

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



USE THE TOOLS YOU HAVE AND LET YOUR PASSION SHINE

By Virna Luke

As we wrap up August and prepare for a busy fall, now is the perfect time for Public Relations **Chairpersons to get ahead** on September and beyond. With Patriot Day, POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans Day fast approaching, remember, you don't have to start from scratch.

The American Legion Auxiliary provides **fillable Media Release Templates** designed to help you share your events with local newspapers, TV, and radio stations. These tools save you time, keep messaging consistent, and help ensure our mission is clearly communicated.

Personalize your media release by adding local details, include the name of your unit, quotes from members, and strong photos. Reporters are more likely to run a story that feels **connected to their community**.

And for those who prefer to write their own, we encourage it! **Show your passion, share your story** in your own words, and let your voice be heard. On the next page is a **guide to walk you through writing a clear, compelling media release from scratch**.

September's POW/MIA commemorations are a chance to highlight our commitment to remembering and honoring those still missing. Whether you use ALA's templates or create your own, the important thing is to **get your story out there** and make your unit's voice heard.

IN THIS ISSUE

- How to write a media release
- September is suicide prevention month – Be The One
- Back to School: Time to Learn About this Year's ALA Committee Programs
- Meet Que and Her Quest for Knowledge



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HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE THAT GETS MEDIA ATTENTION

By Virna Luke

When writing a press release for your American Legion Auxiliary event, the goal is **to spark interest**, not just share facts. Reporters, editors, and the public want to know **why your event matters**. Here's how to deliver that message clearly and effectively:

Step 1: Gather the Right Information

Before you start writing, make sure you have:

- Who is hosting the event? Who's invited?
- What: What's happening? Be specific.
- When: Date and time, include the day of the week.
- Where: Street address, city, location details.
- Why: Why is this important? (This is your "hook.")
- How: Any special instructions to participate (RSVP, cost, attire, etc.)



Step 2: Use the Inverted Pyramid Style

Write your press release like an upside-down triangle:

Headline & First Paragraph – Grab attention

Make the headline short, clear, and relevant. Include the most important details in the first sentence.

Example: Local Veterans Honored at Free Community BBQ Hosted by Auxiliary Unit 401

Second Paragraph – Add meaningful details

Provide context: Why this event matters. Add a quote from an organizer or veteran to give the story heart.

"This is our way of showing appreciation to our veterans and their families," said Heather Adkins, Unit President.

Final Paragraph – Background and extras

Include history about your unit, your mission, or how this event ties into a larger program like POW/MIA Recognition Day, VA&R projects, or Girls State.

[Check out the ALA National media templates to view how they close out their news releases.](#)

Step 3: Use Strong, Clear, Modern Language

Avoid long-winded language or formal jargon. Be clear and compelling. Use action words:

- "Join us," "Celebrate with," "Honor our heroes,"
- "Family-friendly," "Free and open to the public,"
- "Hands-on activities," "Interactive," "All ages welcome"

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Step 4: Don't Forget Contact & Deadline Info

Always include:

- Media Contact Name
- Phone number
- Email
- RSVP or ticket deadline if applicable

Step 5: Share It Everywhere

Once your press release is polished and approved, send it to:

Local Media:

- Newspapers
- TV newsrooms (morning shows love positive local stories!)
- Community radio
- Local online news blogs

Online & Social Media:

- Post on your Auxiliary Facebook page or Unit website
- Share in relevant community Facebook groups
- Submit to local community calendars
- Use tools like Canva to create a graphic version to share across all social media platforms.

PRO TIPS:

- Include a photo! A strong, high-quality image increases the chance of coverage.
- Lead with emotion: media loves **people-centered stories**.
- Be timely; send your release at least 1–2 weeks before the event.
- Offer an interview with someone passionate, like a veteran or long-time volunteer.





SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH — BE THE ONE

By Virna Luke

September is a time to unite in action, compassion, and awareness. **Be the One** is The American Legion's top priority, a mission to reduce the number of veterans and servicemembers who die by suicide. Every conversation, post, and connection this month can save a life.

How You Can Help Through Public Relations and Social Media:

- **Share Resources:** Post the link to the [Be the One advocacy page](#) so others can find training, support tools, and the latest news.
- **Tell Stories:** Highlight personal experiences or testimonials from those who've been helped, reminding others they're not alone. Share Be The One playlist on [YouTube](#).
- **Promote Free Training:** Encourage your network to sign up for the Be the One suicide prevention [training](#).
- **Use Visuals & Hashtags:** Create eye-catching graphics or visit Veterans Crisis Line - [Spread the Word](#) for materials. Use hashtags like #BeTheOne and #SuicidePreventionMonth to reach more people.
- **Engage with the Community:** Comment, share, and repost related content from veteran service organizations to keep the conversation active.

Visit the **Be the One** [advocacy page](#) to learn how you can get involved, show support, and help save the life of a veteran this September and beyond.

BE THE ONE

TO ASK VETERANS IN YOUR LIFE HOW THEY ARE DOING.
TO LISTEN WHEN A VETERAN NEEDS TO TALK.
TO REACH OUT WHEN A VETERAN IS STRUGGLING.



Department
of Florida



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BACK TO SCHOOL: TAKE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THIS YEAR'S ALA COMMITTEE PROGRAMS

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

This month, students headed back into the classroom and kicked off another school year. But they don't have to be alone. August also is a great time for you **learn more about the American Legion Auxiliary's many programs and initiatives** for the coming year!

Recently, Department hosted its annual Workshop in Orlando in which ALA members from across the state gathered to hear from Department Committee Chairpersons about their different programs and objectives for the year. Shortly after, each **chairperson's annual engagement plan** (along with awards and end-of-year reports) **were posted on [ALAFL.org](https://alafl.org)**. We recommend that you take time to **familiarize yourself with the various engagement plans** to better assist your Unit's committee chairs as they establish their own goals and objectives.

In addition, **Schools of Instructions are being hosted this month inside each of Florida's districts!** This is an opportunity for committee chairs to learn from District Committee Chairpersons. It's also a great time for unit members to explore programs they are interested in being involved in and **for PR unit chairs to gain ideas**.

August isn't just a time for school students to start learning. It's also a great time for ALA members to sharpen their pencils and learn, too.

PRO TIP: Be sure to visit alafl.org/public-relations to see the PR program engagement plan, awards information and year end reporting!



Dara Oliver presents Children & Youth program during the Department Workshop in Orlando.



MEET QUE AND HER QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

You may have seen Que. She's been sited in a variety of different ALA Schools of Instruction, at the recent Department Workshop, inside Unit meetings and more.

Shaped in the form of a question mark, her character was created by the Department Leadership Committee Chairperson Penny Kanbara this year to **encourage members to stay curious** (or, rather, "que-rious"), **learn more about ALA programs** and **promote Que while on a quest for knowledge**. As we all know, knowledge is power and can only help us be better leaders.

Similar to the "Flat Stanley" phenomenon, pictures are being snapped of Que as she joins members to participate in the ALA Academy, District meetings, Convention, Schools of Instruction and more. The Department Leadership Committee is even offering a **Department Award for Que's Quest for Knowledge (Leadership Chairperson Award)**!

We hope you'll encourage your unit to adopt Que and her quest for knowledge - encouraging your unit's Leadership Chairperson to create a Que (Reach out to Penny for a template) and assist your unit in promoting Que and her quest this year.

Have questions? Need a template from Penny to create a Que? Reach out at Leadership@alafl.org.



5th Dist Community Service Chairperson
Tanica Alexander, Unit 197 Jacksonville



8th District President Shebly Taylor with
13th District President Evelyn Gowdy.