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PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ALL UNITS: PROTECT YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE

By Virna Luke

Your unit's Facebook page is more than just a social media profile, it's a digital archive of your service, community outreach, and impact over the years. Please remember: **there is never a need to delete your unit's Facebook page** when leadership changes occur. Doing so permanently erases years of posts, photos, and memories that showcase your dedication to our mission.

Instead, simply transfer administrative rights to the new officers. Once the new leadership accepts their roles, the previous admins can be removed. This process preserves your page history and helps maintain consistency for your followers and community partners.

Let's protect the legacy we've built online and continue sharing our passion for veterans with pride.

If you need help managing your Facebook Page or updating admins, contact the Public Relations Committee at publicrelations@ALAFL.org.

Together, we keep our story strong.

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Preserve Your History.



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SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION VS. ABC SCHOOL

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

As a unit PR chairperson, you likely have seen your unit president share information about an upcoming School of Instruction event. You might have also seen flyers about an ABC School. So what's the difference?

What is the School of Instruction?

Simply put, the School of Instruction is an opportunity for members of the unit to **learn about each of the different committees that make up the American Legion Auxiliary.**

Schools of Instruction are typically hosted just after officer installations each year by the local district. At the district level, there are corresponding chairpersons for each committee. For instance, there is a PR chairperson for the district and a PR chairperson for the unit. During the Schools of Instruction, the District president introduces the goals for the year and then gives each district chairperson the floor to introduce their program for the year.

The idea is to recruit unit members to take on roles as unit committee chairpersons. For PR chairpersons, the School of Instruction can give you a wealth of ideas on how you can assist each of your unit committee chairpersons in reaching their goals and objectives. We recommend taking a notebook and being ready to jot down tons of ideas!

What is the ABC School?

The ABC School, or Auxiliary Basic Concepts School, was developed to give a **comprehensive, organization-wide look at the American Legion Auxiliary's operations.**

The school delves into a variety of ALA-related topics, ranging from protocol, finance management, officer duties and bylaws. This annual leadership training program is taught by certified ALA instructors (volunteer members who have undergone training) to help unit leadership thrive. Units and districts can request an instructor to offer a class. Check out the blog about Florida's ABC School [here](#).

For unit PR chairpersons, it's always important to understand the full operations of a unit to help you tell the story of the good things your unit does. Discover what drives the organization behind the scenes with this powerful learning experience. We recommend that you bring your curiosity and get ready to learn a lot.

IT'S TIME TO LAUNCH A MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

American Legion Auxiliary, at the national level, recently opened up the ability for members to renew their membership for the 2026 year. Now is the time for unit PR chairpersons to meet with their unit membership chairpersons to talk about renewal strategies for the new year.

Identify the objective. The American Legion Auxiliary sets a total expected amount for each unit based on the total number of members at the close of the previous year. This is typically a 2% increase. Calculate this number to know the exact goal for your unit as it relates to total membership, including recruitment and retainment. This is your measurable objective to reach.

Create an Internal Membership Campaign. This is the creative part! Utilize the strategies in your toolbox – including social media, newsletters, flyers, brochures, word-of-mouth, personal letters and more.

Here are some creative membership renewal ideas:

- **Create a basket to win.** Each renewed member is entered into a drawing to win a basket!
- **Host a VIP membership event.** Only invite members who have renewed their membership to attend an exclusive afternoon picnic or a movie night. This is a fun incentive in which people will have to show their current membership card at the door.
- **Create a recognition wall at your Post.** Create a fun, colorful bulletin board in which names are displayed of those who have renewed.
- **Renew-and-Refer Program.** Offer a program in which members who renew and refer new sign-ups get a prize or are entered into a fun drawing.
- **Capture and share personal stories.** Tell the story about why members are passionate about the work they do. Each person has a story to share; telling that story may help remind someone why they got involved and are passionate about the mission. You can create short videos for social media, write content in your newsletter or build a flyer for a bulletin board.
- **Personal touch points matter, too.** Handwritten notes go a long way in renewals. A small, tangible thank-you makes a lasting impression and can make a difference.

Don't forget to evaluate and adjust. Once you've launched your campaign, it's important to check back in with your unit's membership chairperson to see how the unit is doing for renewals. Always adjust, if needed.

What ideas do you have for a membership renewal campaign? Has your unit launched a membership campaign that worked well? Be sure to share in our [ALAFL Public Relations](#) Facebook group.



HOST A SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE FOR YOUR UNIT

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

It's that time of year—fresh pencils, blank notebooks, and the promise of a new school season! Hosting a school supply drive supports your unit's Children & Youth initiatives and builds lasting community connections. Here's how to make your drive a success with help from local schools! PR chairpersons, we encourage you to work with your unit leadership, including the education chairperson. **Start by reaching out to schools to learn what supplies are most needed.** Some may have students who need basic items like backpacks, crayons, or folders—others might need boxes of Kleenex or art supplies. You want to make sure that the supplies you collect are going to make a difference, not sit on a shelf and collect dust. **Next, set up collection bins throughout your community and at your local Post. Then, advertise the items that you need.** Make your campaign fun and visible with bright signage at the bins, social posts, colorful flyers – even a press release announcing that your unit is collecting! **Finally, schedule a cheerful drop-off day at the school.** Invite your members and key school staff to speak. **Be sure to snap photos, and tell the story of the impact.** Let's pack those backpacks with purpose!



July 11, 2025 – USS Tampa Unit 5



HOW TO CREATE A MEDIA LIST FOR YOUR UNIT

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

If you are a new unit or district PR chairperson, one of the best things you can do is to create a media list of the local reporters in your area.

Read your local publications, listen to relevant radio shows or watch local television news stations and **pay attention to the specific reporters and what they are covering**. Turn to tools like Google or LinkedIn to find those reporters' latest contact details.

Follow your media contacts on social media to learn about their latest positions, coverage and preferences.

We also recommend calling the reporters, introduce yourself so they know who you are, and asking them how their deadlines work. Find out how soon in advance of notice they want information sent to them, and what kind of information they look for. These phone calls can go a long way in establishing a relationship.

Store your list in a spreadsheet, like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets, or use a printed address book. Each entry should include the journalist's name, publication, contact details, topics they cover, and any specific information you might want to add to help you. Some people even document when they talk to reporters to keep track of the relationship and build upon it.

Creating your list might take a bit of time and research, but you'll be happy in the end to have a solid list of contacts who can help you tell the story about the good work your unit or district is doing to help veterans and the community.



Photo courtesy of Anna Keibalo, Unsplash



MENTORING MOMENT: THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION IN LEADERSHIP

By Virna Luke

In public relations and in leadership, **communication is everything**. As we guide and mentor new volunteers in the American Legion Auxiliary, our ability to clearly connect with others is what builds understanding, inspires action, and creates a legacy of service.

Whether it's a heartfelt social media post, a newsletter update, or a conversation at a meeting, how we communicate reflects our passion for veterans. It shows others not only what we do, but why we do it. Clear, open communication helps build trust, resolve confusion, and empower others to grow in confidence and leadership.

Mentoring doesn't have to be formal. It can start with a simple question: "How can I help you succeed?" Through consistent encouragement, sharing tools, and actively listening, we help our Auxiliary family become stronger communicators and stronger leaders.

Let's continue to lead with clarity, compassion, and courage, because when we speak with purpose, we ignite passion for veterans in everyone around us.

LEADERSHIP

is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge. – Simon Sinek