

American Legion Auxiliary Department of Florida



“Navigating for our veterans and their families”

District President's Guide 2016-2017

**Kelli Becraft
DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT**

CONGRATULATIONS!!

You have been elected to a most important position in the American Legion Auxiliary. Thank you for giving a year of time and energy to our great organization.

You are now a member of the Department Executive Committee. It is your responsibility to promote the ideals of good American Legion Auxiliary public relations in your own district, just as it is the Department President's responsibility throughout the State.

Your job can be carried out successfully only if you are enthusiastic and start with the idea that your District will have its best year under your guidance.

Decide on a course of action and follow that course – in other words “PLAN YOUR WORK AND WORK YOUR PLAN.”

YOU MIGHT ASK WHY? WHAT IS THE THEME AND HOW DO I GET EXCITED TO WORK THE PROGRAMS?

Our veterans are lost. Over the years, many have forgotten the service our veterans and families have provided and time they served. Without their service this country would not be a free country. And it is time to get back on course and show our support for our veterans and their families. This is what the Auxiliary is all about and why we joined.

QUARTERLY REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT

As District President you are required to submit a quarterly report to the Department President by; September 1st, December 1st, March 1st and June 1st. These reports are on **YOUR** activity in your District during the quarter. Keep track of your Unit visits and the purpose of the visit. Your report is due no later than ten (10) days from the due date and it to be mailed directly to the Department President at her home address. Do not mail your report to Department Headquarters! **This report is NOT about Unit activity! It is on YOUR activity during the quarter.**

Along with your report you are to complete and submit a Quarterly Expense Worksheet. These sheets are in your Handbook. Complete the form listing your District #, each Unit visited and the # of miles for each trip. It is not necessary to attach any receipts to this form. Quarterly allowance is based strictly on mileage with up-to 700 miles at .25 each available each quarter for

reimbursement.

Once the Unit and mileage are completed on the worksheet, sign it verifying the information you provided is correct and mail it to the Department President with your narrative report. **DO NOT fill any information in the Office Use Only box.**

DISTRICT DUES

Standing Rule VII, No. 5 states that District dues, payable to President, **shall not exceed** twenty dollars (\$20.00) per Unit and are to be used for operating expenses (i.e. bulletins, postage etc.) not for personal use of any officer or chairman. A financial report must be given at the Constitutional Conference. Any left over money should be turned over to the newly elected District President.

Units **MUST** make check payable to the District President only! **NO DISTRICT CAN HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT!**

The District President may use this money to offset the cost of paper, printing, toners and postage. **If all District correspondence is done electronically to a Unit, they do not have to pay District Dues, nor should you expect them to.**

Remember, to give a full accounting of this money in a report at your Constitutional Conference.

BUILD YOUR TEAM

You are a very important part of the TEAM and it is not a one-person job. One of the most important jobs you have is to choose the team that will assist you all year. This includes officers and chairmen.

Each District has its own needs as to what officers and committee chairmen they have or need. Therefore, appointments need to be one of your first responsibilities so they may start work immediately. Even though your district has not had a particular office or committee before, there is no reason you may not have one. This is YOUR year; don't be afraid to try something different. Give careful consideration to your selections; also do not give all your appointments to ONE UNIT. Try to involve at least one person from every unit in the district.

We must caution you, however, if you appoint a vice president, they do not have the same authority a Department Vice President has. They cannot act in your absence. Because they are appointed, they have no authority to preside at District Meetings or take your place at Installations. A Past District President may do so only.

Appointed officers and chairmen serve at the District President's request. You appointed them,

and you can un-appoint them. You can relieve someone and appoint someone else without stating a reason or asking anyone's permission. If they are not doing the job . . . ask someone else to do it! Don't be afraid to stir things up. The success of your year could depend on it.

We want you to "think outside the box". Make changes! Remember if you stay within the confines of the Constitution and Bylaws you can do it "your way". Tradition is important, but not to the detriment of progress.

CHAIRMEN

The Chairmen you appoint should be familiar with the program they are assigned to. Do not assume they know it in its entirety. No one knows it all. Make sure you and your staff attends the Department Workshop to learn about the programs and how to put on a good School of Instructions. The Department Chairmen will outline the entire program at the Workshop. Your Chairmen should pick what they want the District to focus on.

Once they decide what the focus is going to be, then it is important to be creative with how they will promote the program in the District. If they present boring material at the School of Instructions, you cannot expect the Units to get excited about working it!

Enthusiasm builds momentum and momentum leads to success. The goal is to get Unit chairmen excited about working a program.

Unit Presidents will have a form to complete listing all their chairmen so you can prepare a roster for each chairman. This will help them communicate with the unit chairman directly.

Make sure your chairmen understand what you expect from them. You must communicate with them on a regular basis. Encourage them to prepare items for you to include in your monthly bulletin. Again, remember, no one wants to read anything that is boring, so proof read their articles to ensure they meet your requirements.

YOU MUST NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF YOUR OFFICERS & CHAIRMEN AND PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THEM. Make Headquarters aware of any changes throughout the year.

DRESS CODE

There is no official dress code but it is important to look your very best! Some Districts establish a uniform for the district staff; however, it is not required. It does look nice when doing Installations, if the District Team is dressed the same. An example might be; navy skirt or slacks, white blouse and red jacket. Jeans or shorts are never acceptable when performing

District duties.

When presenting yourself as president, you should always wear your District President's Pin. Your Officer's ribbon is only worn while presiding at a District meeting and during the formal processional at convention.

Makeup and clothes should be conservative and in good taste. As a rule of thumb – most Auxiliary meetings are business meetings, not social gatherings, so dress as you would for a business office.

If you would like District shirts you must follow the guidelines for approval before ordering. Any shirts that have not received prior approval will not be allowed to be worn.

EMBLEM USAGE

Rules Governing the Use of the Auxiliary Emblem

The American Legion Auxiliary emblem is fully copyrighted and patented in the name of the National Organization. The use of the emblem by an individual Auxiliary member is limited to the wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry or merchandise bearing the insignia. Units are confined to using the emblem or reproduction of the emblem on stationery, Unit publications, notices, posters, place cards, or items of similar character used in the ordinary routine and conduct of legitimate Unit business. Any other use of the name "American Legion Auxiliary" or the emblem shall be subject to the approval of the Department Secretary and the National Secretary.

Any officer, Unit or member placing our emblem on an article of clothing must submit a drawing of the clothing indicating everything that will be on it along with the name and address of the person printing or embroidering the name and or emblem, and the quantity being made for approval by first the Department and then by National. Once final approval is granted, the National Organization will send authorization to the printer granting permission for a one-time print! All renewal orders are subject to the same approval process. There is no exception to this rule.

You may use the emblem on stationary, bulletins, business cards and program material without prior approval. You may not use the emblem or the American Legion Auxiliary name on any item for resale without permission.

Remember if you establish a district uniform that has the name or emblem on it and it was not purchased from emblem sales, you must have the items approved first.

In your District travels should you see articles of clothing with the emblem on them, ask what procedure was used to receive permission for the use of the emblem. Contact the Department if you need assistance with emblem usage in the district.

DISTRICT FUNDRAISING

PER, FINANCE RULES, THERE IS NO FUND RAISING ALLOWED BY A DISTRICT PRESIDENT OR ANY DISTRICT CHAIRMAN.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

At the Department Convention in June, you will be installed and given your oath of office as District President. It is a “ceremony” because that is what it is. It is the “custom” in Florida to wait until after the Installation Ceremony to take office. Your installation is the only one that the Auxiliary sets the time and place.

You will receive instructions from the incoming Department President as to the colors to be worn, and whether there will be escorts, or not. At the Department Convention there will be instructions for incoming District Presidents, which you are expected to attend.

The Department President’s colors for this year are Blue & Gold (just like the Auxiliary emblem).

The Department President will try to meet with you regarding her official visit to your District.

Remember your duties as District President do not begin until after you are installed. Please give every courtesy to the current District President during the Convention and realize this is their Convention.

Awards given at Convention are given to the out-going President to present to the Units. The awards were won during their year and they should be given the opportunity to present them at Unit Installations. Work out with them, how this is going to be handled. We suggest that the awards go with you, and if the out-going District President is at a Unit’s Installation, they be brought forward to present the awards earned during their year. If last year’s president is not at the installation, then it is your responsibility to distribute the awards to the unit out-going president.

It seems like a small thing, but believe me, the out-going District President will appreciate the courtesy being extended to them and it will make for a smoother transition between the two of you.

It is suggested that you attend the Pre-Convention Executive Meeting so you can get a feel for the procedure. You are required to attend the Post-Executive Committee Meeting and as a

member of the Executive Committee you will answer roll call and vote on matters brought before the meeting. Always vote with certainty; i.e. know what the subject is and if unsure, ask! Don't go home and say, "I wish I understood what that was about." This is the time to ask questions and you will get answers. Be brave . . . the microphone does not bite!

You may be asked to vote on a something in-between Executive Committee meetings. If so, you will receive a letter outlining the reason for the vote and a postcard ballot to be returned within fifteen (15) days. You must sign and date the postcard prior to returning it.

You are required to turn in your District President's Book at Convention at the close of your year. Failure to turn this in to Department will result in you not being paid for attending Convention. Do not remove any contents prior to turning in the book.

UNIT INSTALLATIONS

Upon returning home from Convention, you will be called upon to install the officers of the Units within your District. Therefore, it is suggested that you study very carefully the ceremony for Installation of Officers found in the Manual of Ceremonies.

The District Installation schedule is set by the District Commander, sometimes with and sometimes without consulting the Auxiliary. The Unit has the right to either agree to join the Legion for this . . . or set their own date with you. Many units select to be installed at their unit meetings. Check with them as to their preference.

In the ceremony there are charges for the Officers of the Unit. Occasionally additional officers are elected by the Unit, in which event it would be necessary for you to deliver a charge consistent with the duties of that office. This may require a little maneuvering on your part. Be flexible and be prepared. **You NEVER allow a stand-in at an installation.** If the officer is not there, skip that charge.

When you arrive at the Unit, ask the President to furnish you a list of officers that are present for the installation.

Space for the installation will vary from Post to Post, so survey the room when you arrive for the best way to set-up for the Installation. Your Installation team is there to help you so work closely with them for the best results.

All officers being installed should have their dues paid for the year they are serving so ask if their dues have been collected and sent to Department. Remember, they are a member in good standing even if they have not paid the new year, so they can be installed, but it is important to impress upon the President to make sure their dues for the new year be remitted as soon as possible to avoid problems later on.

You will find there is a long and short ceremony for installations. Some Units have a preference and their wishes should be granted. Whichever form you use, personalize it and make it as nice as possible. Remember, Installations are merely a ceremony and do not make them the officer. The election did that. The Installation is the first interaction with the Units in your District and you want it to go well and for each Unit to feel special and important. Whatever you do. . . DON'T rush through it giving the impression you can't be bothered. That would not be the way to get off to a good start.

If the Installation schedule is too much for your staff you could do the short form by yourself. When you arrive you can ask a Unit member that is not being installed to act as chaplain. Have the prayers written on a 3x5 card in large print for them to use. If you don't have the District Sgt-at-Arms with you, pre-post the District Colors.

DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP – August 12-14, 2016

The Department President will schedule a workshop within forty-five (45) days after the close of convention, and you are expected to be in attendance.

The purpose of this workshop is to prepare you and your district staff to put on your District School of Instructions.

Department Workshop is open to all members in good standing of the American Legion Auxiliary.

You will receive travel and room allowance based on the approved budget.

PLANS OF ACTION

Following the Department "Boot Camp" that is held for Department Chairmen, the Plans of Action are prepared and made available to Districts President, Secretaries and Unit Presidents and Secretaries. These "Plans of Action" will be placed on CDs and distributed. Printed copies of these will also be made available for anyone that does not have a computer and they will be posted on the Department web site for anyone to download.

The Plans of Action will include that Unit Report Forms and the District Report Forms that get completed at the end of the year. Encourage the Units in your district to read the Plan of Action before planning their activities for the year.

CONTRIBUTIONS

As District President, you should monitor the donations made throughout the year by Units in your District.

Units will receive invoices at the beginning of the year for the required quotas and bonding fee. These invoices are payable upon receipt. The list of quotas for each district is in the Unit Guide each year. These figures are based on close of books senior membership at the rate for each quota approved in the Department Standing Rules.

There are many other projects sponsored and approved by the Department Executive Committee and the complete list appears on the Donation Remittance Form. Donations for any project not listed on this form cannot be made through Department Headquarters. These donations must be made directly to the organization and recorded on the Unit's yearend report form.

Donations to places that are listed on the Donation Remittance Form are to be made through Department Headquarters. Do not mail these donations directly. For example, Child Welfare and Special Olympics donations are to be made through Department Headquarters only!

Each month a list of donations is posted on the Department web site. You need to check these lists and record donations made by Units in your District. Use a chart listing all the units across the top and the list of approved projects down the side. As units donate, place a star under their name along the project they donated to. Do not list amounts, as not all Units are able to give the same amounts. You should post this chart at all District meetings and you do not want to embarrass a unit for making a small donation. Encourage your Units to do what they can to support our programs and projects. Remember we are a non-profit, so each Unit must spend the money it makes each year. Units all have projects in their communities they support that are not listed on the Donation Remittance Form; however, we want you to acknowledge the donations made to our causes.

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTIONS – By September 13, 2016

- 1) A School of Instruction for Unit Officers, chairmen and interested members must be held within thirty (30) days after Department Workshop. See the Unit Guide, Standing Rule No. VII, Item 9.
- 2) Set the date, place and time, making sure the meeting room facility is large enough to conduct the school.
- 3) Send the information regarding the School to Department Headquarters using the form provided in your Handbook.
- 4) Send a bulletin to all Unit Presidents, District Officers and chairmen notifying them of the date, time and place of the School. If lunch will be provided, state the cost. Make it

clear the cost is for lunch only. **There can be no charge for attending the School.**

- 5) It is fine to invite Department Officers and Chairmen; however, they are not to conduct any portion of your School. It is nice to invite any Past Department Presidents in your area.
- 6) The team you assembled at the Department Workshop should conduct instructions for all offices and chairmanships. Remember, you should select the best-qualified instructor in each phase of the program to ensure a successful school.
- 7) The Welcome should be given by the President of the hostess Unit and the Response to the Welcome can be from either the Unit that traveled the furthest or that has the highest membership % at the time.
- 8) If the Department President is present, ask how long she will be there so she can speak last if possible. She may be attending more than one School, so please accommodate her if she needs to leave early, by allowing her to speak early in the program.
- 9) Thank all for a job well done.
- 10) Write a personal "thank you" note to the hostess Unit.

Be creative when planning your school. Don't be afraid to try something different or use a format that has never been used before. Make it a fun, pleasurable learning experience.

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. *Call to order - rap gavel once for attention.*
2. *"Sergeant-at-Arms, you will see that the doors are closed and allow no one to enter until the opening ceremonies have been completed."*
3. *Rap gavel three times for members to rise.*
4. *Advance the Colors.*
5. *Invocation - moment of silence.*
6. *Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.*
7. *National Anthem.*
8. *Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary.*
9. *Rap gavel once to seat members.*
10. *"This _____ District School of Instruction is now convened.*

Sergeant-at-Arms, you will see if there is anyone wishing to enter."

If there is a printed program, state, "the Chair requests consent to deviate from the printed program." (Their response should be "consent")

11. Welcome - President of the Hostess Unit.

12. Response to Welcome.

13. Introduction of Distinguished Guests, District Officers and Chairmen.

14. Roll Call of Units by District Secretary.

15. Instructions of District Officers (including President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Historian and Sergeant-at-Arms) and Chairmen.

(In the event a District Officer or Chairman is unable to be present she should prepare her outline in advance and see that the District President receives it prior to the School.

16. Question and answer period if time permits.

17. Remarks by distinguished guests.

18. District President's remarks.

19. Announcements

20. Thank Hostess Unit for all courtesies extended.

21. Closing prayer.

UNIT VISITS

In addition to your visit to the Unit to install the officers, you should make an official visit to each Unit in the District during the year.

Notify the Unit President that you will be visiting prior to the night of the Unit meeting. Often the Units like to have refreshments on the meeting night you visit and a "surprise" visit would not allow them that privilege.

When you visit the Unit it is permissible to bring members of the staff with you, however, verify it is all right with the Unit, as space often is an issue and they would want to be prepared with enough seating. Please do not over-power them with a large group traveling with you.

It is important to make your visit very personal. When you are given the opportunity to

speak, keep your remarks up beat and positive. Do not reprimand the Unit for something that isn't done or done incorrectly at their meeting. If there is a problem that needs addressing, do so, one on one with the President and do not embarrass anyone publicly.

All Units do their meeting differently. What works well in one Unit may not work in another, so be open to the different meeting styles within your District. Don't be afraid to make suggestions, but be sensitive to the Unit members' feelings.

Give the Unit a brief overview of how the District is doing and where the Unit stands in the District. Use the donation chart you prepared. Encourage them to ask questions. Ask if there is anything you or your District Staff can help them with.

Listen to their complaints. If you don't have an answer or a resolution to their problem, make sure you arrange to get the answer for them. Do not get involved with differences in personalities. Encourage everyone to respect each other's position on a subject and try to resolve things diplomatically. If the problems are serious, contact the Department President and ask for her help. Provide her with as much detail as possible and she will recommend a course of action. Let the Unit know you care about the issue and will help get it resolved. It is important to personally speak and shake hands with all members in attendance. Getting to the meeting a little early allows time for this. If you are not able to get there early, try to speak to each member before they leave after the meeting.

If time permits, it would be nice to visit with the Unit Officers and Executive Committee. There are items you can discuss with this group that would be helpful, not only to the operation of the Unit, but to the operation of the District as well.

Avoid visiting any one Unit too often. Remember, your job is to keep ALL Units active and on track. If you have units doing an outstanding job it is not necessary to be revisiting them, however, it would be to your advantage to visit the Units lagging in membership several time in order to get them off the ground. Newly chartered Units and Units that are internally reorganizing will need more help. Plan on visiting them more often and be prepared to answer questions, provide forms and help with procedures.

Unit Visitation Forms were given to you at Convention and are also included in your book. You are required to use these forms at each Unit visit and mail the completed form to Department following the visit.

UNIT DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION

The Department of Florida has a Unit Development and Revitalization Committee (UD&R) in place. The chairman of this committee is listed in the Unit Guide. Their purpose is to determine when units are struggling, and to mentor both new and struggling Units.

This committee works in conjunction with the Department Membership Chairman and the District Presidents, under the direction of the Department President. Often, UD&R is used as a problem-solving team.

If you have a Unit that needs help in organization, or is struggling to find officers, hold meetings, etc and you have exhausted all efforts helping them, contact the UD&R Committee. They will attend a Unit meeting, or set-up a special meeting if needed. Especially if you have a Unit at risk for losing their charter or one that has become inactive.

ORGANIZING A NEW UNIT

The basic organization of the American Legion Auxiliary is the local unit. All Auxiliary members must hold membership in a local Unit or the Department holding Unit. Local Units carry into action the Department and National programs, and through the local Unit the Auxiliary mobilizes its energy for service to the American Legion, their local communities, their State and the nation.

The Unit is an auxiliary to The American Legion Post, although the Unit may continue to exist after the Post to which it is attached has ceased to function.

The first step in the organization of an Auxiliary Unit is to arouse interest among women in the community who are eligible for membership and to secure authorization for the creation

of the Unit from a Post. Once a Post has requested the Unit, contact Department Headquarters for membership supplies and cover letter to be sent to the Post.

A Unit can be started with one or two meetings. The first meeting is usually the informational meeting, where, you and other leaders meet with the interested women to explain what the Auxiliary is all about and what responsibilities exist as a result of starting the Unit.

The 2nd meeting is the organizational meeting, where officers are elected, meeting date, time and place are decided, dues amount is set and the charter application is signed by the Post Commander & Adjutant. These meetings can be combined, however, the organizational meeting requires that all applications be complete and dues paid. All chartering fees are paid at this meeting.

Because of the importance of all paperwork being properly completed and submitted to Department, it is recommended that the UD & R Chairman and the Department Secretary-Treasurer be at the final organizational meeting.

Charter Fees are as follows:

Charter application fee	\$10.00
Charter Roll	\$10.00 to include 20 names
Additional Names on Roll	\$.50 each
Membership per capita at;	\$12.50 per senior \$3.00 per junior
Bonding fee	\$5.50

These fees are due at the time the charter application is signed. More information on starting a Unit is located in your Handbook.

SURRENDERING A CHARTER

The loss of a charter is a very serious matter. Any Unit with less than ten (10) senior

members paid at Department “close of books” will automatically have their charter suspended at the Department Executive Committee Meeting at Convention. It will be determined at that meeting if the Department will recommend Revocation of charter to the National Organization, or if UD& R will be sent in to try to revitalize the Unit.

Units may contact you to say the Unit wants to surrender the charter due to poor participation. If you are contacted, notify the Department President, UD & R or Department Headquarters immediately. Before a Unit can surrender the charter certain procedures must take place. Every member must be notified in writing of a special meeting called specifically to decide the future of the Unit. It requires a vote of the general membership to surrender a charter. It is not the decision of a few. UD & R and Department representation will attend the special meeting to determine if other options are available. Surrendering a charter is a last resort. There are suggestions that can be made to solve the problems the Unit is having. The Department will try to salvage the Unit. If all fails, as District President, you will recommend to the Executive Committee Meeting that we accept the charter.

FALL CONFERENCE - November 17-20, 2016

You will receive a call-in from Department Headquarters as directed by the Department President, instructing you to attend the meeting. The budget determines the maximum allowance for the meeting. The Department President decides the number days your call-in is for.

You will be expected to give an oral report at this meeting. It may be during the Executive Meeting, if there is one, or it may be during the general session. Your call-in will tell you the length of your report. Usually it is no longer than 3 minutes. This report, unlike your quarterly reports, is about the activities of the Units in your District. It is not a report of your activity. Highlight and special accomplishments of your Units and any unusual programs or projects they are involved in. Time your report so you are not stopped in the middle of it. Time is limited at this meeting and all reports are timed and if your report is too long you will be stopped.

When mentioning a Unit in your report, give the location, not just the Unit #. You know

where all your Units are located but someone unfamiliar with your district would not. Giving the location helps the listener know what Unit you are talking about.

You will turn-in four (4) copies of your oral report to the Department Secretary when you take the podium. You will receive an expense worksheet at that time, if one was not mailed to you with your Call to Conference.

THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO THE DISTRICT

At Convention, Workshop or soon after, the Department President will get with you to schedule her official visit to your District.

Once the dates have been set, have a planning meeting with your District to decide what events will be planned for her visit. If you have places in your District unique to the State, you may want to plan a tour or visit. Be creative with the visit. Keep in mind she wants to meet as many members as possible, so try to plan large events in the District that many members can attend. If your district is spread out in distance, plan more than one event, so members throughout the District have the opportunity to visit without major travel.

Units participating jointly in a large event can share the expense of the event. Each Unit can share in the responsibilities of the event such as corsage, guest book, gift, table decorations, open and closing prayer and introduction of guests. If one Unit is hosting the event they would be responsible for the amenities.

The hostess Unit President presides for the function. She would handle all introductions except the Department President. She would present the District President, who then introduces the Department President. Once the Department President speaks, no one else speaks except to present the gift, guest book and closing prayer.

A written itinerary of the visit should be sent to the President in plenty of time for her to plan her visit with regard to packing. Make sure you tell her if her attire should be other than business. If you are planning a casual event, let her know so she can bring appropriate clothing. The itinerary should have times for the events especially the time she is expected to

arrive in the District. The details about her housing should be included as well.

Housing is your responsibility. If you are able to have the President stay with you at your home, that is the preferred option. If you cannot house the President, possibly a Past Department President in your District is able to. If all else fails make reservations at a convenient hotel in the area. Please consider safety when selecting the location of the hotel. **The expense of the hotel is your responsibility.** You may ask the Units in the District to chip in to cover the expense. **They are not required to do so, and you cannot mandate it!** If the Department President's husband is traveling with her the hotel expense is hers. As a courtesy the District should comp his meals if possible.

You are the official hostess during the Department President's visit and are to accompany her to every event. The President's car should be used for traveling throughout the District; however, you should drive, as you are familiar with the area.

Have a plan for each meal while the President is in your District. If there are no events planned on a day she is in the District that includes food. Do not leave her to fend for herself. Her meals are also your expense, so you are encouraged to get the Units to entertain her with lunches and dinners. Breakfast is often covered at the hotel she is staying at or can be done inexpensively at your home.

Find out if she has any food allergies and let the Units entertaining her know. Find out what if she collects anything special so the Units have an idea of what to do gift wise for her.

Make sure to invite Legion and SAL members to attend the events in the District. The Department President is eager to meet the entire Legion Family during her visit.

This is meant to be a special time for you and the Department President. You both committed a year of your life to serve this wonderful organization during the same year, so you have much in common. This is an opportunity to build a lasting friendship so enjoy your time together.

NEW THIS YEAR

To show our commitment to this great organization and keeping up with National President

Mary Davis' theme, Auxiliary Member Pride. District Presidents will be given a corner in the Navigator (Monthly Communique). Please highlight different units and use this time to brag about the hard work being done in your district.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

The Constitutional Conference is an important event in any District – it is the culmination of the year's work. It is important for everyone involved to prepare for it and to make it a success.

- (1) Contact the District Commander to "get together" for planning and setting up the Conference. In accordance with Department's Standing Rule Article VIII, Section 10, this conference is to be held not more than 60 days prior to Department Convention. This coincides with the dates of The American Legion; while you should try to have the Conference at the same time and at the same place as The American Legion, it is not required. (You will probably have a better attendance, however, if it is the same.)
 - (2) Set the date. If it is not possible to have it coincident with The American Legion, then set your own place and date. Do it early, and let the date be known early.
 - (3) Check the meeting facilities to be sure the space is large enough to hold the Conference. Find out about housing in the area for out of town guests.
 - (4) Send your Conference information to Department Headquarters as soon as possible using the form provided in your Handbook.
 - (5) In the Call to Conference Notice to the Unit Presidents, Department Officers and Department Chairmen, give the meeting date, time and place, along with housing information. Also include directions to the hotel and meeting place for those who are not familiar with the area. If lunch is provided, state it along with the menu and cost. Remember; make it clear the cost is for lunch only. There is **NO CHARGE OR FEE** for the Conference. The Units should be notified as early as possible of this conference.
 - (6) Invite your guests
 - Remember. . .
 - (a) Date
 - (b) Place . . . Hotel and Meeting
 - (c) Time
 - (d) Any additional activities planned
- (You also will receive invitations to other District Conferences; try to attend. Each District is often unique and you can see how other District conferences are run. This also lends your support to the other District Presidents.
- (7) Appoint and notify Conference Committees
 - (a) Credentials (District Secretary may be responsible)
 - (b) Rules (District Parliamentarian may be responsible)
 - (c) Courtesy Resolutions (see sample form included in this Guide)
 - (8) Notify speakers of any time limit they will have. This includes your District Chairmen who will be giving reports, and all Unit Presidents in your District.
 - (9) Caution those who are to give the Welcome and Response to "keep it short" and to the subject of welcoming and responding. It is suggested that the President of the Hostess Unit give the welcome and the President of the first 100% Unit (or other distinctive Unit) give the response.

- (10) Ask Department Officers and Chairmen in attendance if they prefer to speak early in the program, (they may be attending more than one Conference in a day.) If the Department President will be attending for the entire Conference, she speaks last.
- (11) Openly (verbally) give thanks and praise for any and all jobs well done.
- (12) Write "thank you" note to host/hostesses, etc.

Other preparations needed: be sure to have ballots prepared for your elections.

Are you going to have a printed program?

Door prizes?

Something unique for your Conference? Music? Decorations?

Establish a committee and make sure they are there early to set up the room. All of these things need to be planned well in advance. Have a great Conference!

BASIC SEATING

1. The presiding Officer is always seated in the center.
2. The distinguished guest is always on the right of the presiding officer, regardless of who else is present.
3. The highest-ranking group of guests is usually seated to the right of the presiding Officer, the lesser ranking group to the left.
4. At a business meeting, no matter who is thrown out of line, the Parliamentarian is always seated to the right of the President during the business part of the meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS OR PRESENTATIONS

- (1) INTRODUCE one not known to the group.
- (2) PRESENT one already known to the group.
- (3) When one introduces or presents a guest of honor, and she is simply to "rise and bow", you would introduce the highest ranking guest first and go down the list. If guests are each to say a few words of greetings or congratulations, you would start with the lowest rank and go up the list; thus, the last expression would come from the top-ranking officer or guest.
- (4) Introduction or presentation of honored guests should be gracious, but short.
- (5) The membership always rises in recognition of the Department or District President as introduced.
- (6) When there are distinguished guests present, chairmen and officers making reports address the chair only, "Madam President." The only exception given by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised is that the speaker may address the chair, Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen."

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE
SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. Call to Order - rap gavel once for attention.
2. "Sergeant-at-Arms, you will see that the doors are closed and allow no one to enter until the Opening Ceremonies have been completed."
3. Rap gavel three times for members to rise.
4. Advance the Colors.
5. Invocation - moment of silence.
6. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
7. National Anthem.
8. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary.
9. Rap gavel once to seat members.
10. "This _____ District Constitutional Conference is now convened. Sergeant-at-Arms, you will see if there is anyone wishing to enter." If there is a printed program, state, "the Chair requests consent to deviate from the printed program." (Their response should be "consent".)
11. Welcome - President of the Hostess Unit.
12. Response to the Welcome - Unit President with the highest percentage in membership or any special recognition.
13. Introduction of distinguished guests, District Officers and Chairmen.
14. Roll call of Units by District Secretary.
15. Announce appointment of Courtesy Resolutions Committee.
16. Unit President's reports.
17. District Chairmen's reports.
18. District Officers' reports.
19. District President's report. (Ask the immediate Past District President, if in attendance, to assume the Chair while you give your report.)
20. Election of District President:
 - A. State that an endorsement has been received from Unit No. ____ and the Chair recognizes _____ NAME _____ of Unit No. _____ for the purpose of a nomination. (This is done for all endorsed candidates.) (Ask if there are any other nominations.)
 - B. If there is only one candidate for this office, you state: "There being only one candidate for the office of District President, the Chair declares _____ NAME _____ the newly

elected District President.

C. Ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the President-elect to the rostrum for her remarks.

21. In the event there are two or more candidates for the office of District President

A. The District Secretary will read the voting strength of the Units as per their Certification of Delegates presented to her prior to the opening of the Conference. (These Certification of Delegates should be compared with the delegate strength furnished by Department Headquarters which indicates the maximum number of delegates each Unit is allowed.) **Each Unit shall have as many votes as it is entitled to registered delegates. The vote of any delegate not present shall be cast by the majority of delegates present from her Unit. Note: It is not necessary for all registered delegates to be in attendance.** The delegate(s) from the Unit may cast the ballots in accordance with the majority of their delegate's decision.

B. The Sergeant-at-Arms or Pages will then pass out the same number of ballots to the Chairman of each Unit delegation as called out by the District Secretary.

ONLY THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT HAS HER OWN VOTE AT THE CONFERENCE. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND PAST DEPARTMENT PRESIDENTS DO NOT HAVE THEIR OWN VOTE AT A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. They must be registered delegates of their Unit to vote.

C. After votes are cast, the Chairman of Tellers collects all ballots, and she and her committee (all appointed by you prior to the election) retire to count the ballots. When they return you ask for the report of the Tellers Committee. Chairman just reads vote count. President declares election winner.

D. Chairman of Tellers moves that the ballots be destroyed. Motion to be seconded, ask for any discussion and then call for vote. State "motion is carried."

22. If no endorsed candidate for District President, state, "there being no endorsed candidate for the office of District President, nominations are now open for the office of District President."

A. If more than one candidate nominated from the floor, proceed with election by ballot as outlined above in No. 21.

B. The District President-elect to submit a statement to Department Headquarters prior to Department Convention, indicating her willingness to serve as District President.

23. The District's delegate and alternate to National Convention are **elected** at the Constitutional Conference. However, before opening nominations state that anyone being nominated must definitely be planning to attend National Convention. **IF THERE IS NO ALTERNATE**

DELEGATE WILLING TO ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTION, DO NOT PUT A MEMBER'S NAME ON THE FORM. You should state that nominations are now open for the delegate to National Convention. **Regardless of how many names are placed in nomination, the members will vote for one - - the member receiving the highest number of votes will be the delegate and the member receiving the second highest number of votes will be the Alternate. It may be the custom of the District to send the outgoing President or incoming President, but they must be elected!**

24. Remarks by the distinguished guests. If the Department President is in attendance she should be the last one to speak.
25. Announcements.
26. Report of Resolutions Committee.
28. Thank Hostess Unit for all courtesies extended.
29. Closing prayer.
30. Retirement of Colors and adjournment of meeting.
31. Memorial Service – Time varies in each District.

Note:

- 1) You must have 30% of the units from the district present at the Conference for it to be a legal meeting. If you have 20 Units in your district, 6 must be present at the opening role of Units. If there is no quorum, reports can be given, however, there can be no election for District President or Delegate to National Convention.
- 2) If you either do not have a quorum or simply fail to elect a President at the Conference, a District Caucus will be called by the Department President at Convention for the purpose of electing a President. Filling the vacancy of President is the only business that can be conducted at this caucus. The vacancy of delegate to National Convention will be filled by an alternate elected on the Convention floor.
- 3) You must complete the Quorum Report mailed to you with the your Conference Material. A copy of one is included on the next page for your reference

Constitutional Conference

Quorum Report

Each District must establish it had a quorum at its conference and report such to Department Headquarters immediately following the close of the conference using this form.

District # _____

Number of Units in the District _____

Number of Units Registered at the Conference _____

Attach the registration forms turned in during the registration period prior to the opening of the conference to this form and mail to Department Headquarters along with the results of the District President election.

Signature of District President

Department Office Use Only		
Quorum was met	Yes	No
Election Valid	Yes	No
Did District Elect a President	Yes	No
Did District Elect a Delegate	Yes	No
Does District Require a Caucus	Yes	No

DISTRICT CAUCUS OUTLINE

This caucus of the _____ District, Department of Florida will please come to order.

The Parliamentarian for this caucus _____ was appointed by the Department President. (Introduce the Parliamentarian)

May I have your consent to appoint _____ as Secretary and _____ as Chaplain? (Ask these people ahead of time so they can be prepared)

The Chaplain will offer prayer.

The only purpose for this meeting is to elect a District President. There shall be no other business.

“The Chair calls for nominations from the floor.”

Recognize the first person standing.

(She will nominate someone)

“Are there any other nominations?”

If there are more than one person standing you must recognize them.

If no one else stands . . . repeat “are there any other nominations?”

If no other nominations . . . state:

“All in favor of electing _____ for the office of District President, please say aye, those opposed no”

Will the newly elected President _____ come forward for remarks.

Close with a prayer.

This meeting is now adjourned, thank you for your cooperation.

Complete the Caucus Form by both the District President and the newly elected District President and turn in immediately to the Department Secretary.

DISTRICT CAUCUS FORM

I, _____, District President for District _____, do hereby validate that; _____, a member in good standing of Unit _____ was elected District President at the District Caucus held at the 89th Annual Department Convention.

Signature of District President

Having been elected District President for District # _____, at the District Caucus, I am willing to serve and will do so to the best of my ability.

Signature of newly elected District President:

Contact information for the Unit Guide is as follows:

Name _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

(Home)

(Cell)

Email Address: _____