as follows:
 - Unit or District name, number, address, editor’s name10 points
 - Meeting information (time, place & contact if needed).....10 points
 - Member information (new members, illness, etc).....15 points
 - Summary of just completed projects or activities10 points
 - Upcoming Unit activity25 points
 - Auxiliary programs15 points
 - General appearance.....15 points
 - Total possible points..... 100 points

3. **BEST UNIT NEWSLETTER** – To the Unit with the best newsletter publication.
4. **BEST UNIT/POST JOINT NEWSLETTER** – To the Unit with the best joint newsletter publication.
5. **BEST DISTRICT NEWSLETTER** – To the District with the best newsletter publication.

CRITERIA FOR “NEWSLETTER” PUBLICATIONS

- Send one copy each of three (3) issues to be judged (published from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010), to the District Chairman postmarked no later than March 31, 2010.
- Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.
- Entries will be judged as follows:
 - Masthead (emblem, name of newsletter, date & editor).....10 points
 - Meeting information (time, place & contact if needed).....10 points
 - Unit Officers & Chairmen (list or names by articles) 5 points
 - Member information (new members, illness, birthday, etc)..10 points
 - Summary of Unit activity/projects just completed.....10 points
 - Unit activity/projects coming up information15 points
 - Auxiliary program reports15 points
 - Calendar of Events (incl. Dist. & Dept. mtg. & events)10 points
 - General appearance.....15 points
 - Total possible points..... 100 points
- ★ Items listed as Unit should include Legion/SAL if joint publication.

BE SURE TO INCLUDE A “GREEN SLIP” WITH EACH CONTEST ENTRY.