



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Department of Maryland



HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS PROGRAM

Telling Our Story in November

Ready to get your November photos?

November is a busy month with so many things for Historians to be thankful for. Elections, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving are all wonderful photo opportunities for your Media Team.

Offering rides to the polls for your members without transportation? Holding a Veterans Day Ceremony or Luncheon for the veterans of your Post or community? Showing thanks to your members by presenting continuous membership pins at your monthly meeting? Each event is an opportunity for photos and publicity.

Cathy Gistedt
Department Chairman



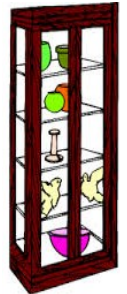
They're Telling Our Story

Hats off to **Terri Allen** reporting for Elkton Memorial Auxiliary 8175 in District 10. Terri's many reports tell the story of 8175 using media to reach out to members and to their community. She included photos and a letter from her Auxiliary President encouraging members to continue their work by attending meetings.

Kudos! Great job, Terri!

Using a Curio for Your Legacy Display

Create a mini-museum for your legacy items by transforming a **curio** cabinet into a showcase of your Auxiliary's history. Raise the **curiosity** of your members and guests with the items that you display to tell your story. **Curio** cabinets come in a variety of shapes and sizes, costing as little as \$40 at Ikea. If space is a concern, don't overlook a corner **curio** that can usually fit comfortably in any room.



Curios are able to display most of the items your legacy members contribute. By balancing the size, shape, and color of the memorabilia, your Auxiliary's story can be told in an interesting way. A mini-art gallery can even be created with framed photos of different sizes. If possible, add lighting if it is not already in the **curio** so the items can be better viewed and enjoyed while protected in the cabinet.

Before You Tell Your Story

Whether you place an article about your Auxiliary in the local paper, on your Facebook Page, or in your Newsletter, telling your Auxiliary's story takes focus.

- ✓ **Purpose** – Make sure your writing will motivate and inspire, not just inform.
- ✓ **Length** – Don't overwhelm your audience with too much information.
- ✓ **Visuals** – Help people to see your story by using photos.



Happy Thanksgiving



THE CHALLENGE

Being a veterans' organization, November is a special month. Most Auxiliaries and Posts hold Veterans Day Observances at their Post Home. Is the public invited?

What a great way to honor your community's veterans AND to publicize your work for veterans. After the ceremony, invite everyone into the Canteen for refreshments and a chance to get to know you. Send me your poster advertising your Veterans Day ceremony to the community for one bonus point.



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M is for Media M is for Meetings

Not all your members who would like to attend your meetings may be able. Think about those young parents with children at home, some who must travel for work, the sick or housebound, and members who no longer drive. Their hearts may be with your auxiliary but they cannot physically get to your meeting room.

Consider setting up media connections for those members. Connect them with conference calls, Zoom, or Skype. It's not a complicated process and will bring them "into" your meeting room. With a computer or smart phone and the proper Internet or phone connection, your attendance at meetings can grow. Members of your Media Team will be needed to help by setting up the connections. To build confidence, ask a knowledgeable member to volunteer being with the newly tech-connected member for at least their first meeting *from afar*.

Acquainting Legacy Members with Computers



Legacy members (our seniors) make up a significant part of most auxiliaries. To make social media accessible to this large portion of the VFW Auxiliary, why not offer a computer *how-to* designed just for them.

To connect these valued members to technology, be sure to consider these points:

- 1) Start with an honest conversation about online safety and security concerns.
 - o Stress strong passwords by mixing letters, numbers, and symbols.
 - o To avoid online scams, remind them – *If in doubt, don't click.*
- 2) Simplify steps for computer usage.
 - o Use screen shots whenever possible.
 - o Provide written directions so your learners have something for future reference to feel more confident.
- 3) Ask your learners questions throughout their learning experience. Many seniors will hesitate to ask for help.

Creating Your Collage of Memories

The word this month is **TRADITIONAL**. There's something about using scissors to trim a photo that you move around then glue down in that perfect spot to make your collage. **TRADITIONAL** is literally the hands-on approach with the materials. Scissors, rulers, glue, pencils, and markers are among the many **TRADITIONAL** tools for constructing your collage. With a your first decision of backing. What photos be



TRADITIONAL collage, has to be your choice of backing. What material will your photos be mounted on? For a

TRADITIONAL backing, cardboard, tagboard, fabric, and even wood is used. Keep in mind that your backing must be strong enough to securely hold your completed display. Frames of varying sizes from 8X10 to poster size can also display photos using the backing that comes with the frame. Carefully choose the glue that is needed to fasten photos on your surface. The backing determines the glue.

Pencil This To



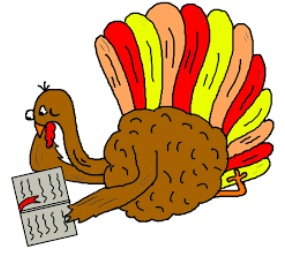
- 1st – 3rd – Eastern States Conference in Burlington, VT
- 5th – Election Day...get those photos!
- 11th – Veterans Day Observances
- 15th - Deadline to confirm the number attending our Christmas Conference from your Auxiliary
- 16th – Official Department Visit to District 14
Breakfast served 9:30 – 11am; meeting starts at 11
- 28th – Happy Thanksgiving!

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We Know This Because.....

Historians Told the Story!



At one time, rags were turned into paper. Old rags were soaked in water then beaten until the fibers were broken down. As pulp, the water was then removed so that sheets could be made. These sheets were carefully placed between felt pads to remove even more water. As a final step, the sheets were hung to air-dry. For many years, paper was a luxury due to the time and expense involved in the paper-making process.

Be sure to tell your Auxiliary's story!

VETERANS DAY



Sharing Your Story with Local Media

Community newspaper and TV stations can be effective partners to communicate your auxiliary's story. Veterans' projects, collection drives, and flag presentations are some newsworthy stories. So how do you get your story covered by local media?

First, introduce your Auxiliary and contact person to local newspaper editors and TV news directors. Contact them with unique events, but monthly news releases will keep the lines of communication open.

After your Auxiliary receives coverage, send a thank-you note or email expressing appreciation. At

the end of the year, present media contacts that have published articles with a Communications Award available free from the VFW Auxiliary's National website.



Creating a Website For Your Auxiliary

So many of our members are technology-loving. A website for your Auxiliary will appeal to a variety of Internet users. Interesting, yes. But most importantly your website needs to be informative.

Our National resource *Web Basics: What to Include* tells us our websites need:

- ✓ A *Become a Member Button* to learn how to join the VFW Auxiliary.
- ✓ Contact information for your Auxiliary, District, and the Department of Maryland.
- ✓ *About Us* including a roster of your officers.
- ✓ Information on our National Programs.
- ✓ A Calendar of Events.

Be sure your website has links – to your District and Department websites, the VFW Store, our National Home, and the Veterans' Crisis Line.

Remember to report the names of your Legacy Members who have shared their stories of your auxiliary's history at your meetings. Each member reported by December 1st will receive a small gift at the Christmas Conference



From National Historian Tela Harbold

Communication through traditional media is important. However, using digital media, will reach a broader audience that includes the younger generations.