

American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Dakota

District Presidents Handbook

2nd Edition 2017

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Judy Twete, Past Department President wrote this publication as a handbook for current and future District Presidents of the Department of North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary. The original document was prepared as a First Edition in June 2008.

It was revised in 2017 by Marcy Schmidt, Department Secretary, and Shauna Dubuque, Department Webmaster with the collaboration and assistance of Judy Twete who graciously shared her knowledge and expertise with us.

The original (2008) publication was revised from the *North Dakota American Legion District Commander's Handbook*, (Second Edition) created by Department Commander, Harvey Peterson (2007-2008).

It was with Harvey's permission and blessing that Judy originally created this handbook with the thought that the American Legion Auxiliary was truly in need of such a document and that it would be of great value to those who assume the position of District President.

Judy thanked Commander Peterson for the great thought and for the content that he used in the original *North Dakota American Legion District Commander's Handbook* and for the work that he did to maintain it.

We hope that this document will be a valuable part of the American Legion Auxiliary for years to come with updates/revisions and additions/deletions made by the Department Secretary in areas that change annually, or are added, deleted or revised.

Judy Twete, Past Department President, NEC, Past National Division Vice President

Marcy Schmidt, Department Secretary (2017)

Shauna Dubuque, Department Webmaster (2017)

District Presidents Handbook
American Legion Auxiliary Department of North Dakota
Introduction (1st Edition 2008); Revised 2017

This handbook is provided by the Department of North Dakota to all incoming District Presidents as a tool to aid you during your terms of office. It will also be available on the NDALA web page.

Here are a couple of thoughts on its preparation and how it can be used to make your year easier, more productive and more satisfying.

First, this handbook was revised from a document written by a Department Commander for the American Legion. It is revised from the Commanders point of view, by a Past Department President, and used with permission from the Commander, Harvey Peterson (2007-2008). This is adapted from the North Dakota American Legion District Commanders Handbook, 2nd edition.

Much of what is included in this manual are things we wish we had known earlier - before we had to learn them the hard way – by making mistakes. Frequent referral to this manual should be of great assistance as you plan and conduct your Auxiliary duties as District President.

Second, it is meant to be used! That is why it should go in a 3-ring binder – so you can make additions and removals as you see fit. In many places you will replace the material with more current information such as yearly committees and officers and the deadlines for submitting forms to the Department, for example. I hope that you will use it so much that it needs to be replaced often because of wear!

Third, this is a second edition. As you need more information or find mistakes or omissions, bring them to the attention of the Department Secretary. Keep notes of the suggestions and corrections you may have. There is no doubt it will need revision in the future. Your input into future editions will be invaluable.

District Presidents are very important people in the American Legion Auxiliary– if you are doing your job. You are the one in contact with local Units. You know what is going on and why it is happening. You are perceived as a leader – one who knows the answers to member's questions, or where to find answers. You are the one who can share ideas, encourage Units and people, offer suggestions and be there to lend assistance when necessary.

There is evidence that when a District President has a well-organized program, is carrying out her responsibilities and maintains a constant awareness of what is happening in the District, the entire District is both energized and elevated. This applies to the Department level of awareness as well.

All District Presidents must be concerned and are responsible for the following:

- **Membership** - potential, membership goals and target dates.
- **Status of programs** throughout the District, including ideas to improve the Auxiliary's visibility and performance.
- Your **personal objectives** as a leader in the ALA
- **Planning** District meetings and Unit visits.

This manual should be passed on to your incoming District President when you're your of service as District is completed. We wish you well in your leadership years. If it is to be done right, it is up to you to do it.

Department of North Dakota

Current Address

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of North Dakota
1801 23rd Ave N. Room 113
Fargo, ND 58102-1047

Phone: 701-253-5992
Contact: secretary@ndala.org
Website: www.ndala.org

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 8:00 AM- 3:00 PM
Friday: 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Officers: A list of all Department Officers, including Executive Committee, District Presidents and Vice Presidents, and Program Chairmen with their contact information is available online at www.ndala.org. In addition, the list of officers and contact information is printed in the quarterly ALA newspaper, *The Message*. That publication is sent to all members.

Operations: The Department Secretary handles daily functions of the North Dakota ALA through the Department office in Fargo.

The DEC (Department Executive Committee):

ARTICLE VII

Department Executive Committee

SECTION 1. Between Department Conventions, the administrative power shall be vested in the Department Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the Department President, National Executive Committeewoman, Department President-Elect, Department Vice-President, Department Secretary, Department Treasurer, Chairman of the Finance Committee and the ten District Presidents. The immediate Past National Executive Committeewoman shall be an advisory member of the Department Executive Committee. until such time as the mid-year National Executive Committee meeting has been held.

SECTION 2. A report of the executive sessions shall be presented to the Department Conventions.

SECTION 3. All Past Department Presidents who retain their membership in a North Dakota Unit of the American Legion Auxiliary shall be members for life of the Department Executive Committee, without vote and without expense allowance.

Meetings: Scheduled as necessary but the Department does meet for Winter Conference and the annual Department Convention. All meetings are open to the membership.

District Presidents

Congratulations! You are now a part of the Leadership Team of the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of North Dakota! You are assuming a great responsibility – one that also has great rewards – most of them in personal satisfaction. Yours is not a task to take lightly. You have a vital role to play! The experiences you bring to your position will be very helpful as you go about your new responsibilities. You have demonstrated some ability and interest to achieve this position – now is the time to put it to use. Teach others, be visible, be creative, make suggestions, encourage, praise, scold if necessary, but above all, LEAD! You will enjoy this position more than, or equally as much as any position in the Department. You are going to be working with the people of your immediate area and this is very rewarding. Be a Mentor!

One of your first jobs is to carefully study the *Unit Handbook* and the *Policies and Procedures Manual* of the American Legion Auxiliary and to become very familiar with the Department Constitution. You will work with the District Commander on both the Fall and Spring District Meetings. If your District does more than these meetings with the American Legion, you may have a much bigger working relationship with the District Commander than those that are not that involved. Work together – it's important.

Responsibilities:

One of your biggest duties will involve membership within your District. Many of us are not natural salespersons or recruiters and are not comfortable in that arena. You will find, as you learn more about the ALA and its programs, that it is much easier than you thought. You are responsible, like it or not, for the District membership and you will be evaluated to a large degree on your willingness and success in meeting that responsibility!

1. Meet with your District Vice President/Secretary. Work with her so you can share responsibilities and thoughts. Remember that she will most likely succeed you in this position. Include her as part of your planning and decision-making. Mentoring is so important.
2. Plan your year. Figure out a way for Units to schedule early, a time when you can make a unit meeting visit. Remember that there are usually only about 8-9 meeting in most Units per year, and you have two years to visit them all. Sometimes units all want you at their Unit Meeting at the time of the year. With ND winters, that 'knocks out' a few months when travel can be challenging, you need to plan ahead if possible.
3. Support your Units. When called on, be there to meet their needs. This may involve speaking at functions or simply being present at Unit or District functions. Be ready to assist as needed. Regular emails to the Unit Presidents are a great way to stay connected.
4. KNOW the American Legion Auxiliary. You are expected to know more than the average member. Don't answer a member's question with a guess, but let them know that you aren't comfortable answering at that time and then find out the answer from someone that knows what the correct answer is. Be sure and get back to them with the correct response. It is the wrong answers that are always the ones that come back to haunt you and they are seldom forgotten!

5. Get to know the other District Presidents so you can work together; share experiences, successes and failures. You are now part of a team that is bigger than the local unit.
6. Plan a visit to each Unit in the District. When you do visit, be prepared; be a leader; it's expected and it's needed! Represent your District and Department well.
7. Your home Unit may be looked to as one of the leaders in the District. It will help you immensely if your Unit is active and progressive so you can speak from experiences.
8. You will be asked to do a number of things you may prefer not to do. However, you are now part of a "TEAM" that forms the backbone of the American Legion Auxiliary. Do your best in everything you're asked to do.
9. You may be faced with the difficult task of discussing a Unit's disbanding. You may also be involved in starting a new Unit. Either one is to be done in a specific manner. That information is available through the Department Secretary. Attend to both jobs with dignity and grace; without judgment.
10. Be sure that you keep track of your visits and expenses when making Unit visits. An expense sheet is necessary to collect reimbursement from the Department from your yearly allotment. Each District President is allowed a set amount to cover expenses. The Finance Board and the DEC determine this amount with consideration for the number of Units your District covers. Unused funding from year one may be carried over for second year use.

Representing the American Legion Auxiliary

As a member of the Department Executive Committee you will represent the American Legion Auxiliary to a number of audiences. Part of their impression is how you act and also in how you speak. You will be able to glean a lot of valuable information concerning leadership and public appearances through the American Legion Auxiliary Leadership Program. Remember that you are representing the World's Largest Women's Patriotic Organization, and first impressions are usually lasting impressions!

Speaking

Below are a few notes on speaking that may assist you in preparing for an event. Not everyone is cut out to be a public speaker. You represent a GREAT organization, and if you are prepared and believe in the cause you can do it! It is safer to partially read your remarks than to 'wing it' and falter.

1. Be prepared. Know what you are going to say. **Have notes.** Do not try to "wing it, as it never works.
2. Practice your remarks. Then practice again!
3. Remember, nobody wants a speech read to them but do stick to a script or notes.
4. Speak up. When addressing a large group, use the microphone. With our aging member population not everyone can hear as well as you.
5. The fundamentals of a good speech still include the; who, what, when, where and why.
6. The National ALA and even the American Legion put out great speeches each year with timely information for you to copy and use as is or as a 'backbone' to your remarks. These are usually available during the times of Memorial Day, Veterans Day and perhaps even Martin Luther King Day. (Watch the National e-bulletin for them.)

Term of Office

The District President serves a 2-year term. Following your two years as District President, the incoming Department President may ask you to serve as a Program Chairman for her year in office. Careful thought as to where your interest lie as to what chairmanship you might like to serve in is so important in fulfilling a chairmanship to your very best ability.

1. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with the Units of your District on a regular basis. Keep them informed on District activities and things in the Department that affect them. There are funds to cover mailings. Be sure that mailings are timely so each Unit receives them early in the month so each unit meeting, no matter when in the month it may fall, gets the information.
2. With the move towards electronic communications it is entirely possible you will communicate with some Unit Officers via e-mail. In that case, an up to date distribution list will be invaluable. However you communicate with Units, be sure that your mailing or email list is current! Throw away the list from your first year and wait to receive the new information from Department prior to a first mailing. ***Know who your Unit Officers are!***

Potential District Leaders

Be on the lookout for those ALA members who show interest and ability to further the goals of the American Legion Auxiliary. Develop a working list of those who could and should be encouraged to strive for future District or higher offices - this list would carry over from year to year with new additions or deletions. Look for ways to further their development and career in the ALA. Don't let them slide by – bring them into the “fold” as productive, positive leaders. Remember that in two years your District will be looking for someone to ‘fill the shoes’ that you step out of. We've all have been in that long silent pause when nominations are open to fill a District Office, and everyone is busy studying their feet! This is where such a list might be invaluable. Know who might be a future leader in your area and contact them prior to the Spring District Meeting and ‘plant the seed of leadership’ with their abilities in mind.

District Meetings

Fall District Meetings

The Fall meetings allow the District membership to gather to learn about Department efforts, update membership, learn of current issues, and meet other ALA members and to share time with the “Legion Family” being the Auxiliary, Legion and SAL meet at this time. This is the first organized meeting of the year involving you as District President. It is also the first look that many have of their forth-coming responsibilities. It is important that this meeting be well advertised, well conducted and worth the time, effort and cost that members put out to attend.

Location – Some Districts rotate meeting places among the communities in the District. Others host the Fall and Spring Meetings at the home Unit or Post of the President or the Commander. These meeting places are set up by The Legion. Learn what is appropriate for your District and follow suit. Some Units choose not to host the meetings, others frequently offer to host.

Agenda – The Department may provide a tentative agenda that is appropriate, detailed, and follows both “Roberts Rules of Order” and American Legion Auxiliary protocol. The District President is to complete the agenda as necessary and will conduct the meeting. Involve the host Unit as much as possible. Have your agenda prepared and rehearsed. Alert those making reports to be prepared, keep it short, sweet and to the point. Make every effort to run a positive meeting in a professional manner. If you are not proficient in “Roberts Rules of Order” have someone help you and write into your copy of the agenda just what to do. If you get stuck on a parliamentary issue, don’t be afraid to call on someone who knows and can help you out!

Planning: Fall District meeting may start in late September/early October. Start planning early. Department will want the site of the meeting, the time and the location well in advance. It is advantageous to have attended one or more District Meetings so you are aware of what happens. If in doubt, contact previous a District President for assistance – they’ve been through it before! See to it the host Unit has the following materials on hand:

1. Registration table(s) with people assigned to take registrations and fees, cash to make change, write-on nametags for everyone, and pens/markers as appropriate, meeting programs that have the Preamble printed in it should be arranged for. The Department President’s Pin should be available and this is a good place for YOU to sell the pins you have been allocated.
2. The room set up, lunch arranged if you do serve one, the color guard and flags prepared, a head table, speakers stand, PA system, and gavel and bell are necessities for a good meeting.

Setup – See that tables, chairs, flags (or flag stands), POW chair and banner, color guard and a copy of the Preamble is in place well in advance. The District President should be at the meeting site a minimum of 45 minutes before the meeting to assist as necessary. Check, check and re-check all details. This is a great time to visit with those members that have come to the evening meeting. They do like visiting with their District President. Remember that you are a ‘Blue Cap Unit Member’ too! Don’t ignore this time to get to meet them.

Department Materials – Usually the Department President will bring any and all information/forms that might be necessary to conduct unit business. There should be a display table available to display this on. Remind members to pick up this information so it doesn’t have

to be mailed at a later date. If the Department President will not be bringing this information, let Department Secretary know so it can be sent to you in time for the meeting.

Any awards or certificates received/picked up at Department Convention are presented at the Fall District Meetings to the Unit representative attending. Those not picked up need to be mailed to the Units.

At the Fall District Meeting, the exchange of pins takes place. The New District President get the Immediate Past District President's Pin and a Past District President get a new Past District President's Pin. The cost of these usually comes from District funds as per your standing rules.

Spring District Meeting

The Spring Meeting (held in March or April) provides the District a chance to learn what has happened during the year, to prepare for the Department Convention (in June) and to elect new leadership for the next year if necessary. The District Vice President is confirmed (generally!) as the incoming District President and a new District Vice President is elected. This takes place in even numbered years for even numbered districts and in odd numbered years for odd numbered districts. One of your responsibilities is to have new leadership lined up! Have a person ready who is willing and able to be elected as the District Vice President. The newly elected DP and DVP will be installed at the Department Convention in June.

The spring meeting allows the District to learn who is running for Department or other offices. Some membership awards are presented to Units for some membership awards at this time. The Spring Meeting is a good opportunity to share Unit ideas and plans. At this meeting the Memorial Service honoring departed unit members will be presented. Be sure that you have a plan for this event with members that are willing to read and present the service. This a very solemn time and should not be taken lightly.

Your financial report should be made available to all District members at the Spring Meeting. This can be made a part of your program.

Reminder: The financial report or the meeting program should then be sent to the Department Finance Board Chairman, the Department Secretary and the Department Treasurer following the meeting.

Department Convention

General: Department Conventions are planned for membership participation – not just for the leaders!

- Take part in as much as you can. Adequate time is built into schedules for socializing and networking among peers.
- Take notes to allow you to take information back to your District.
- Encourage Auxiliary members from your District to attend. Be a visible leader.
- They will be looking for you! Here is a classic situation of leading by example – not by word!
- You need to know how the Department functions if you are to relate that to members and to answer their questions about all that happens in the Auxiliary.

Upcoming -Department Conventions –

June 21-24, 2018 – Holiday Inn, Fargo, North Dakota

Responsibilities:

- You are expected to attend Department Convention to represent your District.
- Bring your **District Flag and District Banner and flag stands** to the Convention per request of the Department Secretary/President. Be sure that you also pick up the flags at the close of Convention and return to the District.
- You will be expected to be at the Department Executive Meeting, which is generally held the Friday afternoon prior to the opening session of Convention. This is one of the meetings where roll call is taken and your attendance is required to collect any reimbursement for the weekend. Other sessions that are required for payment of per-diem are listed in the Department Recommendations.

Upcoming National Convention

2017 – August 18 – 24, Reno Nevada

2018 – Minneapolis, Minnesota

Delegates to National Convention

Incoming District Presidents are, by virtue of office, automatically delegates and are expected to attend National Convention. Make plans early to attend. Even numbered Districts in even number year and odd numbered Districts in odd numbered years.

- Delegates are assigned to attend a National Pre-Committee meeting. You need to be in by Friday night so you can attend the early Saturday Pre-Convention Meetings.
- Delegates may be asked to report to the Department the contents of this meeting.
- Delegates are asked to consider marching with the Dept. of ND in the Convention parade, if one is usually held on Sunday.
- Delegates are expected to attend all General Sessions of the Convention and to sit with the ND Delegation. This is required for payment of per-diem.

Winter Conference

Responsibilities:

- As a District President, you are expected to attend and participate. You represent your District and are a part of the Leadership Team of the Department of North Dakota! The Mid-Winter Conference is a great learning experience as well as a networking opportunity.
- You may be asked to Chair a Reception at this Conference for the Department President, ***IF*** she is from your District. That responsibility includes notifying Units in your District and collecting funds to defray the cost of this event. Depending where it is held, usually coffee and or punch and a small sweet is served. Some hotels will allow the bringing in of these items and others will only let you purchase them from them. This needs to be checked out early in the year so you can assess units in the District enough to cover the cost. Generally all the District Presidents are in charge of 'hosting' this event during Winter Conference.

Currently planned dates and locations:

2018 – January 26-28, 2018 – Mandan, ND (former Seven Seas) Conference will be hosted by the Bismarck Post 1 and Unit 1.

Membership

One of the primary and the most important function of the District President is in leading the effort to maintain or to increase membership for the Units, District, Department and the National organization. Member numbers are easy to track and are readily available so it becomes a convenient measure of the success of a DP as an effective leader in the American Legion Auxiliary. Like it or not, membership numbers are a huge measure of your effectiveness and leadership abilities as a DP.

Goals – Unit membership goals are set by the Department President and the Department Membership Chairman who have received the Departmental goal from the National organization. You may discuss your goals which are based on a number of factors that include: current Unit memberships, anticipated loss of members to death, moving, etc., the potential for recruiting new members, and non-renewal expectations of current members

Recruitment and Retention - Membership is a management challenge. The District President is responsible for increasing awareness and efforts to obtain the goal of each Unit and thus the District to achieve goal. You will receive materials from the Department about membership recruitment “contests” and rewards. Those who do the work deserve the recognition and rewards. Membership is the life-blood of the organization and deserves your utmost effort. The more you stay in touch in a positive manner, the better each Unit will respond! It is so important that you as District President encourage each Unit to send in the first membership dues in the fall; thus breaking the ‘Goose Egg’ (a 0 membership count) and entering you in a contest sponsored by the Department Secretary for an award. Regular monthly emails to Unit Presidents/ Secretaries/Membership Chairmen are great tools to list the current membership status of the Unit. With technology now-a-days. It an easy way to keep in contact and encourage goal number data.

A Note of Caution: If you are to be perceived as a leader in the membership effort, it is a good idea if your home Unit is among the membership leaders in the District and that you are seen yourself as a promoter. This will make all your membership efforts more believable and, in the long run, serve as a guide or goal for the other Units (and members) in the District.

Programs of the American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors a number of Programs. In fact, these are what the ALA was founded on and, to this day, is still based. There are ample materials that explain each. The following is a list of some ALA sponsored programs. Units may conduct one, many or all of these. Most Units do more than they think! Learn all you can about the Auxiliary's programs as well as those of the Legion. This knowledge will be important and invaluable as a recruitment aid!

- Americanism: Youth Programs, Patriotism and Citizenship, Special Programs, Support Legion Programs, and Collaborating Programs and Activities
- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- Cavalcade of Memories
- Children and Youth: Children's Miracle Network, Youth Hero Program, and Child Welfare Foundation
- Community Service
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Education: Scholarships, Literacy, Veterans in the Classroom, and Supporting the American Legion Programs
- Finance
- Girls State
- Junior Activities
- Leadership: Educate and Motivate Members, and Encourage Mentor Program
- Legislation
- Membership and Unit Development and Revitalization
- National Security
- Past Presidents Parley
- Poppy Program
- Public Relations
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
- Centennial Strategic Plan or Events (celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Legion)

Special Events

- Memorial Day Observance
- Veterans Day Observance
- Independence Day
- Flag Day
- Pearl Harbor Day
- Presidents Day
- Martin Luther King Day

Calendar - Planning!! Start immediately after installation!

Your year as District President begins with election at your Spring District Meeting. You will be officially installed at the Department Convention in June.

July – Organizational Meeting

- July is usually when the Department President has her organization meeting. It is **very** important that you attend. She may know at the time of Convention just when and where the meeting will be held. Be sure to make arrangements to attend. This is a great training exercise and a time to get acquainted with the other district Presidents you will be working with throughout the year. Department Recommendations and Budget are drafted at this time and you will have a chance to approve them. This is a major part of your learning experience with the American Legion Auxiliary on the Department and District levels.
- Start planning District Unit visits.
- Start your membership program. Make sure that ‘goose eggs’ are broken. Units with no memberships sent in for the next year are considered having a ‘goose egg’. Don’t let your District have these!
- Start planning for Fall District Meetings with the District Commander.

August – National Convention – see Convention Section

- Incoming (new) District Presidents are paid an allotment to attend Nation Convention as follows. In even numbered years, the even numbered Districts attend and in odd numbered years, the odd numbered District attend. Take advantage of this event, as it is a great learning experience. Be sure to be in the Convention city by Friday night as Pre-Convention Meeting start early on Saturday AM. The last of the events for the National ALA is early on Thursday AM. That is the instillation ceremony for National Officers and Department NEC’s and Presidents. It is nice if you can stay for that, but if time is a concern, flying out on Wednesday night is usually OK, if approved with the Department President.

September/October – Fall District Meeting

- Line up your Unit Chairs and be ready to answer any questions for them on hosting a District Meeting. Be ready to welcome the Department President and her traveling companion and offer any assistance she may need.

November

- Some District Presidents are asked to be special guests at Veterans Day and Memorial Day Events and Programs. Be ready to represent your District if asked.
- Prepare for your Mid-Year Reports, contact units in your district to remind them about sending in reports promptly.

December

- Does your District have an Oratorical Contest? Offer assistance to the District Commander if the District hosts the contest. Have you ever attended a Gift Shop in Fargo or Lisbon? If possible, make plans to attend one or both events. You will enjoy the experience.
- If you write a District newsletter, now would be a good time to remind the units/members that mid-year reports are due soon.

January

- Do you need to assist with your Regional Oratorical Contest?

February – Department Winter Conference

- The Department Winter Conference is held this month and is a great learning tool for District Presidents. Workshops are sometimes held and training events are presented. Some funding (at this time) may be allowed for District Presidents. This is subject to change depending on finances.
- Send a note to all units to prepare unit reports and file their tax documents.
- Finalize plans for Spring District Meeting.

March – American Legion Birthday

- Spring District Meetings may start. Remind Units that reports are due in April.

April – Spring District Meetings

- Reports from the units in your District are due in April. . . ***BE SURE THAT YOU SEND THEM ON IN DUE TIME!*** Good luck and take your time to review all the information on them. Report correctly and make request for certificates for winners to the Department Secretary. Again, ***forward*** the information in a timely manner to the appropriate people.

May

- Prepare for Department Convention. You may be asked to be a Memorial Day speaker or guest. Check above about the availability of speeches from TAL And ALA.

June – Girls State

- If you are in the Grand Forks area, you might be asked to help with registration or some part of the weeks' events.
- **Department Convention** – Bring District Flag and Banner to Convention and remember to take them home again when you depart. Secure one or two pages for the Convention, per request of the Department President.

Parliamentary Procedure

There are many good guides or references on how to properly conduct a meeting. A starting place is the *Policies and Procedures* manual that is available through Flag and Emblem catalog or at 1-888-453-4466. This is a book that should be a part of every District President's brief case. It is an excellent place to start. If you need assistance and practice, don't hesitate to ask previous District President's. They would be only too happy to assist.

Local Scout groups, 4-H clubs and FFA Chapters can provide copies of simple, yet informative materials. Nothing helps a meeting flow better than proper procedures. Knowing how to properly handle the business of any group is both important and valuable. Finally, Rules of Order are invaluable in handling "sticky" situations in which there is disagreement or discord amongst the group.

Check Our Site When You Need to Cite

Fresh out of unit handbooks but needing to cite a specific procedure? Want to get in touch with your state senator or representative? The Auxiliary's unit handbook and its legislative advocacy guide can help. In need of more *This is the ALA* brochure? These publications and more are available in downloadable format (for free!) 24/7 at www.alaforveterans.org.

Basic Parliamentary Procedure

How is Business Brought Before the Assembly?

To get business before the assembly a member must make a motion. A main motion is a formal proposal for consideration and action. Since only one subject can be considered at a time, no main motion can be made while another motion is before the assembly.

Main Motions That Are Not In Order

- Conflicts with the corporate charter, constitution, or bylaws of a society.
- Presents substantially the same question as previously rejected during the same session.
- Presents essentially the same question as one that was temporarily disposed of but is still in the control of the assembly.
- Proposes action outside the scope of the society's objects (unless by a 2/3 vote the assembly authorizes its introduction).

Eight Steps In Processing a Main Motion

Step 1: Member rises and addresses the chair when nothing is pending, "Mr. President." of "Madame President."

Step 2: Chair recognizes member by nodding at the member or stating his/her name. "Mr. Williams."

Step 3: member states his/her motion. "I move that we have a canned food drive."

Step 4: Another member seconds the motion (without recognition). "Second."

Step 5: Chair states the motion and places it before the assembly for discussion. "It is moved and seconded that we have a canned food drive. Is there any discussion?"

Step 6: Members have the right to get recognition and debate the motion. During debate subsidiary motions (i.e. amendments) may be introduced to help the assembly make a final decision.

Step 7: When discussion is finished the Chair puts the question to a vote. "The Question is on the adoption of the motion that we have a canned food drive. Those in favor, say AYE." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say NO." (Pause.)

Step 8: Chair announces that results of the vote. "The AYES or NOES have it; the motion is adopted/lost; we will/will not have a canned food drive; the next business in order is. . ."

The Three Ways to Amend

1) To insert or to add (a word, consecutive words, or a paragraph). **Phrasing:**

- “I move to amend the motion by inserting the word consecutive before the word terms.”
- “I move to add the words at a cost not to exceed \$100.”
- “I move to amend by adding the following paragraph. . .”

2) To strike out (a word, consecutive words, or a paragraph). **Phrasing:**

- “I move to amend by striking out the word every.”
- “I move to strike out the third paragraph.”

3) To strike out and insert (words) or to substitute (paragraphs or entire main motion).
Phrasing:

- “I move to strike out the word monthly and insert the word annually.”
- “I move to substitute for the pending main motion the following. . .”

Voting

- **Unanimous Consent** – no member objects to a proposal that meets with general approval; a vote of silent agreement.
- **Voice Vote** – regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote; most common form of voting.
- **Rising Vote** – method used when a 2/3 vote is required for adoption; is also used when a member call for a division of the assembly.
- **Show of Hands** – an alternative method for a rising vote; used in small boards, committees, or very small assemblies.
- **Voting Cards** – an alternative method for a voice vote, rising vote, or show of hands; cards must be issued during the credentialing process.
- **Counted Vote** – can be ordered by the chair when it appears a voice vote is unclear and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly.
- **Ballot or Roll Call Vote** – can be ordered by a majority vote of the assembly and is required if specified in bylaws.

The 13 Ranking Motions

- **Fix the time to which to adjourn:** The intent of this notion is to set the time for another meeting to continue business of the session. This motion does not adjourn the present meeting r set a time for its adjournment.
- **Adjourn:** This is a motion to close the meeting.
- **Recess:** A short interruption which does not close the meeting. After recess, business resumes at exactly the point where it was interrupted.
- **Raise a question of privilege:** this device permits a request or a motion relating to the rights of either the assembly or an individual to interrupt business and, because of its urgency, be brought up for possible immediate consideration.
- **Call for the order of the day:** By the use of this motion, a single member can require the assembly to follow the order of business or agenda, or to take up a special order that is now due to come up, unless 2/3 of the assembly wish to do otherwise.
- **Lay on the table:** This motion is used to place the pending motion aside when something of an urgent nature arises and needs the immediate attention of the assembly.
- **Previous question:** This is simply a motion to end debate, allow no further subsidiary motions on the pending motion, and take a vote. It must be seconded, no debate is allowed, and a 2/3 vote is needed to close debate.
- **Limit or extend limits of debate:** This motion can reduce or increase the number and length of speeches permitted or limit the length or debate on a specific question.
- **Postpone definitely:** Should be used if the body needs more time to make decision or if there is a time for consideration of the question that would be more convenient. The postponement cannot be beyond the next session in a group that meets regularly.
- **Commit or refer to a committee:** This motion send the main motion to a committee for further examination and refinement before the body votes on it.
- **Amend:** The intent of this motion is to modify the pending motion before it is voted on.
- **Postpone indefinitely:** This motion, in effect, kills the main motion for the duration of the meeting without having to take a vote on it.
- **Main motion:** A formal proposal for consideration and action.

Debate

Decorum in Debate

- In order to debate a question, a member must rise and address the presiding officer by his/her title, and be assigned the floor.
- Always address remarks to the chair, never using a member's name where it is possible to describe him/her otherwise.
- The correctness of a statement of facts may be denied, but the motives of a member are not questioned.
- Discourteous language is never used.

Rules of Debate

- The maker of a debatable motion is always entitled to the floor first, as soon as the chair states the question on the motion. When a motion is made by order of a committee, the reporting member of the committee should be recognized first.
- It is in the interest of the assembly to hear both sides of a case, and therefore as far as practicable a member who is opposed to the last speaker should be recognized.
- Confine debate to the question under consideration.
- Ask permission of the assembly before reading any document.
- Do not waste time with frivolous arguments or repetitions.
- The member who introduces a question is allowed to close the debate, provided he/she has not already exhausted his/her time.

Number and Length of Speeches

- Unless permission is given by the assembly, no member shall speak
- . . . longer than ten minutes at a time,
- . . . more than twice on the same question on the same day,
- . . . a second time until everyone has spoken who desires to.
- At any meeting the limits of debate may be changed by a 2/3 vote.
- If a member who has the floor allows another member to make an explanation, the time is charged to the one who has the floor.

Parliamentary Tips for the Presiding Officer

The following tips should allow the presiding officer to establish a friendly atmosphere while expediting business in meetings of all sizes. (It should be noted that some of these tips may be modified for presiding at a board meeting in which Procedures for Small Boards have been adopted as referenced in **Robert's Rules of order Newly Revised p. 470.**)

- Prepares an agenda for each meeting, begins the meeting on time, and keeps the meeting going according to the order of business.
- Guides the meeting so that all members take part and keeps the meeting friendly and 'informally formal'.
- Knows and abides by the bylaws and all other governing documents.
- Is in control. The members want the presiding officer to help them get through the business.
- Keeps a sense of humor and has the ability to appear cool and calm when tension is high.
- Remains impartial by attitude, facial expression, and voice. Tries not to express his/her opinion.
- Has at hand the following:
 - 1) A copy of the bylaws and other governing documents,
 - 2) A copy of the organizations adopted manual of parliamentary law (i.e. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*,
 - 3) The agenda for the meeting.
- Stands while:
 - 1) Calling the meeting to order,
 - 2) Stating a question,
 - 3) Putting a question to a vote,
 - 4) Explaining reasons for ruling on a point of order,
 - 5) Speaking on an appeal in debate,
 - 6) Answering a parliamentary inquiry or point of information.
- Sits or stand back from the microphone when the floor has been assigned to a member.
- Slows down, clarifies, and explains when the members seem confused.
- Enforces the observance of order and decorum and restores order at the first sign of disturbance. Raps the gavel once and says, "The members/delegates will come to order." If the assembly remains disorderly, the presiding office says, "The chair is waiting for the members/delegates to come to order," or "Business cannot continue until there is quiet."
- Is entitled to vote on ballot votes, roll call votes or when his/her vote would change the results.

- May expedite business by use of General Consent. (“If there is no objection. . .”)
- Repeats the pending motion often. Makes sure all members understand motions before voting.
- May assist members in working a motion if needed.
- Speaks of him/herself in the third person as “the Chair” instead of “I”.
- Interrupts offenders, but does not debate offenders.
- Has a gavel, but uses it sparingly. The gavel is used to:
 - 1) Open the meeting,
 - 2) Call attention to breaches of order by members in a meeting and,
 - 3) Adjourn the meeting. (A single rap of the gavel is sufficient. The presiding officer secures silence by his/her dignity and composure
- Remembers to do one thing at a time, sees that each member is given justice and courtesy, and that the majority rules, but the minority is protected.
- Assigns the floor alternately between those speaking for and those speaking against the motion (as much as possible).
- Uses a visual method of voting such as rising, raising hands, or raising voting cards when a 2/3 vote is required for the adoption of a motion. It is possible to hear a majority vote, but not a 2/3 vote.
- Does not ask for abstentions when taking a vote. A member who abstains from voting has voluntarily relinquished his/her vote and is not counted in the results.
- Always declares the results of all votes and also states the action that will be taken as a result of the vote.
- Knows that the only authority a presiding officer has is stated in the bylaws or delegated by the members.
- Enjoys every minute of this experience 9even the tough ones0 for it is a high privilege to serve as a presiding officer.

In enforcing the rules there is a need for the exercise of tact and good sense. In small assemblies and especially when the members are unfamiliar with parliamentary procedure, a strict enforcement of the rules is unwise. It is usually a mistake to insist upon technical points, as long as no one is being defrauded of his rights and the will of the majority is being carried out. The rules and customs are designed to help and not hinder business. – Henry M. Robert

Dealing with Conflict

Conflict is defined as a disagreement or opposition between individuals and/or groups involving such things as people's interests, ideas, values, attitudes, beliefs, motives and/or goals.

- Conflict is inevitable – there are abundant opportunities for conflict
- A minimal level of conflict is optimal
- Conflict sparks creativity, stimulates innovation and encourages personal improvement
- Conflict is important to the change process
- When conflict is not properly managed, it can render an organization dysfunctional
- Conflict demand a number of skills for its successful resolution: listening, communication, team building, negotiation, goal setting, commitment

The Seven Steps in Conflict Resolution

1. Indicate your positive intent
2. Be specific about the issue causing the conflict
3. Determine if it is a real conflict or a misunderstanding
4. Describe the effect of the problem – use 'I' statements
5. Suggest possible solutions
6. Show the benefits of collaborating
7. Commit to a solution and follow-up

Parliamentary Procedure – Frequently Used Motions						
To Do This:	You Say This:	May You Interrupt A Speaker?	Do You Need A Second?	Is it Debatable?	Can It be Amended?	What Vote?
Introduce new business.	"I move that. . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion.	"I move to amend the motion by. . ."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Request information	"I rise for a point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Complain about noise, etc.	"I rise for a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Call for a brief intermission.	"I move to recess for () minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Postpone the question to a later time.	"I move to postpone the question until next week."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer the question to a committee for further study.	"I move to refer the motion to the () committee to study."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Put a limit on the debate.	"I move that debate be limited to 5 minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
End debate and vote.	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Verify a voice vote by rising.	"Division."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Set the pending question aside temporarily when something else of immediate urgency has arisen.	"I move to lay the pending question on the table."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Want to do something, but don't know how to do it.	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Reconsider an action.	"I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to. . ."	No	Yes	Yes/No	No	Majority
Call attention to breach of rules.	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Suspend the rules temporarily.	"I move to suspend the rules so that. . ."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Adjourn the meeting.	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

Protocol

Protocols, some general, some specific to the Auxiliary, have been discussed in several sections of this handbook. Become familiar with the workings of the Department organization and some of their peculiarities and also the National ALA. The best teacher here is experience, so get involved! You will be involved with hosting and/or speaking at certain events, so knowledge of what is expected is important.

Speaking Protocol

Speaking order

- The main speaker/guest of honor speaks last. She will receive the longest speech of introduction and their address concludes the speaking portion of the program.

Speeches of Introduction

- Be brief, to the point
- Refrain from reciting biographical information – use anecdotes as appropriate.
- Length varies with respect to the rank of the individual being introduced, the highest-ranking guest receiving the longest speech of introduction.

Introduction of Head Table

- Generally done by the Master of Ceremonies – start as soon as everyone is seated.
- Start at the speaker's extreme left, working toward the center, then continue with the Speaker's extreme right, again working toward the center. If the spouse is seated at the head table, they are to be introduced at the same time as the guest.
- Introductions should be brief – names, titles/functions – don't be windy!

The Speech

The invitation has been acknowledged. You have agreed to address a civic group about the American Legion Auxiliary. Now you are unsure what to say or how to pull everything together.

Everyone is nervous before getting up in front of an audience to make a speech; even a professional. Just remember that you are the only one who knows what you are going to say. That's why the audience came to hear you. If you forget a part or you say something that doesn't come out exactly as you planned, only you know it. So relax.

Serving the American Legion Auxiliary as a speaker should not be the most difficult challenge of your life. Instead, it is the opportunity to tell others the ALA story from your perspective – what The American Legion Auxiliary does and why it does it right here in your hometown. Your speeches, audience and subject matter may require the use of a verbatim manuscript or may just require notes to jog your memory on main points. In any case the goal remains the same: tell your story. Remember to talk to the group as though it is a living-room conversation. Pick out several people around the room and concentrate on them as you speak. Verbatim speeches tend to make the speaker distant, formal, authoritarian, and not real or likeable.

It's best to use "message points" and your own short notes to help you be received as warm, friendly and, most of all, human. Successful speechmaking depends upon two things: preparing the speech and delivering the speech. Both are equally important. Failure to perform either properly will result in a less than effective speech. Remember, you must prepare and research your subject, you must organize your material, and you must rehearse.

Giving a Speech

A good way to begin a speech is to tell a story, perhaps about someone or some event that leads into the "what" or "why" of your subject. A good, personal anecdote is often effective. This technique helps the audience identify in a personal way with you and what you are about to say. A quote from a famous person or document is another effective way to set the stage for your subject. Some people use humor to begin. Be cautious. Most people cannot tell jokes very effectively. And you can never be sure your joke will not offend someone. Unless you are a master storyteller, it's best to leave the humor to the comedy clubs. Your opening is usually the most difficult part of preparing your speech. But when you have decided how to start you will have written your speech from end to beginning by talking it.

Before the day of your speech, rehearse it. Practice it again and again until you are familiar with its content and with the most effective pace for delivery. Rehearse on your feet in a relatively large room in front of another person, if possible. You may also use both a tape recorder and a mirror to properly gauge your total presentation. Remember when you are comfortable with you; the audience will be comfortable as well. Once you reach the program site, check over the facilities: room size, your position relative to the audience, the acoustics, the microphone, etc. Do this long before you actually give your speech. Then, when you are introduced you will be ready to knock 'em dead.

As you speak, look directly at your audience. Establish eye contact at the outset, and constantly re-establish it by looking up from your notes. Eye contact with the audience is especially important at the beginning and conclusion of your speech, so know the opening well. Don't memorize it, but know what you plan to say and say it. The same holds true for your big ending.

In fact, reading a prepared text or reciting a memorized speech usually leads to a dull presentation. Talking to your audience, using notes or "message points" on cards, makes for an effective one-two delivery.

During the body of your speech, keep your movement at the podium to a minimum. Too much movement distracts audiences. If you move away from the podium and microphone, you will need to adjust your voice level to accommodate the increased distance, unless you have been outfitted with a wireless microphone. While excessive movement can be distracting, gestures can enhance your presentation. By using your face and eyes, you can express the finest shades of meaning that your words alone cannot convey. The nod, the frown, the smile and the raising of an eyebrow can impart additional information of use to the audience. Practice controlling your movements and facial expressions until you are in complete control and can use them to your advantage.

Remember: gesture to your audience, not to yourself, just as you speak to your audience and not to yourself. Be definite. An effective gesture is firm and direct, not a flinch. Effective gestures are forms of communication. They are purposeful and should be directed at the audience.

Speaking

Just as you wouldn't surprise your audience with inappropriate gestures, don't surprise yourself with elements of your speech. **Know the proper pronunciation of difficult names and words. Use proper pronunciation,** but be sensitive to local places, names and customs. When you take this structured approach to your speech from concept to your final closing at the event you are maintaining control. Just as with "message points" for an interview, control is what you have and what you want to keep. It takes some time, but you can handle the challenge.

Flags

District (Banner)

Incoming District Presidents will receive the District Flag (Banner) following the Department Convention. The DP will take charge of the Banner, transport, store and care for during her term. The DP will transport and display the flag at District functions during the two-years and to the Department Convention where it will be transferred to the newly installed District President up to completion of her term. Be sure that your flag and banner are kept in good condition and CLEAN.

U.S. Flag

The District President must be as familiar as possible with the history, protocol, display and traditions of the Flag of our country. A number of excellent references are available to review and refresh your memory. Among these materials are those we use for flag education in the schools including:

- Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette
- Flag of the United States
- Know Your America
- Our Country's Flag

The Flag of the United States will be displayed and the Pledge of Allegiance recited at all American Legion Auxiliary functions. You may be called upon to determine if the Flag is properly displayed. For this reason alone you should be aware of protocol.

One item of concern you must be aware of is the concept of “breaking the colors”. This is the act of passing through an imaginary line on which the flags stand without showing proper respect by placing your right hand over your heart. The most common is the act of passing **between** the flags at the head table of meetings and other events. One should always go around one end or the other. Many of our members are not aware of this concept and violate it routinely – often incensing those who do care. This is an area in which some educational effort would be valuable.

Flag etiquette is a complex issue, one many of us do not fully understand and its one that requires some homework. Again there are informative pamphlets available through the “Flag and Emblem” catalog. Here is where newly elected District Presidents need help from those who have gone on to higher office and have experience!

American Flag Days to Remember

New Year's Day.....	January 1
*Martin Luther King Day	Third Monday in January
Inauguration Day	January 20 (every 4 years)
Lincoln's Birthday	February 12
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Washington's Birthday	February 22
Easter Sunday.....	Variable
Army Day.....	April 6
V-E Day	May 8
Mother's Day	Second Sunday in May
Armed Forces Day	Third Sunday in May
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Flag Day.....	June 14
Father's Day.....	Third Sunday in June
Independence Day.....	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
V-J Day	September 2
Patriot Day	September 11
Constitution Day	September 17
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October
Navy Day	October 27
Presidential Election Day.....	First Tuesday after first Monday in November
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Pearl Harbor Day	December 7
Christmas Day.....	December 25

Working with the District Commander

This page is provided so you can input data as you find it and as you need it. Obviously the data will vary by Districts. Your responsibilities are listed below. This is a way to keep track of who is sharing your district position on the Legion side of the Legion Family

District Commander:

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Phone: _____

Vice District Commander:

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Phone: _____

District Presidents Responsibilities:

- **Work with your District Commander** to plan and make arrangements for the Fall and District Meetings. Make sure that this is a shared event.
- Work with the District Commander as requested on any joint District events. Include the Legion in your events as appropriate.
- Jointly try to determine the locations, times, programs, and lunch (if any) at District events.
- Advertise jointly, if appropriate for your event(s).

Note Term of Office:

- The Legion District Commander serves a 1-year term. The Vice-Commander typically steps into the role of Commander. This may change in the future, so keep abreast of happenings in the American Legion on such issues. Sharing information with your counterpart in the Legion can make for a nice 'Legion Family' situation.

Know about the Sons of the American Legion - SAL

The Sons of The American Legion was created in 1932 as an organization within the American Legion. The S.A.L. is made up of boys and men of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the United States military and became eligible for membership in The American Legion.

As many Post and Unit members age, the SAL may provide some very important assistance to them through new manpower, energy, enthusiasm and willingness to work!

Together, members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion make up what is known as The Legion Family. All three organizations place high importance on preserving our American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and perhaps most importantly, teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship. Sons have always assisted with Legion Family programs. Our Family boasts a combined total membership of nearly 4.2 million members.

Just as each Legion Post and Unit determines the extent of its service to the community, state, and nation, each S.A.L. squadron is permitted flexibility in planning programs and activities to meet its own needs. The S.A.L. has study programs recommended for younger members.

List of Department Officers and Chairmen

Insert new List Annually –

List is available on the Department of North Dakota's website at:

www.ndala.org