



## American Legion Auxiliary

# UNIT REVITALIZATION GUIDE

REVITALIZATION is about identifying new and existing members with new ideas that breathe life into Units that are declining in membership and mission outreach. It is more than just organizing new Units and trying to help Units keep their charters. Revitalization is also about providing mentors for struggling Units, providing training for new members, and finding leaders to replace long-time chairmen and officers. More importantly, revitalization is about finding, exploring and trying new ways for all members to become more engaged in meaningful opportunities for mission outreach. While revitalization is not focused primarily on solving Unit disharmony and personality conflicts within the Units, conflict resolution training can help members learn to solve many of the problems that damage the Auxiliary's reputation, discourage members and distract from our mission and purpose.

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## **DEVELOPING A REVITALIZATION TEAM**

- A. The Unit President should select two or more highly interested, motivated and knowledgeable members to comprise a revitalization team, with one appointed as team leader.
- B. Team members do not need to be Unit officers (either past or present). There are many dedicated members who do not aspire to these offices and this is an excellent way to utilize their talents. Ask the following:
  - Are they knowledgeable of Auxiliary programs?
  - Are they knowledgeable of Auxiliary benefits?
  - Are they comfortable speaking to strangers?
  - Do they present a positive, personal image?
  - Are they physically able to do canvassing?
  - Are they willing to visit members?
- C. The Revitalization Team should receive information and training from the District/County or Department Team who will provide additional support as needed.
- D. The Revitalization Team:
  1. Communicates monthly with District/County or Department Chairman to inform her of Unit activity.
  2. Provides training for additional Unit volunteers assisted by District/County or Department Team.

## **HOW TO BE A GOOD CHAIRMAN**

Any journey takes planning, but planning alone is not enough. As a Unit Revitalization Leader, you need to “Be” many things.

### **Be Knowledgeable:**

A good leader should be knowledgeable about the entire program. The Unit Revitalization Leader should know the key people of the American Legion Auxiliary at the District /County and Department levels.

### **Be Available:**

Make yourself available to answer questions. Be prepared to talk with people. If you are out when someone calls, always make the effort to return their call. Sometimes you will encounter questions you cannot answer. Be wise enough to say, “I do not know,” then find the answer, and get back with the person.

### **Be Practical:**

To succeed, be practical. As a leader, there will be many demands on your time and energy. One person can only do so much. It is impossible to do every single task yourself. Delegate tasks to others on your team. Remember to *praise* your team members for a job well done.

### **Be Cooperative:**

There is always room for *change* and improvement. As our society is so complex, it is extremely difficult to meet the needs of everybody. It is imperative for us to cooperate with other organizations and agencies. Do this to reach as many people as you can.

### **Be Energetic:**

You must demonstrate to others that you possess the capacity to do the job. You must first motivate yourself to the highest degree possible. A clear understanding of the program’s purposes will help you to motivate others.

### **Be Dedicated:**

To be successful, you must be dedicated. Your dedication is the key to a successful program. Dedication is maintaining your own level of motivation and enthusiasm, even when it appears your team members have misplaced theirs. Your dedication gives you strength to carry on.

## GETTING BACK TO BASICS

The future of the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by what Unit members do today.

- Where will your Unit be in five years?
- What kind of investment in the future are **YOU** willing to make? Concerned Auxiliary members can promote the growth and well being of our Units. **We must get back to the Basics.**

We aspire to serve God and Country. Our motto is *Service Not Self* and our mission is to enhance the lives of veterans, service members and their families. Anyone who encounters the American Legion Auxiliary, for whatever reason, is entitled to respect and courtesy. Do we **need** to like everyone in our Unit? Of course not; we are all individuals and our likes and dislikes are what set us apart. **But we do have a responsibility to treat each member with courtesy and respect.**

- When someone new enters your Unit, do you acknowledge them and make them feel welcome?
- When someone unknown comes to a meeting or participates in a volunteer project, do you ignore them?
- Are you part of a small group that sits together at meetings?
- Do you treat others as you would like to be treated?
- Do you snub others?
- Do you judge?
- Do you gossip?

At your next Unit meeting or function, introduce yourself to someone alone or unknown to you. Find out something about them even if it is nothing more than their name and where they live. At each event, make a point to talk to someone unknown or not know well to you.

Consider how you appear outside our organization.

- What message do you send to prospective members?
- Consider how you appear to those just joining?
- What message are you sending?

**Look deep into YOUR heart for ways to strengthen YOUR OWN Unit as the American Legion Auxiliary searches for ways to succeed and grow as an organization.**

## BASIC RESEARCH

To better relate to a prospective member, do some research on why members join. Answer the Who, What, When, Where and Why to help you recall why you joined the American Legion Auxiliary.

Use these questions to survey Unit members. Their responses will reveal useful information. You will learn where your Unit has succeeded and discover areas that need improvement. Also, responses to the survey should provide a guide for future recruitment of new members.

1. **When** did you hear your first message about the American Legion Auxiliary?
2. **Where** did you hear it?
3. **What** attracted you?
4. **Who** did you connect with?
5. **Why** did you join and become active?
  - Did you join as a volunteer in service to others?
  - Did you join to find out what YOU could GIVE to the Auxiliary?
  - Did you join for recognition and power?
  - Did you join for what YOU could get FROM the Auxiliary?

## DO YOU KNOW ME?

It amuses me to think how the American Legion Auxiliary spends so much time looking for new members—when I was there all the time. Do you even remember me?

I'm the woman who came to every meeting and volunteer activity, but nobody paid any attention to me. I tried several times to be friendly, but everyone seemed to have their own friends to talk to. I sat among some unfamiliar faces several times, but they didn't pay much attention to me. In fact, they looked at me like I should not be sitting at **their** table.

When I joined the American Legion Auxiliary, I hoped the Unit President would ask me to volunteer on one of the committees. I wanted to volunteer, to somehow participate and contribute. I would have washed dishes if I had been asked. But no one did.

Finally, because of illness, I missed a meeting. The next month no one asked me where I had been. I guessed it didn't matter very much whether I was there or not. So, when the next event came, I just stayed home.

Do you know me? You might say I am a good person. I hold a responsible job, and I love God, my community and my country.

Do you know who else I am? I'm the member who will probably never again participate in a Unit activity. And someday soon, I'll wonder what reason I have to renew my membership in the American Legion Auxiliary.



### *Is This Woman a Member of Your Unit?*



## HOW TO BE A UNIT MENTOR

Mentoring is an invaluable service we give our new members and our successors in the American Legion Auxiliary. What is mentoring? Mentoring is the art of teaching, counseling, listening to and advising others so they can be successful. A mentor is a knowledgeable person who is willing to give her time to explain the programs of the Auxiliary. A mentor provides encouragement and guidance and is enthusiastic about teaching others. A mentor is patient and understands that a new member may be hesitant and unsure of herself.

How do you mentor a new member or a member wishing to become active in the Unit?

- Sit with the Unit member during meetings and get to know her.
- Offer to car-pool together to meetings and volunteer events, if feasible.
- Introduce her to others, particularly to the chairmen of any committees in which she has an interest.
- Encourage her participation in Unit activities and projects.
- Answer any questions she may have about procedures.
- Answer her questions about the Auxiliary mission, programs and volunteer opportunities.
- Follow up if she misses a meeting or volunteer event. Let her know that she was missed, send her any handouts or notes from the meeting, and remind her of future volunteer events.

**Remember** - some members may not enjoy meetings but would **love** to use their time and talent to serve veterans and their families.

- Stay in touch. Call her and send birthday, get well cards, etc.
- Socialize with her if it is agreeable to both of you.
- Invite her to attend District meetings, Department workshops and other Auxiliary events.

***Share what you know—Be a mentor!***

## HOW TO CULTIVATE ACTIVE MEMBERS

### I. Encouraging members to attend meetings and/or participate in volunteer events

Members may or may not attend meetings. They may attend meetings only occasionally or they may attend social meetings only. They may only want to receive a newsletter or mailing from the Unit. They may communicate with others by telephone, getting and giving information about Unit activities. You may never hear from some members except they may pay their dues or send donations regularly. Nevertheless, these members are your Unit and you must never forget, without them, there would be no American Legion Auxiliary.

Your efforts to get members to attend Unit meetings or participate in volunteer projects are just that—efforts. Members control whether or not they choose to attend or participate. You can only control your efforts to motivate them to attend. So, if you make no effort at all, there is almost a 100% probability that no one will come.

### II. Develop a program

How do you motivate members to become **active** members? Develop a balanced program to include meetings, newsletter, personal contact and, more importantly, meaningful opportunities to participate in mission outreach projects.

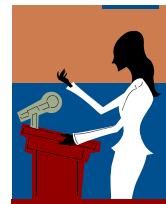
## MEETINGS

There will be meetings for those who want to or can be influenced to attend them. It's very important to have a permanent place so members know where the meeting will be held. It's too confusing when the meeting is held at one place one month, moved to another location the next month, or held at different locations each month.

Carry with you an Auxiliary informational brochure or a business card. It should list a contact person, time, place, and date of meeting for your Unit. When you run into members at the grocery store, at the mall, doctor's offices, etc who have not been attending meetings, invite them to return. Give them the business card. Make sure your Unit members know about your meetings—use all public relations outlets to get your message out.

A member will not travel 25 minutes to attend a meeting that lasts 15 minutes, nor will she travel 25 minutes for a meeting that lasts 2 hours! Control the length of your meetings with a printed agenda. If you cannot get copies of a printed agenda for everyone, print the agenda on a large flip chart or poster paper and display it at the front of the room.

(One member asked what to do about bickering at the meeting. It was suggested that she have an agenda printed or displayed for all to see. Then she could point to the agenda and tell them that "bickering" was not on the agenda and it was not going to be taken up in the meeting!)



## NEWSLETTER

There will be an information-filled newsletter for those who won't or can't attend meetings. When the Unit Secretary or Membership Chairman sends out membership cards, she should include a letter thanking the member for joining or renewing and invite them to a meeting. Send new members a short note, hand-written on pretty stationery or on a blank greeting card thanking them for joining the Auxiliary.

**Units can afford a newsletter!** The newsletter can be sent with membership cards. It's going to cost \$.39 to mail the membership card, so include all the information you can in the mailing. A newsletter can be a list of future activities or a report of what was done the previous year to benefit veterans, children and the community. Always give the member some information about the Unit; there just might be something in the newsletter that she's interested in or she might want to help with the activity. Newsletters can be as simple as a hand-written note in a blank card listing upcoming activities, speakers or programs. Always include a reminder about the meeting date and time. A report of each meeting should be included in the newsletter or as part of future mailings. The goal is to motivate the reader to wish she had been there. Do not ever pass on an opportunity to give members information.

## PERSONAL CONTACT

There should be a member visitation program to reach members through personal contact. Former members have said that the main reason they did not renew was because no one contacted them after they were mailed their membership card. Personalize your written correspondence with members; short notes should be hand-written. Remember long-time members with birthday cards or notes of appreciation. Say thank you for all successes. Write notes to loyal members who have not been attending meetings for a while. Buy or make a pretty blank card for loyal members and include a hand-written message such as:



**Volunteering without you just won't do!  
Since you've been gone, the number of veterans has grown.  
So come back, brighten up a veteran's day—and ours.  
Please come back and bring a friend.  
We miss you.**

Unit leaders have to make members feel special and appreciated. Give members a phone call or make a personal visit when you think it is appropriate for certain situations. Two other ways to make personal contact are through calling committees and a “Welcoming Committee”, both of which are discussed on the following pages.

There are simply too many good reasons for members to miss Unit meetings from time to time, such as conflicts with family and community events, illness, etc. The key to saving a Unit and seeing it through low member attendance is for the members to remain FLEXIBLE and POSITIVE. The kiss of death for any Unit is to suspend meetings for several months at a time or to stop having meetings. Adjust the Unit's agenda, try new methods, but **do not give up.**

## HOW TO ENGAGE MEMBERS

Ideally, you want **active** members who attend meetings and participate in mission delivery. This can be extremely challenging because you are competing with all the other demands on their lives. And remember, most members belong because they believe in the mission. Attending meeting may be of little or no interest to some members. Focus on engaging members in something they find meaningful and the best use of their time and talent. Even if a member can only volunteer one day or a few hours per year, they are still "active" and will likely continue their membership in the Auxiliary. One does not have to attend meetings to be considered an active member.

### 1. **Invite them to meetings and to participate in volunteer projects**

The initial challenge is to get members to come to their FIRST meeting. If you can get a member to come to a meeting—even once—you have an opportunity to personally market your Unit's programs to them and motivate them to continue their participation in Unit projects. The first contact you have with a Unit member should be accompanied by a personal invitation to come to the next meeting. The personal invitation should be followed by a reminder call. If the member doesn't come, call again and invite her to the following meeting. If you really want members to attend Unit meetings or assist with Auxiliary volunteer projects, you have to put forth an effort.

### 2. **Offer attractive meetings with program, speaker, social time, refreshments, etc.**

Simply expecting members to attend meetings just because they belong doesn't work. Meetings must have something interesting and worthwhile to attract members. You must sell the Auxiliary mission and program, the social and membership benefits, and the opportunity to help others. Have a special program at each meeting. Program speakers are relatively easy to get. Set aside time for members to socialize before or after the meeting.

### 3. **Offer and publicize opportunities to participate in meaningful mission-outreach projects**

Many members have no interest in attending meetings but LOVE to do hands-on mission-related work. Identify and publicize your Unit's mission-related projects and events that would attract these members. Personally contact these members to let them know how much your Unit would appreciate their time and talent to help carry out the Auxiliary mission.

### 4. **Give members positive reinforcement**

First and foremost, at every meeting and event you must make each member feel their participation is appreciated. Talk with each attendee, face-to-face, if only for a few moments, to look in their eyes and tell them how glad you are to see them and how much you appreciate their participation. Speak in positive terms about what will happen at the next meeting or volunteer event and tell them that you hope to see them there

too. This has the added benefit of helping leaders to get to know members better. When members attend their **FIRST** Unit meeting, they should receive special treatment. The Unit President or other Unit office should welcome them, saying how pleased she is that they are sharing their time and talent. Invite the **first-time** members to tell the Unit something about themselves. Make sure that someone talks to and socializes with the members who are attending for the first time. Make sure that the members do not sit alone! The goal is for the members to leave thinking, "Everyone was so friendly and helpful!" And don't forget to show appreciation to long-time members and reward them for their successes. Say "Thank You" often.

#### 5. **Get feedback from members**

Members who continue to participate in meetings and/or volunteer project and events do so because they get something out of them. Talk to these members and find out what they value about the meetings, events or projects. Talk to people who have stopped participating and try to find out why. Ask them what might bring them back. Find out which mission outreach projects they find most meaningful and ask them to participate. *Think like a business owner. These members are your customers. You want them to buy your products. If they stop buying, as a business owner, you would certainly want to know why and how you could fix things. A business owner wants to keep all loyal customers.*

#### 6. **Offer and request that members take on responsibilities and assignments**

Another way to encourage members to continue participating is to involve them in some special way. For example, you may want to get 2 or 3 members for each meeting whose mission is to talk to members who are sitting alone, to make sure that no member sits alone, and to get new members socializing with others. Try in some innovative and fun way to separate the small group or clique that always sits together.

Everyone you can persuade to bring refreshments or to give a brief report of some community project will attend. Assign a special project to new members to get them involved (make sure it is something they like to do). Don't be afraid to ask Unit members for help. Often, it's not that difficult. Most members are eager to contribute in some way. All you have to do is ask.

#### 7. **Appoint a calling committee**

Some Units keep members engaged by appointing a small calling committee. Each committee member is given a list of names and telephone numbers, and asked to call everyone on their list to remind them of meetings and other opportunities to participate. The impact of the calls can be enhanced if the caller tells them about the meeting agenda (speaker or program scheduled) or an explanation of the volunteer project and how their time and talent is needed. This is a reminder call only—Unit does not solicit dues or donations during these calls. You want to get members to participate in some way, so don't drive them away by asking for money! (One organization reported using this method for 30 years and that it was very successful.)

#### 8. **Establish "Welcome or Welcoming Committee" for personal contact**

Set up a "welcome" committee (or whatever you want to name the committee) to make personal visits. If you can get a husband/wife team to make visits together, this will show Legion family unity. For a new member, explain what the Unit does in the community, provide a benefits sheet, a schedule of meetings and volunteer projects/events, Unit and Department newsletters, etc. This committee does not solicit donations or dues. The purpose of this committee is to welcome new members, explain programs of the Auxiliary, invite participation, and to show that the Auxiliary is a caring organization.

*Show others that the American Legion Auxiliary consists of volunteers who are caring and find meaning in the work they do for the organization and at the same time, have fun doing it.*

### **PERSONAL CONTACT**

Do not let the dues notice sent by National Headquarters be the only contact with Unit members. If you are going to revitalize your Unit and get more renewals, you have to get back to **personally** contacting members. Make phone calls and personal visits.

Contacting members by phone is good, but nothing takes the place of a **personal visit**. Call or send a note to let members or non-renewals know that Unit members will be in the area making visits and may stop by. (*Sample letters, pages 15-20*) Members or former members should not be surprised by strangers knocking on their doors. Always carry some American Legion Auxiliary identification, membership applications, information about Auxiliary programs and Member Benefits.



### When Making Personal Contact with Members/Non-Renewals:

- The most important thing to do is **listen**. People just want someone to listen to their concerns. Find out why the member did not renew.
- Tie their interest to American Legion Auxiliary mission outreach programs.
- Provide information about meeting place/time, and how they can get involved in projects and programs of the Unit. Tell about benefits and provide brochures.
- Invite them to come back to the Auxiliary. (You will need applications)
- **Thank them.**
- Ask for leads -- Are there family members eligible to join? Is the neighbor eligible? Do they have any female relatives in the Armed Services?
- **Thank them again.**

### Personalize Your Correspondence

Letters should be personalized. Renewal letters and short notes should be hand-written on nice stationery. Never use form letters where you just fill in the blanks.

### **WORDS**

#### **“Talk In Everlasting Words”**

Use words to attract members.

Learn how to talk to

prospective members. “Word of mouth” is an effective way to recruit new members. Enthusiastic members proving information to people who ask about their volunteer work, are the Auxiliary’s greatest publicity tool.

Be prepared to talk to everybody. Develop skills in the technique of active listening. When talking to a prospective member, ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are ones that require more than just a “yes” or “no” answer. You want to ask questions that require the prospective member to talk about themselves, their interests, concerns, etc. At a large social event it much better to talk with a smaller number of people, thus having a quality conversation with each one.

Many members of the Auxiliary, when talking to prospective members, talk about the mission and how the member can help. For example: “You can help us welcome home returning service members, provide assistance to military families, assist in our many veterans programs, write letters to support The American Legion's legislative agenda, help raise funds to sponsor a girl to Girls State or provide youth scholarships, help organize a parade or holiday party, etc.” A more effective message is to include information about the advantages and benefits of becoming a member. Use words that grab the prospective member’s attention, interest and desire. Also, give them the “American Legion Auxiliary At a Glance,” brochure and a business card. (*sample business card, page 9*)

#### **“It’s Only Words”**

How do you gain great *free* publicity for the Auxiliary? Newsletters, flyers, brochures, business cards, and other written material are all means of getting your message out to the community. Be creative! Use one of the most read sections in a newspaper, the letters to the editor. It’s easy to get your recruiting message in there and it’s free!

Use the following words in your written messages:

|      |         |       |           |     |      |
|------|---------|-------|-----------|-----|------|
| earn | profit  | win   | discover  | new | love |
| gain | health  | save  | achieve   | get | you  |
| easy | results | avoid | guarantee |     |      |

Experts say these words have been found to “spark” the most interest from people.

*Talk in everlasting words, and dedicate them all to me.....  
It's only words, and words are all I have, to take your heart away.  
“Words” by Bee Gees*



### **“Words Are All I Have To Take Your Heart Away”**

In order for the Unit members to learn the language of recruitment, have them practice using the words listed below to describe the benefits and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. Use as many of the words, listed above, as possible in the same sentence.

Example: Through our Legislative program you will discover important issues and gain a new understanding of them.

Play a game similar to “Name that Tune” where the person naming the tune with the smallest number of notes won the game. Call your game “Describe the Auxiliary” with the winner being the person who has written a sentence using the highest number of the words listed above. Award a prize—make this activity both educational and fun!



### **ELEVATOR SPEECH**

As you enter an elevator, a woman asks about the Auxiliary emblem, which is visible on your shirt. (You have one minute to explain.)

#### **This is what you can say:**

“The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest, women's patriotic service organization in the world. Our nearly 900,000 members are women who are either veterans themselves or immediate relatives of American Legion members or deceased veterans of war. We were founded in 1919 to serve the needs of American veterans and their families. Today, Auxiliary volunteers work for many worthwhile causes that benefit veterans, service members and their families. I have a brochure that explains the Auxiliary in more detail.”

Hand the brochure, “American Legion Auxiliary At a Glance,” to the woman before she departs the elevator. Always carry the brochure where you can get it at a moment’s notice. On it, make sure that you have a label with the name, address, and telephone number of the local contact person. It is also good to provide a business card to prospective members. Along with pertinent information, you should list some contributions your Unit has made to the enhance the lives of veterans, active military and their families in your community.

### **Sample Business Card**

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY  
Summerset Unit 289  
300 Cherry St., Summerset, NY 36237  
Meetings on Second Thursday, 7:30 P.M.  
Contact: Lois Smith (458) 222-3232

#### **FRONT OF CARD**

**Did you know that Summerset Unit 289:**  
Donated \$500 to Muncie VAMC  
Sent six girls to Girls State  
Assist families of active military  
Conduct Welcome Home events for troops  
Have a variety of veterans service programs

#### **BACK OF CARD**

## RENEWAL PHONE CALL

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Name) (Name and Number)

here in \_\_\_\_\_. Are you \_\_\_\_\_?  
(Location) (Member's Name)

The reason I'm calling is we noticed you have not renewed your membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the current year.

Your membership is very important to us and we want to make sure everything is all right.

- If there is a problem, listen and see if the Auxiliary can be of help, or if a problem can be solved.
- If they have paid their dues, check it out and get back to them.
- If there is no problem, suggest times and dates you could come by and pick up her dues.
- Could I come by in the next 30 minutes to renew your membership, or would tomorrow about 10:00 a.m. be better?
- Confirm the response by repeating it, and also confirm her address with directions to her home.
- Thank her for her time no matter what the outcome!

## ROLE PLAYING

Fears are based on assumptions about the person on the other side of the door or on the other end of the line. Put yourself in that position and go for it.

- Make a list of the fears you have when you call or
- Knock on doors. What is the worst thing that can happen?
- When you face your fears, they will become less scary.
- This will help you to be prepared for what may actually happen during canvassing/recruiting.



### Reasons people say **Yes**:

- They like the person asking
- Believe in the program or organization
- Get something for the money
- Feeling generous
- Know their dues will be used well
- Feels guilty saying no
- Wants to support troops
- Knows someone in the organization

### Reasons people say **No**:

- Does not believe in the program or organization
- Organization has a bad reputation
- Bad mood that day
- Belongs to too many other organizations
- Not sure what the dues will be spent on
- Heard that members gossip and bicker too much
- Person asking is too pushy

A negative answer is usually not the fault of the person asking. There are usually reasons outside our control or knowledge. Hopefully, taking time to look at the reasons realistically will help with the barriers around asking someone to join. Think about what you would say and why. The worst that can happen is she might say NO. If you are asked a question you cannot answer, respond by saying, "I don't know, but I will find out for you." Then get back to her.



### **FORM A RENEWAL TEAM**

Create a Membership Renewal Team. The team should be made up of two or three highly motivated Unit members whose only job is to focus on membership renewals. They would be expected to track down those who have not yet renewed and make sure they remain members of the American Legion Auxiliary. These renewal team members should organize postcard campaigns, make phone calls, write letters, or knock on doors to contact non-renewals.

The Membership Renewal Team might also want to hold a Renewal Open House at the beginning of a new year to collect dues. It should be a special occasion, lasting one to two hours depending on the size of your Unit. It's not expensive to make copies of a computer-generated flyer or invitation to send members. Flyers should also be posted in various locations, especially in the Post home and on community bulletin boards. A flyer/invitation must contain pertinent information such as the sample below.

#### **You are invited to a *Renewal Open House***

WHO: Members of local Unit

WHEN: September 9, 2006  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Your local Auxiliary Unit  
Street address  
Town, State  
Phone Number

An exclusive for valued members like you. Renewal made quick and easy.  
Door prizes will be awarded, Food/snacks will be served. Music/Entertainment

***RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP . . .***  
take advantage of the many benefits provided by the American Legion Auxiliary

## **UNIT REVITALIZATION Plan development**

1. **Commitment:** There must be commitment from members in a Unit who want to reorganize/ revitalize their Unit. Without commitment, nothing positive will occur. Commitment involves:
  - a. Sacrificing time, giving of self
  - b. Willingness to change old habits
  - c. Desire/courage to try something new
  - d. Letting others hold office or chairmanship
  - e. Removing existing “cliques”
  - f. Determining desire—Do Unit members have desire to change?
2. **Recruiter Profile**
  - a. How do you look?
  - b. Are you knowledgeable about programs and benefits?
  - c. Are you energetic, enthusiastic, flexible?
  - d. Can you talk “off the cuff” or “on your feet”?
  - e. Does not have to be a Past President or officer
3. **Work as an American Legion Family**
  - a. Working together enables more to be accomplished
  - b. Is Post home inviting to prospective members and/or family members?
  - c. Is it smoke-free and handicapped accessible?
  - d. Are visitors and prospective members welcomed?
  - e. Have “together” functions—installation, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Legion birthday, Easter Egg Hunt, etc.
4. **Goals**
  - a. When revitalizing an existing Unit, there must be goals
  - b. Set a goal for number of former members/renewals you want to enroll
  - c. Set a realistic goal; you want to be successful
  - d. Establish a time frame—completion time from start to finish should be no more than two (2) months
5. **Networking**
  - a. Know which organizations are active in your community
  - b. Talk with members, find out their activities, how successful are they, learn from them
  - c. Encourage Units to assist with community and other organization’s projects.

**CONCLUSION:** If you are to be successful in your efforts to revitalize your existing Unit, remember the three **A’s of success: APTITUDE, ATTITUDE, ACTION**

## **STEPS FOR REVITALIZATION EFFORT**

1. **Canvassing Date**

Select dates and times for canvassing effort; weekend is probably best. Be aware of unsafe areas.
2. **Publicity**
  - a. Have efforts publicized in Post and/or Unit newsletters two months prior to canvassing.
  - b. Two weeks prior to canvassing have newspaper coverage. Display posters/flyers in the area (community bulletin board, grocery stores, church bulletin board, etc.).
3. **Post Roster**

Ask Post Adjutant if membership roster is on the computer and if so, that it be provided to a UD&R Team member. If Post cannot provide roster, ask Adjutant to secure from Department Adjutant a membership roster in Alpha and zip code order with home phone numbers. Check to be sure phone numbers are correct; make corrections if necessary.
4. **Letters**
  - a. Secure mailing labels from Post/Department or make your own.
  - b. Letters are to be mailed two-three weeks in advance of the canvassing effort; allows time for letters with wrong addresses to be returned.
  - c. Letter should be mailed 2-3 weeks prior to canvassing to Post members whose wives are not Auxiliary members, members of Department Headquarters Unit in the canvassing zip code area,

- Unit non-renewals for last three years for canvassing zip code area (secure list from Unit or Department Headquarters).
- d. Letter to Post members from Commander and President can be found on page 29.
  - e. Letter to Auxiliary members from Unit President can be found on page 28.
  - f. Sample letter to past Auxiliary members from Unit President and UD&R Chairman inviting them to rejoin can be found on page 30.
5. Brochure  
From Department Headquarters get the brochure, "This is the American Legion Auxiliary" and in space provided on back, place label with name, address, phone number of contact person, plus date, time and location of Reorganization meeting. Get copies of the Auxiliary Member Benefits sheet, fold and insert in brochure.
6. Maps  
Ask your State or County Mapping Division for a map of the area you will be canvassing. Maps should include street name, map grids and house numbers. If the street names and house numbers are difficult to read, you will need to enlarge the maps. The Chamber of Commerce, library, office supply, drug store and post office are other sources for maps.
- a. Personnel and supplies needed:
    1. At least two members working as a team to do mapping
    2. Address list of Legion members (Post roster)
    3. Several copies of map of the area to be canvassed
    4. Several different colors of high-lighter pens
  - b. Mapping tasks to accomplish prior to "door-to-door" canvassing
    1. Make copies of Post roster. The number of canvassing teams will determine the number needed.
    2. Make copies of Unit roster and non-renewals for past three years. Cross reference with Post roster for duplications.
    3. Place a number by each member's name on roster that lives locally (in canvassing area). Number the names consecutively... 1, 2, 3, etc.
    4. As you find each address on the map (street name and close proximity), put their corresponding number on the map where they live. Be sure it is clear enough to read.
    5. After you have located all the members on the map, make a grid and divide canvassing area into sections based on the number of teams. This should be an area that can be worked in about three hours.
    6. Use a different color marker for each section. Each section or area will have its own color or highlighted, numbered spots on the map according to the names on the list.
    7. Make each team a list complete with names and addresses for every member to be visited by that team.
    8. Combine the team lists and make a Master List. UD&R team leader should have master roster and map for each area.
7. Day of Canvassing
- a. Meet at designated time at Post or other meeting place.
  - b. Determine number of homes to be visited.
  - c. Determine number of teams that will be needed.
  - d. Each team should consist of at least 2 members and it would be better to have three or four per car. (Never have just one person per car)  
Know the amount of Senior and Junior Unit dues, (includes National /Department/District/County per capita). Know day, time and location of Unit meeting.
  - e. Have open house at Post or other meeting place and have 2-3 people there to talk with walk-ins. Have Auxiliary, Legion and SAL program pamphlets/brochures and membership applications available.
8. Visiting Homes
- a. Wear appropriate clothing, make a good first impression.
  - b. Wear visible name tag with Auxiliary emblem on it.
  - c. Check roster to know name of individual so you can call by name.

- d. Two people go to door, with one doing most of the talking (if both talk, it could become confusing), take brochure (leave with individual or in door if no one is home).
  - e. Return to car and give information to one responsible for recording, i.e. interested, not interested, call back, need ride to meeting, etc. It is essential for this information to be recorded for each home visited.
  - f. Return to Post or other meeting place at designated time for all teams to report results. Turn in all completed applications, money for dues and notes you take. UD&R team member will compile notes and give to the Unit President.
9. Follow-Up  
 Follow-up at a later date on those not home, those who asked to be called and reminded of meeting, those who might need a ride, etc.

### MASTER LIST

| Team Name   | Post Member's Name | Post Member's Address |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (Numbers by names correspond to their address on the map)           |                    |                       |
| <b><u>YELLOW TEAM</u></b>   |                    |                       |
| #1  |                    |                       |
| #4  |                    |                       |
| #8  |                    |                       |
| #9  |                    |                       |
| #16   |                    |                       |
| #17   |                    |                       |
| #21   |                    |                       |
| <b><u>BLUE TEAM</u></b>   |                    |                       |
| #2  |                    |                       |
| #3  |                    |                       |
| #6  |                    |                       |
| #12   |                    |                       |
| #19   |                    |                       |
| #22   |                    |                       |
| <b><u>GREEN TEAM</u></b>  |                    |                       |
| #7  |                    |                       |
| #10   |                    |                       |
| #11   |                    |                       |
| #13   |                    |                       |
| #14   |                    |                       |
| #15   |                    |                       |
| #20   |                    |                       |
| <b><u>PINK SPOT:</u></b> Meeting Location and time after canvassing |                    |                       |

(LETTER TO UNIT MEMBER CONCERNING REORGANIZING THEIR UNIT)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Unit stationery.**  
*SAMPLE LETTER*

Date

Dear Unit Member,

As you know, the American Legion Auxiliary has a proud heritage of volunteering and as a volunteer member you understand the importance of our programs and activities and the effect they have on our veterans, service members and their families. The possibilities for us to continue to have an impact in these areas are limited only by our creativity, desires and enthusiasm.

As a member you have been able to volunteer in many capacities in your Unit. If you are a member who has not volunteered as much as you would like, now is the time to consider your options and find new ways for our mission outreach programs to attract other women who want to make a difference in the lives of veterans, their families and their community.

We invite you to attend a special reorganization meeting of our Unit #\_\_\_\_\_. The meeting will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ location \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_.

A team of leaders from the District/County and Department will be available to answer questions on the Auxiliary's programs and activities to help you decide your interest and at what level you would like to participate.

Thank you for being a member and a volunteer with our exceptional organization. We look forward to your continued membership and volunteer work.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unit President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unit Secretary



(LETTER TO LEGIONNAIRE CONCERNING REORGANIZING A UNIT)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Post stationery.**  
*SAMPLE LETTER*

Date

Dear Legionnaire,

When you joined The American Legion, you chose to continue your fellowship with others who have served our country. You also chose to support an organization that stands strong for veterans and their rights as American citizens.

Our Post is very interested in assisting the American Legion Auxiliary in re-organizing our local Unit. The American Legion is proud of this Unit's past goals and accomplishments. Thanks to these Auxiliary volunteers, many veterans, service members and their families as well as our community have benefited.

To make this Unit stronger we welcome the eligible girls and women you know to join our organization. There are many different programs and activities for members of all ages in which to volunteer. Please contact either of us for additional information about the Auxiliary's programs and activities. We can be reached at 123-4567 and 987-6543 respectively.

The re-organizational meeting of Unit # \_\_\_\_\_ will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ location \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_. Auxiliary representatives from the District/County will be present to assist Post and Unit members with the re-organization.

Remember, those eligible for membership are the wife, daughter, mother, granddaughter, great granddaughter, sister and grandmother, including step relatives, of a Legionnaire or deceased veteran who served during the eligibility dates.

Thank you for your consideration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Post Commander)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unit President

(LETTER TO FORMER MEMBER ASKING HER TO REJOIN THE UNIT)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Unit stationery.**  
***SAMPLE LETTER***

Date

Dear Barbara,

When you joined the American Legion Auxiliary, you chose to stand strong for veterans, their families, and communities. You chose an organization that has supported and touched with kindness many veterans and their families.

I know that you cared about the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary. That is why I am inviting you to rejoin Unit 0007.

An application for membership is enclosed along with a sheet showing the many benefits available to Auxiliary members. The dues are \$25.00 for Senior members and \$5.25 for Juniors. Please mail completed application and dues to:

Diana Fields, Secretary  
Unit 0007  
2211 Oceanview Blvd.  
Paradise, HI 98765

You are also invited to attend the October 7, 2010 meeting. If you have not sent in your application and you wish to rejoin Unit 0007, you may bring the application and dues to the meeting. Our meeting is held at the Legion Post 0007 home and begins at 7:00 p.m.

The District Revitalization Team Leader is working with our Unit in its revitalization efforts. If you have any questions, contact one of the individuals at the address and phone number listed below.

We look forward to your participation in the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary!

Sincerely,

Surfer Girl, President  
Unit 0007  
2211 Oceanview Blvd  
Paradise, HI 98765  
(808) 555-6789

Happy Hula, District Chairman  
Unit Development & Revitalization  
2211 Ohana Ave.  
Aloha, HI 6789  
(808) 555-3210

(LETTER TO UNIT PRESIDENT CONCERNING ASSIGNMENT OF MENTORS TO UNIT)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Post stationery.**  
*SAMPLE LETTER*

Date

Phyllis Jones, President  
Independence Unit 999  
106 Williams Street  
Liberty, MS 21434

Dear President Phyllis:

How exciting it is to advise you that Shannon Smith, a member of our Department Revitalization Team, has offered to serve as a mentor for your Unit.

Shannon will be able to assist you and your Unit members in a number of ways as she has personally witnessed the impact our committed volunteers can have on the veterans, service members and their families. More importantly, Shannon will be available to attend your meetings, respond to your questions and help you to explore the potential needs of both your Unit and your community. Shannon's address and phone number are listed below.

Another valuable source of information and support is your District/County President, Erica Lane. I am sure you will soon hear from her. Remember, these women are eager to work with you and to offer suggestions which will hopefully strengthen your Unit and help all of you soon experience the love and satisfaction that only volunteering can provide.

Please don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sally Jones, Department Chairman  
Unit Development & Revitalization Committee  
123 Sunshine Rd.  
Anywhere, MS 54321  
(area code & phone number)

Shannon Smith, Committee Member  
Unit Development & Revitalization Committee  
2436 Birch Rd.  
Somewhere, MS 65432  
(area code & phone number)

(LETTER TO LEGIONNAIRE CONCERNING FORMING A NEW UNIT)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Post stationery.**  
***SAMPLE LETTER***

Date

Dear Legionnaire,

Time and again it has been demonstrated that the most successful Posts are the ones who work cooperatively with their Auxiliary Units. With this in mind, our Post is very interested in forming an Auxiliary Unit as we realize the positive effect a Unit can have on a Post. We hope to build a family organization of Legion and Auxiliary members volunteering together to enable us to do more for our veterans, service members, their families and our community.

Do you have female relatives, friends and co-workers who take pleasure in volunteering? Would they enjoy helping the Auxiliary to enhance the lives of our veterans, service members, their families and our community? Are these women eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary? If so, will you please share the information in this letter with them?

Those eligible for membership are the wife, daughter, mother, granddaughter, great granddaughter, sister and grandmother including the same step relatives of a Legionnaire or a deceased veteran having served during the eligibility dates. Women who in their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion are also eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

There will be an informal meeting of interested women and Post members on \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_.

Auxiliary representatives from the District/County will be present at this meeting to provide information on programs and activities, dues, possible meeting date, officers etc. They will also be there to answer any questions you may have.

Having a strong Unit to work closely with our Post will strengthen our commitment to our mission and this community.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Post Commander

\_\_\_\_\_  
Post Adjutant

(LETTER TO COMMANDER CONCERNING FORMING A NEW UNIT FROM DEPARTMENT UD&R CHAIRMAN)

**It is recommended this letter be written on Post stationery.**  
***SAMPLE LETTER***

Date

John Smith, Commander  
American Legion Post 234  
567 Sesame St.  
Anytown, OH 12345

Dear Commander Smith:

I understand you are interested in organizing an Auxiliary Unit for your Post. Congratulations for understanding the positive effect a Unit can have on your Post; it has been demonstrated that the most successful Posts are those that work cooperatively with their Auxiliary Unit. The family organization of Legion and Auxiliary members volunteering together can have an even greater effect on veterans, service members their families and the community around us.

Enclosed is information on How to Organize a Unit. This guide will take you through the process and provide some background information. While the Auxiliary, once formed, is an independent organization, it exists first to assist the Post. Once your Post has voted to form a Unit, we will provide help in membership recruiting and with Informational and Organizational meetings. We will also provide a mentor to assist the Unit for as long as help is needed.

As the Department Revitalization Leader, I assure you that our Department and District/County leaders are ready to assist in any way we can. Please contact me if you have questions.

I can be reached at the following:

123 Sunset Dr.  
Somewhere, OH 12345

Phone Number: 123-456-7890  
E-mail address: [mj@emailaddress.net](mailto:mj@emailaddress.net)

Sincerely,

Mary Jones, Department Revitalization Team



## Valued Member Survey

Dear Member,

YOU are valuable to us! Since the Unit is beginning a new administrative year, it is important for us to know what we must do to better serve YOUR needs.

### PROGRAMS and COMMITTEES

1. Which Auxiliary programs and committees interest you? (Check all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children & Youth                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Auxiliary Emergency Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Girls State                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior Activities        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Security                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Constitution & Bylaws    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Committee        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poppy                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Past Presidents Parley   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Revitalization           |

Are there other community based, mission outreach projects with which you are familiar that would be of interest to our Unit?  Yes  No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MEETING ATTENDANCE

2. What is the average number of meetings that you attended in the past year?

3 or less       4 to 6       7 to 9       10 to 12

Do you hold an elected position in your Unit?  Yes  No

3. Currently our meetings are held at 7:30 PM the second Tuesday of each month. Is there another day and hour more suitable to your schedule?  Yes  No

Please indicate your preference.

Monday     Tuesday     Wednesday     Thursday     Friday

Morning     Afternoon     Evening

Other reasons for your lack of attendance. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Continued on other side.*

4. Our Unit's leadership continues to look for ideas that will add stimulus to the meeting. What ideas can you suggest that would interest you?

Speakers on:

- Veteran's benefits
- College financing
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Losing Weight
- Coping with death
- Auxiliary Benefits

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

- Have learning type quiz or skits?
- Visit a VA Medical Center
- Plan activities with The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion.
- Go shopping or to a movie, etc.
- Invite a beauty consultant to discuss the trend in hairstyles and make-up
- Start a computer or a dance class for all ages, etc.
- Host a "Meet the Candidates" Night
- Honor military from the area that have or are currently serving. Invite their families, etc.
- Assist families of deployed service members
- Monetary drawings
- Local historical/cultural day trips (fun day trips)

5. In which mission outreach volunteer projects/events would you most like to participate? (*list those of your Unit*)

- Stand Downs
- Welcome Home troop events
- Assist families of deployed service members
- Volunteer at VA center
- Operation Military Kids projects
- Veterans Creative Arts festival events
- Ride 2 Recovery events

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments:

Thank you for taking your time to answer our survey.  
We are always seeking new ideas to improve our meetings and volunteer opportunities.

**Your opinion counts!**



## **CHARTER CANCELLATIONS**

1. NO charter shall be considered for cancellation without the Unit first involving and working with the Department and/or District/County Revitalization Team.
2. After the Revitalization Team has exhausted all means to save the Unit, the following procedure shall be followed.
  - a. A Unit wanting to relinquish their charter for cancellation must send an advance written notice to their membership and shall vote at a regular meeting of the Unit.
  - b. The Unit charter cancellation will then be voted on by the Department Executive Committee and then forwarded to National Headquarters for vote by the National Executive Committee.
  - c. When a Unit ceases to function or its charter has been revoked or cancelled, the charter and all Unit records and funds must be forwarded immediately to Department Headquarters.
3. If the Unit cannot be saved, encourage the members to transfer to another Unit before the Unit cancels the charter.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

## (LONG VERSION)

Room – Large enough to accommodate the group with both classroom style seating and space to accommodate the group in four or five simultaneous breakout sessions.

- Head table with podium and microphone

Tools Needed – Flip chart, easel, felt markers, microphone (hand-held, if possible)

### AGENDA

PRESENTER: CALL TO ORDER

WELCOME: (**your own words ending with**...now let's begin.

(Since it is important for you to know who is making up your class and depending upon the time you have allowed and the number in your class, you can do one of the following:

- a) Select one question from the following list for each member of the group to answer) if the group is 20 or more use (b)
- b) Will everyone who is serving as a new officer or chairman please stand. Now, will everyone who has previously served in there positions please stand.

- Please give your name and the state where you are from?
- What office or chairmanship will you serve in 2006-2007?
- How long you have been a member?
- What is the highest office or chairmanship you have held?
- What prompted you to join the American Legion Auxiliary?

**(If the group is 20 or less, ask each person to stand, face the audience and then using the hand-held microphone responds to your questions. Again, if the group is too large or if you are running short on time, you must go with (b)**

PRESENTER: Thank you for responding to those questions.

Now is there a schoolteacher in the room? If so, please hold up your hand? (If no response, ask for a volunteer to come forward to assist you. Give her the packet of felt markers and ask her to write on the flipchart when directed to do so)

How many of you remember the TV Show Bewitched? Remember when Samantha was upset about something or she wanted to make changes - how she would wiggle her nose and immediately the change would take place?

Well, (today/afternoon/tonight) I am going to bestow that same magic power on you.

If you had the power to make one major change in your Unit or District, what would that change be? Let's start right here in the front row.

(Each time a member states something she would like to see changed, the person at the flipchart writes it down. Example: Boring meetings, better attendance, cliques, involve the Juniors, etc) Once the list is complete and depending upon the number in your workshop, group the list into workable categories. If you have four category groupings, then ask the attendees to count off: 1,2,3,4; 1,2,3,4. etc. then say

PRESENTER: Will all of the #1's move to (**select a place in the room for them**) and the issues in Category One that you are to find solutions for are: (then read them from the flipchart)

Now all of the #2's will move to (**select a place in another corner for them**) and the issues in Category Two that you are to find solutions for are (**then read Category Two items**)

Will all of the #3's go to (**select a place in the room for them**) and the issues in Category Three are: (**then read them from the flipchart**)

Now will the #4's go to (**select a place in another corner for them**) and the issues in Category Four that you are to find solutions for are (**then read Category Four items**)  
(When everyone is in their assigned place, state.....)

Each group must select someone within your group to take notes – you now have 10 minutes to solve your issues.

*(When eight minutes has elapsed – announce they have 2 minutes remaining) (Depending upon the amount of time that you were given for your workshop, you can allow them 2-3 minutes additional minutes) When the allotted time is up.....*

PRESENTER: Your time is up – let’s quickly return to our seats.

*(When everyone is back in their seat)*

Did you enjoy having that magic power? Well, like all of you I am eager to hear from our problem solving teams.

Will the person who is reporting for Category One, come to the front and lets hear from you! *(She uses the hand-held microphone)*

*(After she reports, I always ask)*

Does anyone who was part of the Category One solution team have anything additional to add? Anyone else? *(Always praise them for doing a good job; Lead the applause)*

*(Follow the same procedure for Category Two, Three and Four. After everyone has reported applaud them for a job well done)*

PRESENTER:

So often when individuals or a group of members have problems, they call on others to solve their dilemmas for them. However, since the majority of disagreements stem from individual differences, it is important for Unit members to understand how necessary it is to try to solve their own conflicts.

I am hopeful that after participating in this meaningful exercise, you can recognize and appreciate the tremendous opportunities that can result such as new ideas and that can lead to renewed enthusiasm.

The key to conflict resolution is giving EVERY member a voice. Once the voices are heard however, it is up to you the leaders and the members to work together to take the steps necessary to implement the changes.

Now I want each of you to take a piece of paper...if you are right handed, I want you to write your name with your left hand. If you are left handed, I want you to write your name with your right hand.

***Was that uncomfortable?***

Now let’s do that same exercise again? Was that a little easier to do? Is your name becoming a little easier to write?

Now I want you to write your name the third time? Is it getting a little easier? Is your name becoming a little more legible?

Each time that you want to a make change, or to undo something that “you have always done a certain way,” remember the more that you work at it, the easier it will become.

Are there questions on anything that we have covered?

Congratulations, I am really proud of you!

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION** *(SHORT VERSION)*

Each year Membership Chairmen spend untold hours promoting and enrolling new enthusiastic members. Then after a year or two, these new members often drop their memberships due to lackluster meetings, seasoned members not inviting newer members to participate in volunteer projects and events, the same officers serving year after year, or perhaps the Unit is unwilling to change the way they do things.

For the Auxiliary to be successful, the revolving door must stop. Many of the issues plaguing our Units today can be resolved through Conflict Resolution.

So where do you begin? First, call a special meeting and ask each attendee to respond to the following question. *"If you had the power to make two major changes in this Unit, what would those two changes be?"*

Each response should be written on a flipchart or chalkboard. Once everyone has responded, categorize the list into workable groupings, based on the number of attendees. If you have four groupings, then have the attendees count off: 1, 2, 3, 4: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Next, ask each number group to go to a different area of the room to begin discussing the issues assigned to their group. Each group should also have one group member to take notes. This person will also read the notes later in the meeting. The groups should have 10 - 15 minutes to discuss their assigned issues.

When the allotted time has elapsed, everyone should come back together, and the person responsible for the notes in each discussion group reports their group's solutions. After each report, ask for additional comments from the floor, and then go on to the next group's report, etc.

So often when individuals or a group of members have problems, they call on others to solve their dilemmas for them. However, since the majority of disagreements stem from individual differences, it is important for Unit members to understand how necessary it is to try to solve their own conflicts.

It has been our experience that when a Unit has participated in this meaningful exercise, the members soon recognize and appreciate the tremendous opportunities that result. New ideas abound, and that leads to renewed enthusiasm. The key to conflict resolution is giving EVERY member a voice. Once the voices are heard, however, it is up to the leaders and all members to work together to take the steps necessary to implement the changes.

## **The Joy of Six Team Building Game**

- Objective:** To provide a vivid demonstration of the satisfaction (joy) of being included in a group (of six) and the uneasiness of being excluded.
- Materials Required:** Sufficient messages and envelopes, prepared in advance, to accommodate all participants.
- Procedure:** Prepare a series of short sayings (e.g., “The customer is number one”) and make 6 copies of each. Ideally the messages should relate either to the central topics of the meeting or to currently important themes or issues in the organization, such as “Coping with Change.”
- Make single copies of 1-5 other messages. Place each of the sayings in an individual (unmarked) envelope, seal the envelopes, and mix them up. Give one envelope to each member.
- Instruct members to open their envelopes, read the messages, circulate around the room, introduce themselves, and repeat the message (softly). When an individual finds someone else with the same message, they are to team up. Tell them to continue this search and introductory process, staying in growing clusters, until they are all in teams of 6 persons (i.e., experiencing the “joy of six”).
- When all but the “loners” are in their groups of six, act surprised and then, lead the team in the following discussion.
- Discussion Questions:**
- 1) How does it feel to not be accepted into a group or team? Does this ever happen in your jobs or with the Auxiliary? Is it intentional?
  - 2) How did it feel when you found someone with the same message?
  - 3) Why didn’t those persons already in a team reach out to the excluded persons? How did organizational policies, or our own self-interests, prevent us from including others?
  - 4) What can we do to include others “in the loop”?
  - 5) What lessons does this have for team building?
- Tip:** if time is critical, or the group is large, reduce the number for each team to three or four.