PROGRAMMING

FOR AMERICAN LEGION LEADERS

PREPARED AND DISTRIBUTED BY MEMBERSHIP AND POST ACTIVITIES,
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EDITOR'S NOTE: The June edition of "PROGRAMMING FOR AMERICAN LEGION LEADERS" is traditionally aimed at Post Commanders--those on their way out and those who have just been elected. The response to such a Commander's cue sheet has been so great that we again dedicate this edition of "PROGRAMMING" to:

POST COMMANDERS - OUTGOING AND INCOMING:-

This is a word to the wise and to the otherwise. A word of advice to the outgoing Post Commander and the newly elected Post Commander. "PROGRAMMING" is not trying to tell you what to do. This information is for your guidance and should not be considered as mandatory. Here's a few suggestions we hope are helpful.

MR. OUTGOING COMMANDER:-

You have learned a lot in your American Legion year of administration as a Post Commander. You may be glad to give up the gavel but we hope you do so with a sense of accomplishment. Your year's experience will be doubly beneficial if you lend a hand to the newly elected Post Commander who will be your successor. Here's a few things you can do.

1 - Be present at the installation of newly elected officers. Help plan this meeting as a friendly gesture of cooperation.

2 - Spend some time with the new commander. If you got your experience the hard way, give your successor the benefit of that experience the way you would have liked to learn it.

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 - Turn over all mail addressed to you as Post Commander to your successor without delay. See to it that the names and addresses of your newly elected post officers are sent in to Department Headquarters. That's how the mailing lists of Department and National Headquarters are corrected.

5 - Stay in there and pitch. You should be available at all times to give advice and counsel to the new post officers.

MR. INCOMING COMMANDER:-

You have been chosen by your fellow Legionnaires to lead your American Legion Post during the coming year. With that honor you have accepted a great responsibility. You are the officer in charge of directing the entire operation of your post. You can count on the help of other officers and the Post Executive Committee. But your post record of American Legion accomplishment rests squarely on your shoulders. The following suggestions may help you to start this year off right.

1 - This may be elementary, but see to it that <u>all</u> of your 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 newly elected post officers, inviting the outgoing commander and his officers for the purpose of a roundtable discussion. A question and answer period should be helpful and a demonstration of cooperation and team work.

4 - Membership is the mainspring. Get the membership enrollment job out of the way early in order to devote more time to programs and activities. You will receive 1957 membership material from Department Headquarters within a few weeks.

5 - Obtain all programming pamphlets, booklets, et cetera from the outgoing commander so that you and your fellow officers, and committee chairmen will have the necessary background information to do the 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. Keep the entire membership advised of such plans. Work closely with your Post Adjutant and fellow officers in setting up such a schedule.

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

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

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

11 - Give a maximum number of your post members a job to do. Keep some interesting activity going at all times.

12 - Unselfish service to your hometown is the best way to build community confidence. Community service projects reap a rich harvest of hometown dividends. The American Legion should take the lead in these projects but never overlook a chance to cooperate with other organizations.

13 - As a Post Commander, read every manual and booklet sent to you by your Department and National Headquarters. Read them thoroughly and then see to it that the proper committee chairman has access to these booklets, since he will be responsible for carrying out such activity.

14 - The membership in your post is a measuring stick for your stewardship as Post Commander. An active American Legion Post should attract and maintain a maximum number of eligible veterans.

15 - Become familiar with the policies and traditions of your post. You should enroll in the American Legion Extension Institute, which is a six months correspondence course. Write the Membership and Post Activities Section at National Headquarters for an application blank and a pamphlet "Learn Your American Legion Thru the Mail".

16 - Appoint a Post Publicity Officer. Next to the Post Adjutant, this should be one of your most important appointments. A Post Publicity Officer can obtain much good publicity providing the post makes the news by actually doing something newsworthy. It is his job to write brief news stories telling the public what The American Legion is doing. He gets these stories to the press, radio and TV outlets.

17 - You are The American Legion spokesman in your community. You are the front man for your post during the coming year. There are any number of ways that you can call attention to the job your American Legion Post is doing. Use the suggestions made through the American Legion News Service clipsheet, which is mailed to Post Adjutants. Write to National Public Relations Division for the Post Publicity Manual and Tips to Department Officers.

18 - Sincere acceptance and earnest performance as a commander will justify the confidence your comrades have placed in you.

19 - Audio-visual aids are available through the National Moving Picture Section. Write to National Headquarters for a list of films, which may improve the attendance at your post meeting.

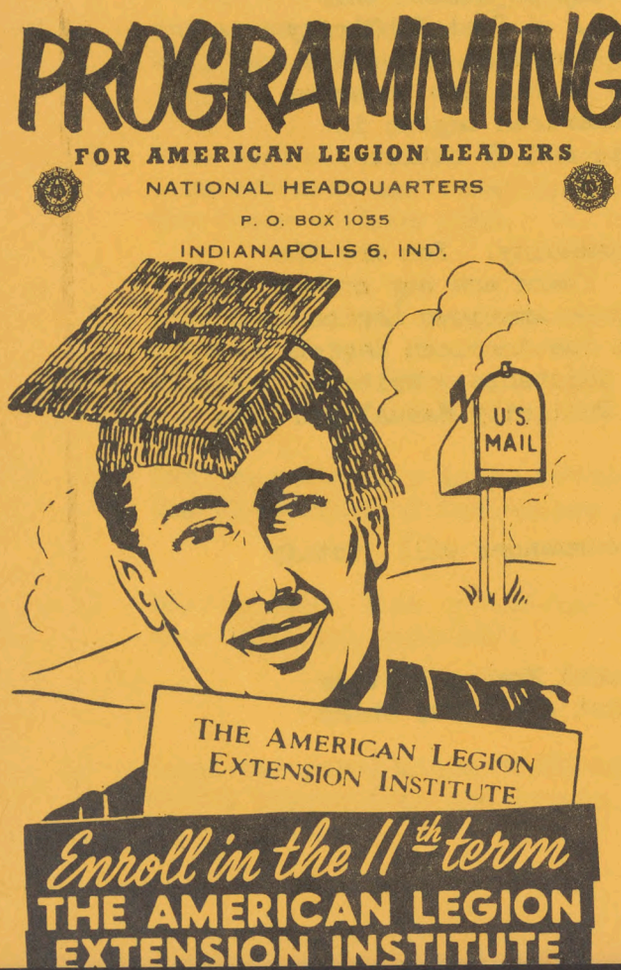
MAKE YOUR FIRST MEETING A GOOD ONE:-

Plan now for your first post meeting. Sit down with your fellow post officers in an advisory board session prior to this first meeting. Call upon them for original suggestions.

Try to get a good speaker or a person prominent in the news. This helps attendance. Be sure that your speaker is properly introduced.

Publicize the meeting well in advance -through bulletins, post cards and radio announcements. You might obtain speaker through county, district or department officers list. Have lecturn (stand) for speaker to place notes or script. Obtain public address system so that speaker will be heard.

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

Have the Sergeant-at-Arms in charge of escorting distinguished guests to the rostrum.

Call upon newly appointed chairmen of commissions and committees in regard to their plans for the American Legion year of 1957. Conclude your meeting with an announcement of the next post meeting's attraction. Keep the meeting reasonably short--with the audience wanting just a little longer program.