THE AMERICAN LEGION

A NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR POST COMMANDERS AND POST ADJUTANTS . . .

Advance

Vol. XIX August, 1976 No. 8

Direct Renewal Won't Get 100% . . .

Start New Member Drive Early

SHOULD DIRECT RENEWAL notices be expected to produce 100 per cent of our membership?

Certainly not!

For example —

The response from deceased members is practically nil.

Many of our posts have members who have become so lost that even the U.S. Post Office can't find them.

And it's sure not unusual for someone in The American Legion to make someone else angry or, at least, feel neglected.

When you add it all up and look at it nationally, the figure is staggering. On April 15, 1976, National had processed 2,550,400 dues for the current year. That's 92 per cent of the 2,767,000 cards pre-printed at National Headquarters with the names of the 1975 members.

New Members: 11 Per Cent

Of that total processed on April 15, renewals accounted for 2,234,350 or 89 per cent of the total. New members and reinstatements accounted for 316,050, or 11 per cent.

Now that 11 per cent couldn't be secured any other way except through a new member campaign.

So, with those figures in mind, let's turn our thoughts to the 1977 membership campaign of your post.

If yours is an average post, you need to be thinking in terms of signing up 11 per cent of your current membership as either new members or reinstatements, if you want a gain.

A new member campaign can be quite informal or it can be planned. However, the degree of success will probably be determined by the amount of planning that goes into the securing of new or replacement members.

Direct Renewal Notices

There's no doubt that direct membership renewal notices bring in renewals much faster. But that rate of return in itself is no guarantee that your post will have an increase.

Direct renewals provide your post with that very valuable commodity — **time.** How you use that time will determine how successful your post's campaign will be. If it hasn't already done so, your post needs to make one fundamental change in the traditional approach to the annual membership drive.

With the direct renewal notice program, your first priority should be to get the replacements you know you are going to need. If you work on new members while the U.S. mail collects the majority of your renewals, you'll show a gain.

Second, Third Mailings

Many departments are now participating in a second and third mailing of renewal notices. The post that does not take advantage of this bargain is simply not using a very valuable membership tool. For 1977 the cost will still be only 6 cents for each unpaid member. Whether this is paid by the post in part, in full, or not at all depends upon department policy.

Second and third renewal notices should be spaced properly so that the effect of prior mailing is exhausted before the next mailing.

There's another membership source which needs to be explored about the time that second notices are being mailed. This includes the drop-outs and irregulars who should have special attention. With this group it's more important than ever that they know what their post is doing. These former Legionnaires can be some of our most severe critics.

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COMMANDER'S CALENDAR

Paid-Up-For-Life Schedule

August 1, 1976 —

A. National Headquarters mails 1977 Paid-Up-For-Life cards to all PUFL members.

B. All departments receive checks covering the per capita of their PUFL members. Departments also receive, for transmittal to the various posts, checks covering the posts' per capita, if any, of their PUFL members.

C. National Headquarters credits PUFL membership to departments.

August

5	12th anniversary of Gulf of Tonkin Incident, 1964, changing role of U. S. involvement in Vietnam.
20-26	58th National Convention of The American Legion, Seattle, Wash.
25-29	Regional Tournaments, American Legion Baseball.

September

2	V-J. Day.
6	Labor Day.
2-6	National Finals, World Series of American Legion Baseball, Manchester, N.H.
11-12	District Commanders' Training Seminars at Greensboro, N.C.; Arlington, Tex.; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Fairlee, Vt.
17	Citizenship Day.
18-19	National Baseball Conference, Indianapolis, Ind.
25-26	National Conference of Department Oratorical Chairmen, Indianapolis, Ind.

The American Legion **ADVANCE**

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MEMBER AMERICAN LEGION PRESS ASSOCIATION

Editor: Frank L. Megnin

August, 1976 Vol. XIX No. 8

May We Ask A Favor?

If you are a Post Commander or Post Adjutant whose term of office has expired or is about to expire, will you please pass this issue (and any succeeding issues) of **ADVANCE** to the person who is coming into the office you are leaving? Until your department has been notified of a change in officers and forwards that information to National Headquarters, you will continue to receive the **ADVANCE.**

Thanks!

Legion Lists Priorities in Legislation

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S current priorities for veterans legislation are as follows:

1) Increases in benefits for the service disabled and the survivors of the service deceased (this has always been the Legion's No. 1 priority).

2) Improvement of the pension program for veterans and widows (this program helps especially the aged who badly need more help than they are getting).

3) Cost of living increases in the monthly allowances to those now in training under the GI Bill (last increases in these allowances were 2 years ago).

4) Adequate funding for the VA hospital and medical care system (there are at least eight new hospitals that need to be constructed immediately as renovations and replacements for worn-out facilities, if the VA is to continue to provide medical care second to none in quality to veterans).

At the present time there is a difficult problem in getting adequate funding by the Congress for the next fiscal year for all veterans benefit programs. To carry on all ongoing programs, and to get needed funding for the priority concerns listed above may well use all of the money that Congress can be expected to provide.

In all of its legislative activity for veterans benefit programs, the Legion has been guided by two main principles:

What is right for veterans

and

What is feasible.

The ADVANCE, August 1976

Planning Keys Membership Gain

AS YOU LOOK AHEAD to your 1976-77 year as Post Commander, you fully expect your American Legion Post to grow in both membership numbers and the services it provides for the community and the veterans living there.

The enthusiasm for the year ahead begins with you Mr. Post Commander. Undoubtedly, you have many plans for your post and its programs for 1977. Now, it becomes a matter of selling these plans to your committee chairmen, your members, and then to your community.

Perhaps some of the following suggestions will fit into your plans and assist you in maintaining the enthusiasm of your post. These suggestions call for meetings — several of them. However, most of these meetings are of the "one-to-one" variety. For example —

1. Sit down with the immediate past commander and review his year. You need to know his assessment of the year just ending, what needs to be changed or dropped.

2. Review minutes and records with the Post Adjutant. Perhaps he has recommendations for the year ahead.

3. Promptly call a meeting of the post executive committee. This meeting cannot be held to early in order to establish common goals for the post and to begin the year with a spirit of cooperation.

4. Appoint committee chairmen and meet individually with them. Compare plans and agree on common goals. As commander, you should inform them of the programs you expect to have carried out. And you should suggest that each chairman also come up with some original ideas, too. You should expect these chairmen and their committees to modify existing programs or add new ones.

By following the foregoing suggestions, you are putting together a product which you will be selling as American Legion membership. Veterans in your community are going to be interested in what your post is doing (and going to do) for them. If your post has something to offer them, then it has its "product" that can be sold.

Date		Membership Goal by This Date
_____	First meeting of Membership Committee. (Make it as soon as officers for new year have been elected.)	_____
_____	Early Bird turn in — officers, committee members, active Legionnaires.	_____
_____	Mailing of dues notices. (Dues notices are scheduled to be prepared and mailed to members of practically all Posts by National Headquarters. Start recruiting new members now.)	_____
_____	Veterans Day turn in. (How will the Post celebrate Veterans Day? Who will collect dues from those who have not responded to the dues notices?)	_____
_____	Christmas or year-end turn in. (Are there good prospects not yet contacted? How about the drop outs from previous years? It is time to send second notices to those unpaid?)	_____
_____	January 1 to Legion Birthday, March 15-17. (Time to really concentrate on new members. But don't forget the 1976 members who are not yet renewed. What about personal letters to members who have moved out of town? Will you have an initiation? Does the Post social calendar have something for all ages?)	_____
_____	Legion Birthday celebration. (This is the date to make 1977 membership at least equal final 1976 membership — a 5 percent gain over last year is not an unreasonable goal today.)	_____
_____	Gathering up the loose ends. (Who's still unpaid? How many more members do you need to qualify for one more delegate to the Department Convention?)	_____

If you've followed the steps suggested so far, your next meeting is with your membership committee. It's your job to let your membership team know what the post has to offer.

You and your membership committee should set up not only a plan but also a post membership calendar for the entire year.

The work of the membership committee will be helped through the use of a "timetable" which calls for certain goals by significant dates in your year as Post Commander. Working with your membership committee, set these goals, decide what is going to happen, when it is going to happen, and who is going to make it happen. The suggested timetable is printed along with this article — just waiting for you to fill in the blanks.

All of these suggestions, including the timetable, are offered to help you in building a product. If you follow through with the procedures outlined here, Mr. Post Commander, you are going to be involved in a great deal of planning which should get your year off to a good start. The end result should be a stronger, more active Legion Post when you turn the gavel over to your successor.

But, more important, you will have provided your members with a post that is worth far more than whatever its dues may be.

The American Legion

For God and Country

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ 222 NORTH DEARBORN STREET ★
★ INSURANCE DEPARTMENT ★ CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601 ★ 312-FI 6-9300 ★

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

THE ONLY APPROVED INSURANCE PLAN IN ALL STATES FOR LEGIONNAIRES

August 1, 1976

Dear Commander:

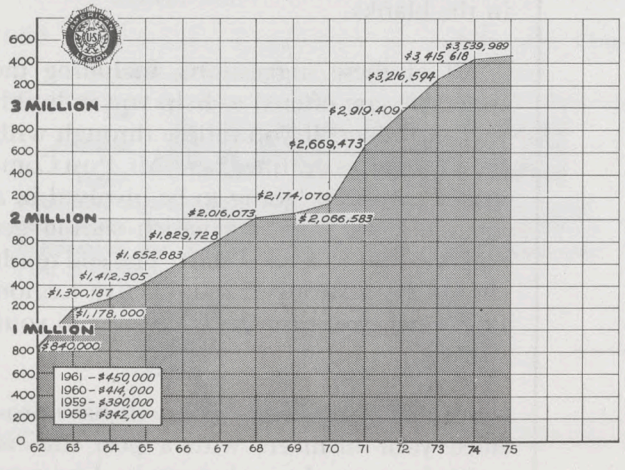
Congratulations on your election to the office of Post Commander. No doubt your interest will include a stong desire to increase the membership of your Post. There are literally millions of Vietnam Veterans, and many just waiting to be asked to join The American Legion. When inviting them to become a member, we suggest you call their attention to the outstanding insurance plan available to members only.

American Legion Life Insurance is a decreasing term plan desiged exclusively for Legionnaires with no intention to replace your other insurance. Vietnam Veterans under age 30 (26 in Ohio) can apply for the maximum of $60,000 insurance coverage. The Insurance Department is also very pleased to announce that for the seventh time in the 19 year history of the Insurance Program an increase in benefits amounting to 10% became effective July 1, 1976 and will be extended through December 31, 1976. This increase applies across the board and comes without additional cost. Therefore, the $60,000 insurance protection is upped to $66,000. We hope that this benefit will be extended into 1977.... More on this later.

Since the Plan's inception on April 1, 1958 well over 21 million dollars has been paid out in claims to the designated beneficiaries of former Legionnaires. Any further information about this very low cost insurance plan available to members only can be obtained by communicating with The American Legion Life Insurance Division, 222 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60601.

Albert V. LaBiche, Chairman
The American Legion Life Insurance
and Trust Committee

AMERICAN LEGION LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUM GROWTH 1958 — 1976



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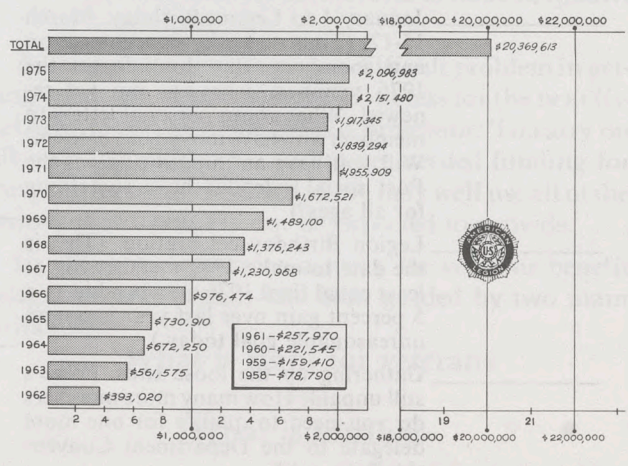
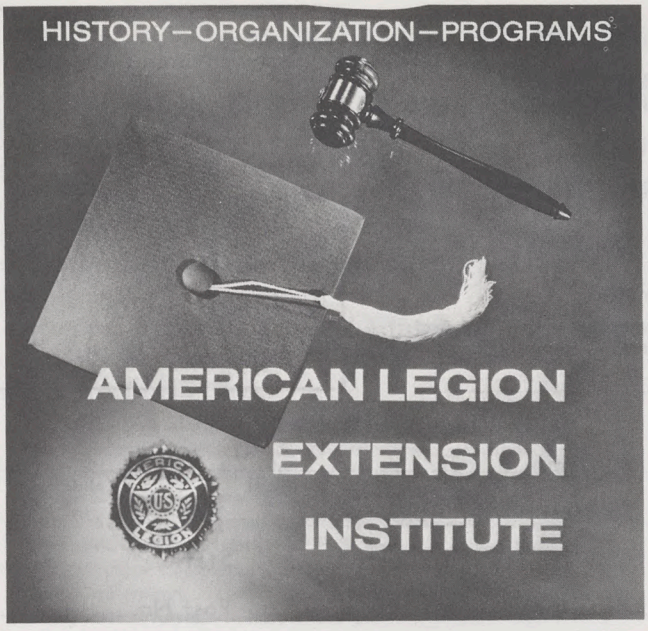




31st Term

THE EFFECTIVENESS of American Legion programs, the success of American Legion endeavors, are related directly to the capability of Legionnaires in elected positions of leadership or appointed responsibilities within their respective communities. In order to perform their specific duties to the best of their ability, Legion leaders must understand fully The American Legion—its history, its accomplishments, its programs, and, especially, how it functions today.

The American Legion Extension Institute will give this basic knowledge of our organization. A home study plan, the course consists of six monthly lessons. Students check their own progress by a series of questions at the end of each lesson.

Students will complete the final examination and return it to National Headquarters for grading. Students passing the final examination will receive a certificate of graduation. Legionnaire and SAL graduates will receive a colorful blue and gold mortarboard cap patch. Auxiliary graduates will receive an attractive mortarboard pin and chain which they may attach to their Auxiliary pin.

The six monthly lessons are as follows:

1—History and Organization.
2—Service Divisions and Sections.
3—Americanism and Children & Youth Programs.
4—Veterans Affairs—Rehabilitation and Economic Programs.
5—Legislative Program and Public Relations.
6—National Security and Foreign Relations Programs.

THIS COURSE is tailor-made for all newly elected and appointed American Legion officers. Any Legionnaire is eligible to enroll. Members of the American Legion Auxiliary are also cordially invited to enroll. The material contained in the Extension Institute can also be of great value to those older members of the Sons of The American Legion who have the maturity and potential for further SAL service as either elected leaders or counselors of the younger age sections.

Tuition

1 to 3 enrollments
.....$5.00 each

4 or more enrollments
(on one application).....$4.00 each

Enrollment Instructions

1. Use the handy enrollment application form on the reverse side of this page. Additional copies of these two pages of Extension Institute information are available from your Department or National Headquarters. If you have more than ten (10) applications for enrollment, type or print the requested information for the additional enrollees on a plain sheet of paper and attach it to the application form.

2. Be sure to fill out the application form completely. It is important that you include the membership card number and post or unit number of each enrollee!

3. Make all remittances payable to: National Treasurer, The American Legion.

4. Mail the application and remittance through your Department Headquarters, or to:

American Legion Extension Institute
P. O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

5. Mail your enrollment application as promptly as possible. National Headquarters will accept enrollments in the thirty-first term of the Extension Institute through November 1, 1976.

Application Submitted by:

Name .....

Street .....

City .....

State .....

Zip Code .....

Post No. ..... Unit No. .....

AMERICAN LEGION EXTENSION INSTITUTE

P. O. Box 1055

Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

APPLICATION – 31st Term

(Please Type or Print)

IMPORTANT! Please Include Membership Card No. And Post Or Unit No. Of Each Enrollee!

(Reserved For Office Use)

No. .....

Post .....

Unit .....

Remittance .....

No. of Apps. .....

1. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

2. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

3. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

4. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

5. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

6. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

7. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

8. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

9. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

10. Name ..... (Last) (First) (Middle)
Address .....
City ..... State .....
Zip Code ..... Post No. .....
Card No. ..... Unit No. .....

Conferences Boost Children & Youth

WE'VE ALL SEEN the Bicentennial spot announcements on television with some well-known American describing "the way it was" 200 years ago. Well, let's take a shorter trip into the past of The American Legion and discover "the way it was" with the Legion's Area Children & Youth Conferences nearly 50 years ago.

In her portion of the National Adjutant's Annual Report of 1928, then National Child Welfare Director Emma Puschner stated:

> **"At the time of the reorganization of the National Child Welfare Committee, which plan developed area groups with an Area Chairman in charge, the director realized that this was the most progressive development in the Child Welfare organization and that it afforded great possibilities in the educational and legislative work. It was not anticipated in this first year, by the National Child Welfare Committee that five area groups could hold their Area Conferences . . . and have representatives from practically every state involved . . . have a well-planned program with Legion, Auxiliary, and social work representatives participating, and have an interest so keen, discussion frank and enlightening, that it is no exaggeration for the director to state that these area Child Welfare meetings were the finest she has ever attended . . ."**

And that's the way it was — nearly 50 years ago.

According to files maintained at National Headquarters, New England conducted the first Area Child Welfare Conference, April 25, 1928, in North Hampton, Mass., with John D. Crowley presiding as Area Chairman.

Since 1928, The American Legion and its affiliates have conducted and participated in more than 225 Area Conference on Children & Youth. Many changes have been made over the years in an effort to make these meetings as meaningful and productive as possible. The 1976-77 series of Area Conferences will continue to offer those in attendance an innovative, interesting, and informative program.

Area Conferences are an essential part of The American Legion's total Children & Youth Program. There are several sound reasons for their existence:

1) To orientate children and youth leaders and workers;
2) To encourage The American Legion and its affiliated organizations — the American Legion Auxiliary and the Eight & Forty — to work on common problems cooperatively;
3) To acquaint those interested in children and youth with problems warranting national attention for the benefit of America's children;
4) To provide a vehicle for informing the public of the Legion's and Auxiliary's interest in youth;
5) To create an opportunity for those in attendance to meet specialists in fields contributing to the betterment of conditions for young people; and
6) To provide an opportunity for Legionnaires and Auxiliary members interested in children and youth to meet periodically to exchange ideas, renewing old acquaintances, and to develop new friendships.

Here are the dates and sites for this year's Area Conferences on Children & Youth:

Area	Date	Site
Middle Atlantic	Oct. 28-30, 1976	Martinsburg, W. Va.
Midwestern	Nov. 18-20, 1976	Bloomington, Minn.
Western	Dec. 2-4, 1976	Portland, Ore.
Southern	Jan. 13-15, 1977	New Orleans, La.
New England	Jan. 27-29, 1977	Burlington, Vt.

When the Conference on Children & Youth is to convene in your respective area, please plan to attend, or have a representative of your post there. Anyone who is interested in the problems of children is welcome. No registration fee has ever been charged at these meetings.

— And that's the way it is!

Movie, Program Aids Available to Combat High Blood Pressure

AMERICAN LEGION POSTS and Auxiliary Units may obtain an excellent 16mm movie without charge, for a program which could save the lives of their members.

Entitled "Silent Countdown," the 30-minute color film stresses that high blood pressure afflicts 23 million Americans, half of whom are unaware of the fact. High blood pressure contributes to the death of 250,000 Americans annually and causes serious illness and disability in millions more. The film is offered by the Citizens for Treatment of High Blood Pressure, Inc., in cooperation with the National High Blood Pressure Education Program.

In addition to the loan of the film without charge (other than return shipping costs), the sponsors provide a discussion guide for the program chairman, brochures for those attending, a poster, and a suggested news release.

Arrangements for borrowing the film and obtaining the program materials may be made by writing —

West Glen Films
565 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10017

"Silent Countdown" is NOT available through the National Headquarters film library.

By action of the National Executive Committee in 1972, The American Legion endorses participation in high blood pressure discovery programs.

Employ Handicapped Week Set Oct. 3-9

FOR THE 30th consecutive year, The American Legion will observe National Employ the Handicapped Week, Oct. 3-9, in conjunction with the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

Mr. Commander, your post can be a part of this worthwhile program. How? Simply by nominating an employer in your community who hires and retains the handicapped, especially war veterans.

In submitting your nomination to department headquarters, all you have to include is the employer's name and address, the total number of employees (include data on the number of handicapped and veteran employees), and a brief statement as to why you feel your nominee should receive national recognition for 1976.

Many of the handicapped have learned to overcome their disabilities. Now, they are capable of making meaningful contributions to society. The employers who consider the handicapped on the merits of their ability — and not on the basis of their disability — deserve due recognition.

Here is where your help is so vitally needed, Mr. Commander. National recognition cannot be made without your nomination.

Direct Renewal . . .

(Continued from front page)

Make sure that your new members are properly welcomed into The American Legion, properly initiated, and then brought into the mainstream of the post. Statistics at National Headquarters show that the greatest loss of members comes in the first and second years after joining.

Simple friendship can cut that loss dramatically, but use of some available tools can also help.

These tools can be found in affirmative answers to the following questions:

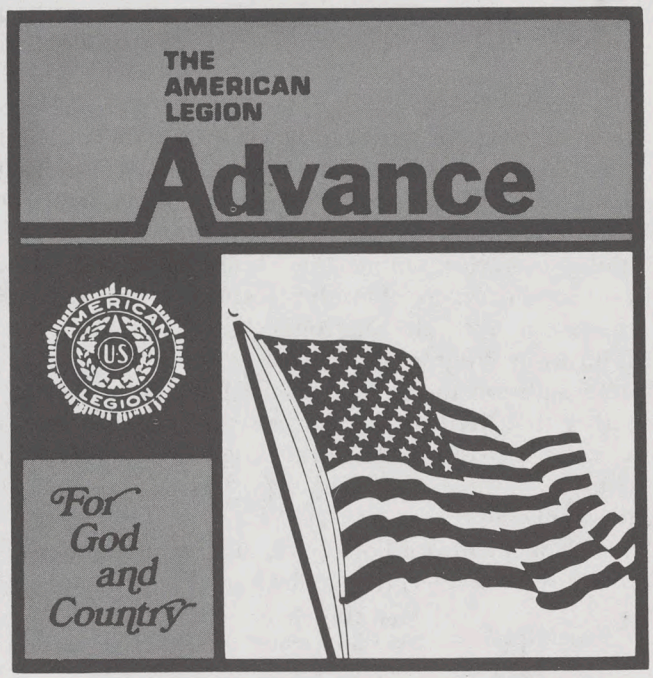
Have you contacted everyone on your renewal, dropout, or prospective member list? Have you made an effort to learn what interests your new members? Have you given your new members a chance to serve on committees?

Have you revised your activities and social events to fulfill the needs of the majority of your members? Have you asked eligible veterans to join? Have you rewarded those workers who have done a good job?

Have you promoted the honoring of your 50-plus year members?

Have you pinpointed the mistakes of previous campaigns so you can avoid them in the 1977 drive?

Don't overlook that last item. There's another membership campaign ready to begin. Let's get those new members!



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