



CHIEF OF STAFF – NOVEMBER MAILER

This month I want to emphasize the important ingredient to a good, healthy Auxiliary. It is how its members feel about themselves. There is a saying, "*The Whole is equal to the Sum of its Parts...*" and this is true. To be a strong, healthy auxiliary, it takes effort on every member's part! And we want Maryland to have every Auxiliary in the **GREEN!** So, here is a cute way to explain the characteristics of what is in each of us.

Watch U-TUBE – *The Pencil's Tale* – a story that everyone should hear

What is the main lesson the Pencil wants to teach us?

*A pencil teaches us **Versatility, Resilience, and the importance of Revision.***

Here are the 5 Lessons from the Pencil:

1. Everything you do you will always leave a mark!
2. You can always correct the mistakes you make!
3. What is important is what is inside of You!
4. In life, you will undergo painful sharpening which will only make you better!
5. To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you! **(mentoring!)**

Remember these "points" when Inviting & Investing in new members.

And don't forget – use *Building on the Auxiliary Foundation* to help your auxiliary grow & stay strong! –Betty Ann Johnson, Chief of Staff

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VFW Auxiliary Meeting Challenges & Solutions



Challenge

Members do not know when the meeting is scheduled.

Solution

The day of the month, time and location of the meeting is voted on and approved by the members. The presiding Officer closes the Auxiliary business meeting with "The next business meeting will be..."

Other suggestions for contacting members are telephone calls, email, newsletters or postcards. If your Post and/or Auxiliary has a website, display this information front and center. Consider a Facebook page for your Auxiliary, an excellent (and FREE!) way to inform members and increase public awareness.

Our meetings are too long.

A prepared Order of Business/Agenda can help a meeting start and end on time. Business that can be transacted formally, such as making a motion and voting, keeps distractions at a minimum. If an event requires more discussion, invite members to stay after the business meeting for further discussion within.

Have a white board or separate piece of paper to create a "Parking Lot" to hold issues that need to be discussed in depth later. This will table an issue and keep the meeting focused on the business at hand.

Consider the option of a roundtable or contemporary meeting. See the Ritual for guidelines.

Auxiliary Officers who know their roles and duties beforehand will also help the meetings run smoother.

There is no agenda.

The Ritual provides detailed outlines for conducting an official Auxiliary meeting. Prior to the meeting, the Auxiliary President can meet with the Secretary and Treasurer to draw up an agenda containing projects to be discussed, motions to be voted on and any other business. A written agenda will keep the meeting on track as the President moves efficiently through the unfinished and new business.

Challenge

There is too much socializing.

Solution

If socializing is an important part of your Auxiliary meeting, reserve a half hour prior to or a half hour following the scheduled meeting for socializing. A designated social time allows the new and seasoned members to get acquainted, share ideas and enjoy one another's company. Scheduling social time fills this need while being courteous to members who prefer to attend meetings for the business session only.

Certain members speak too many times.

Leadership of the President can help with membership participation. Encourage members to express their views while being respectful of everyone's input. Limit conversation to the topic at hand.

Members see no reason to come or do not feel needed or involved.

Increase involvement by asking members to attend. During an Auxiliary function is the perfect opportunity to ask a member to participate or provide them with a "job." It feels good to be needed. Mentor a new member – offer to pick them up for a meeting or an event. Your personal contact will make a difference. An Auxiliary newsletter or email are other communication tools to request volunteers. Each member has their own special talents; encourage and utilize their contributions.

We do not seem to get anything done for our veterans.

Our twelve National VFW Auxiliary Programs have veterans, their families and member-driven objectives. Educating members on these Programs will create awareness and enthusiasm toward Program goals. Auxiliary Chairman promotions and projects help provide Program awareness and participation. Two communication tools available to all members are the e-newsletter with sign-up through the National VFW Auxiliary website and the VFW Auxiliary Programs Blog, which allows all members to read the latest information and ideas from the National Ambassadors in regard to their Programs.

There is lack of respect for other members and too much gossip.

A good leader will set the dynamic of the meeting. Effective leadership techniques and a positive manner from the Officers and Chairmen will help alleviate the negative. Being diplomatic and fair to each member's comments and/or concerns is key.