PROGRAMMING FOR LEGION LEADERS

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POST COMMANDERS--OUTGOING AND INCOMING:-

This issue of PROGRAMMING has been prepared with the thought of helping you and the other officers of the post to get off on the right foot for the coming year. Some posts have already elected and installed new officers, others will be doing so in the near future. That's the reason for this kind of information in this issue of PROGRAMMING.

Believe it or not, PROGRAMMING is not trying to tell you or any of the other officers of your post what to do, and this information is not to be considered preachment in any way. PROGRAMMING is merely trying to be of help.

MR. OUTGOING COMMANDER:-

You may be outgoing but your job is not over with yet. You've had a year's experience charting the course for your Legion post. As you lay down the gavel, why not give the benefit of your year's experience to the Legionnaire who is picking up that gavel.

Here's a few things you can do as the outgoing commander and you can bank on it that it will help a lot.

1 - Be sure to be at the installation meeting. It is assumed, of course, that you and the other outgoing officers have played a big part in planning the installation program.

2 - Spend an evening or two with the new commander, going over your experience with him and giving to him a little of the know-how you absorbed during your year.

3 - Turn over to the incoming commander the various program handbooks such as the Manual of Ceremonies, Constitution and By-Laws, Post Handbook, Americanism Manual, Child Welfare Guide, Membership Promotion Manual, and the miscellaneous correspondence pertaining to post affairs and other records of the post.

4 - It may be some time before the mailing lists of post officers at Department and National Headquarters can be corrected, so be sure to turn over all mail addressed to you as post commander to your successor without delay. In this connection it is important that your post send in the names and addresses of the new officers to Department without delay.

5 - Then don't be just another past commander, stay right in there and pitch on all of the post activities. Remember that your experience as immediate past commander will be of great help to your post in the years to come.

MR. INCOMING COMMANDER:-

You have been honored by the members of your post by being elected to lead the post during the coming year. But along with that honor you have accepted a great responsibility. It's the responsibility of directing the entire operation of your post. Of course, you will have the help of your other officers and the Post Executive Committee. But the success of the post during your year of stewardship rests upon your shoulders. So what can you do at the very beginning of your year to make the coming year an outstanding one. Here's a few suggestions:

1 - This may elementary, but see to it that all of your new post officers are at the installation meeting.

2 - Check with the outgoing commander to see if the names and addresses of the new post officers have been sent to Department Headquarters.

3 - Call a meeting of your new post officers and invite the outgoing commander and his officers for the purpose of a roundtable or a question and answer session, for the purpose of getting the benefit of the year's experience of the old officers.

4 - Membership for the coming year is your first big job. Get it out of the way early so you can devote more time to programs and activities. In this connection you will be receiving from your Department Headquarters the new material for the 1954 membership operation within a few weeks.

5 - Secure from the outgoing commander all of the program booklets, pamphlets, et cetera, so that you and your officers and committee chairmen will have the necessary information to do a bang-up job.

6 - Give serious thought and consideration to the selection of your appointive officers and committee chairmen. Pick the best qualified members for these various jobs.

7 - Plan your year's program far in advance and keep the entire membership advised of such plans.

8 - Run your meetings in an interesting, entertaining and dignified manner. Use the Manual of Ceremonies as your guide.

9 - Make yourself a check list of the various things you want to do and use this as your constant reminder.

10 - Watch the publication "PROGRAMMING FOR LEGION LEADERS" for timely suggestions for meetings and stunts to pep up your post meetings.

11 - Keep something of interest in the way of activities going at all times, and give a maximum number of your members some job to do.

12 - Remember that unselfish service to your hometown is the best way to build public recognition for your post and attract and retain membership. Don't overlook an opportunity for your post to work with other organizations in the community on community betterment projects.

13 - Read these manuals and booklets on the programs thoroughly and then place them with your various committee chairmen who will be responsible for the carrying out of such activities.

14 - Remember that the measuring stick for your year of stewardship of your post will be whether or not you are able to attract and hold a maximum number of the eligible veterans in your community.

15 - Familiarize yourself with the policies and traditions of your post. It would be a good idea for you and your post officers to enroll in the American Legion Extension Institute, a six months correspondence course. Write the Membership and Post Activities office, National Headquarters, for an application and informative pamphlet "Learn Your Legion".

16 - Appoint a Post Publicity Officer. Next to the Adjutant, this should be one of your most important appointments. The post publicist can obtain much good publicity for the post, providing the post helps him make the news by actually doing something newsworthy. It then becomes the post publicity man's job to write a news story acquainting the public with what the Legion is doing through the press and radio.

17 - Stop being a "shrinking violet". You are going to be the front man for the post all of this year. We know you are interested in good publicity for The American Legion. There will be a certain amount of personal publicity involved, a natural offshoot of this commander's job. When you, as commander, do things that make news, don't hesitate to have The American Legion take a bow.

18 - By sincere acceptance and earnest performance as a commander, your doing the job will justify the confidence your comrades have placed in you.

19 - Be on the alert for a community service "broadside" which will be mailed to all post commanders from National Headquarters. This contains important information offering suggested programs of services to your community.

PLANNING AND PRESIDING FOR POST MEETINGS:-

Let's start to plan now for your first post meeting. Call upon your advisory board of post officers for original suggestions, but have tentative outline for actually running the meeting.

A "name" speaker or a person prominent in the news helps attendance. Have proper background material for introduction of speaker.

Publicize the meeting well in advance--through bulletins, post cards, news releases and radio announcements. Obtain speaker through county, district or department officers list. Have lecturn (stand) for speaker to place notes or script.

See that the Color Bearers are on hand to present the colors. Have your Post Chaplain available for the invocation and benediction.

Be sure the Sergeant-at-Arms is in charge of escorting the distinguished guests to the rostrum.

Hear from the newly appointed chairmen of committees and commissions in regard to plans for Legion year of '54.

Announce in advance speaker or entertainment for next meeting night. Leave them wanting just a little longer program.

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