

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



GUIDELINES FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF NEW SQUADRONS 2005 EDITION

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION SQUADRON

GENERAL

The purpose of this publication is to aid the local Post and / or the individual Legionnaire, in the organizing of a "Sons of The American Legion Squadron."

A WORD ABOUT THE ATTACHMENTS

The "Step Flow Chart"...is given to show the basic steps used to achieve Squadron Chartering.

Support by the Post Members:

After the Post membership has made the decision to sponsor the Squadron, then support and encouragement should follow. You should be aware that the Squadron is usually made up of All age groups; however, most of them will probably be of the younger age group. The S.A.L. programs parallel The American Legion's and the Squadron members will from time to time be working with the Post through your various activities. Sponsorship does not mean domination, but rather, guidance of the S.A.L. members through the selected Post Advisor and the elected Squadron Officers.

Potential Survey:

A "One Meeting" survey for potential S.A.L. members will not do the job!!! A raise of hands will not do the job!!! We planned communications to all of your members and the community, to announce the intentions of forming a S.A.L. Squadron should be used. Surprisingly many members may be awaiting the chance for your Post to take action. A complete list of eligible S.A.L. members should be made. Holding a Father and Son banquet helps to form a Squadron. At this banquet or initial meeting, it is suggested a Detachment Officer or representative of the S.A.L. be present to explain the organization purposes and goals. This will eliminate the problem of misunderstanding, on what the S.A.L. is and does.

It should be stressed that the Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion. Full responsibility for the success or failure of the Squadron rests with the Squadron Membership and its Advisors.

Selection of the Post S.A.L. Chairman and / or Committee:

At some point, either before or after the Post agrees to sponsor the Squadron, a Chairman should be selected and/or at least two (2) members to serve on his committee. The Chairman will act as the coordinator between the Post and Squadron to assure the Chartering process is carried out and to provide leadership to the membership. The entire procedure of organizing should be placed in the hands of this committee and its chairman.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION SQUADRON

Selection of Squadron Advisor:

After the S.A.L. Squadron has been organized, the appointed Chairman and Committee can be eliminated. At this point, a Squadron Advisor should be appointed. Care should be given in the selection of the Advisor. This individual should have some knowledge of the Sons of The American Legion Program. On occasion, this single item has caused Squadrons to fail in the past due to inexperience and lack of interest. Remember that this individual will be working with all age groups requiring activities geared to hold the interest of various age groups. The advisor should be familiar with the following:

Preamble to the Constitution of The Sons of The American Legion:

The Sons of The American Legion program is outlined in its Preamble to the Constitution. These purposes are:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- To maintain law and order;
- To foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism;
- To preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and forefathers in the Great Wars;
- To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State, and Nation;
- To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
- To make right the master of might;
- To promote peace and good will on earth;
- To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of Justice, Freedom, and Democracy;
- To consecrate and sanctify our friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness;
- To adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands;
- And to assist in carrying on for God and Country.

Other duties of the Advisor:

Help the Squadron with setting up a Constitution and By-Laws. There is a sample in the S.A.L. Handbook or use the Post's By-Laws as a guide.

Suggest that Squadron Officers attend a couple of the Post's meetings to see how they are conducted or visit an active Squadron and observe their meeting.

Suggest Post Finance Officer, along with the Squadron Finance Officer be on the same checking account until such time as the Post feels the Squadron can handle their own finances. If the Post Finance Officer doesn't want the added responsibility, the Advisor or another Legionnaire could fill that position.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO THE MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can apply for Sons of The American Legion (S.A.L) Membership?

All male descendants, adopted sons, stepsons, grandsons, great-grandsons of members of The American Legion and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during WW I, WW II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf War, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

What is the Age Limit of Applicants?

From date of birth. There are NO age Limitations or Restrictions.

Can I hold a Dual Membership?

Referring back to, "Who can apply for S.A.L. Membership" many Legionnaires have or had fathers or grandfathers who are or were Legionnaires and I or Veterans and are qualified under eligibility rules. Legionnaires, who qualify, may hold dual membership both in the Legion and S.A.L.

Does the Charter cost my Post anything?

There is no fee for the S.A.L. Charter. However, when your Charter comes back from National it will be held at the State Headquarters until at least ten (10) Squadron memberships and the correct per capita dues are received from the Squadron.

Where can I get an Application for Charter?

A Charter Packet can be obtained from Department Headquarters or the Detachment Adjutant.

If needed. can we have someone speak to our Post about the S.A.L.?

Yes. By contacting the Detachment Adjutant or the Detachment Membership Chairman.

How many members are required to maintain a S.A.L. Charter?

To Charter and maintain a Charter, ten (10) members minimum are required each year.

How much are the Squadron Membership Dues?

Present National per capita dues are \$2.00 and the Detachment (State) dues are set by the individual Detachment. However, this figure will vary as the cost of operations increase. Presently in Massachusetts for example, a total of \$5.00 per member must be sent to the Department Headquarters per member each year.

What is the Name given to the S.A.L Squadron?

The Squadron Name given, is that of the Sponsoring Post. (Example) General Charles King Squadron #406.

What are some of the Membership Privileges?

Members have the opportunity of service to the veterans community. They also assist The American Legion with their Programs and Activities. Learning of proper Flag Etiquette, Parliamentary Procedure, Leadership, Patriotism, Citizenship, Comradeship, Legionism and etc.

What about Programs and Activities?

Some of the S.A.L. programs are outlined in the Squadron Handbook. The age groupings of the membership and the needs of the local community primarily determine Programs and Activities where S.A.L. members can serve. Flexibility is the word ... making the S.A.L. Programs and Activities interesting for all. The capabilities of Squadron Officers and Post Advisors determine the overall effectiveness of the Squadron. One of the main programs is "Service to the Veteran". Two other programs are the "Ten Ideals" and "Five Point Program of Service" promoted by National. When working on programs and / or activities, it is suggested to do the simple things first. Then proceed with the more difficult ones. The object is to formulate the members' interest. Success will be achieved in the end!!! Whatever is attempted must be safe and in the spirit of fun.

What does the Post Advisor do?

When the Squadron is getting started, they are usually considered the PROMOTERS. They advise the Squadron on how to coordinate Programs and Activities. They assist the Squadron on how to properly run meetings, etc. They should also assist in making sure that the per capita dues are collected and sent into Headquarters.

Are Squadron Meetings held separately from Post Meetings?

Yes. Occasionally a joint meeting with the Post may be held for a special event. Installation of Post and Squadron Officers is another good time for a joint meeting. All Squadron meetings are conducted with the same guidelines as the Post meetings.

What type of Training does S.A.L. Memberships offer?

Individuals learn to interact with others. Two of the S.A.L. programs, the "Ten Ideals and Five Star" programs, afford the opportunity to expand in those areas, which may not be available elsewhere. Leadership Training is received when serving as a Squadron Officer or as a Chairman of a committee. Discipline, Citizenship, Patriotism, Courtesy and Honor are a few other areas of training that the member receives.

Is there a National or State Newsletter?

Yes. The National organization publishes a Newsletter called the "National Update" and many Detachments have their own newsletter. The Detachment of Massachusetts publishes a Newsletter called MASS SALutations. Every Squadron receives the State Newsletter and every S.A.L. member receives the National Update.

Does the S.A.L. have a National Emblem?



Yes. A detailed description of the Emblem can also be found in the S.A.L. handbook

- The design of our emblem was taken from the emblem of our parent organization, but is oval in shape so as to be easily distinguished.
- The star in the center represents our country, and the five points of the star represent the five-point program American Legion.
- The sun in the background represents The Sons of The American Legion and the rays represent the loyalty of its membership.
- The blue of the emblem, like the blue of our flag, stands for justice.
- The two stars in the blue border stand for freedom and democracy.
- The wreath below the star is in memory of our comrades, and those willingly gave their lives for their country.
- The ten points of the emblem represent the ten ideals of every Legion son.

What if we don't have enough interest to start a Squadron?

More than one Post in an area can join forces in sponsoring a Squadron. However, the Squadron can only be under the sponsorship of one Post. If this is done, it is advisable to get input from the Detachment Adjutant.

Can my Son, Grandson, Adopted son, or Stepson join any Squadron?

Yes. They may join any Squadron regardless of the applicant's residence or location.

SESSION PLANNING

Make sure S.A.L. membership applications are distributed to your Post members and that you have publicized the Posts intent to sponsor a S.A.L. Squadron in the Post Newsletter.

PREPARATIONS

1. All gatherings should be called “Sessions” or “Orientation Sessions,” thus eliminating the word “MEETING” which to some may mean a formally controlled program.
2. Determine dates and times for all sessions. Refreshments may be served, but are (optional).
3. A special notice should be placed in the Post clubhouse, indicating the upcoming session and requests to Post / Auxiliary members to pass the word.
4. Written invitations should be mailed to all eligible applicants one month in advance of the session date and followed by a telephone call, two days prior to the session date.
5. Have available for the session, S.A.L. Membership Applications, S.A.L. Handbooks and a Chartering Packet. These materials can be obtained through Department Headquarters.
6. A speaker on the S.A.L. and/or a slide presentation is also available on request. Contact the Detachment Adjutant.
7. The Chairman should give a welcome and have the applicants introduce themselves.
8. The Chairman should chair the session and allow time for a question and answer session to clear up questions.

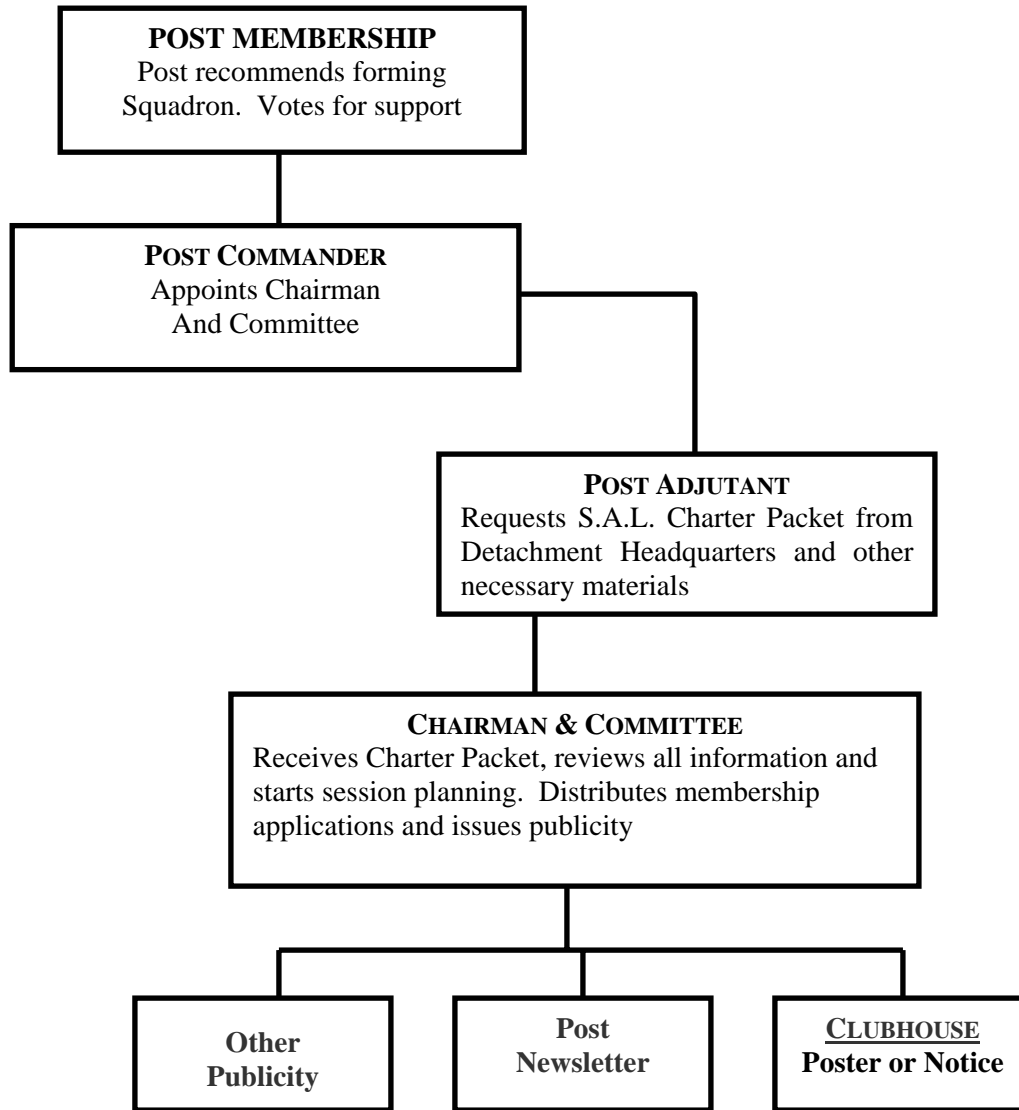
Use the accompanying “Flow Chart” for further assistance.

PROGRAM SESSION

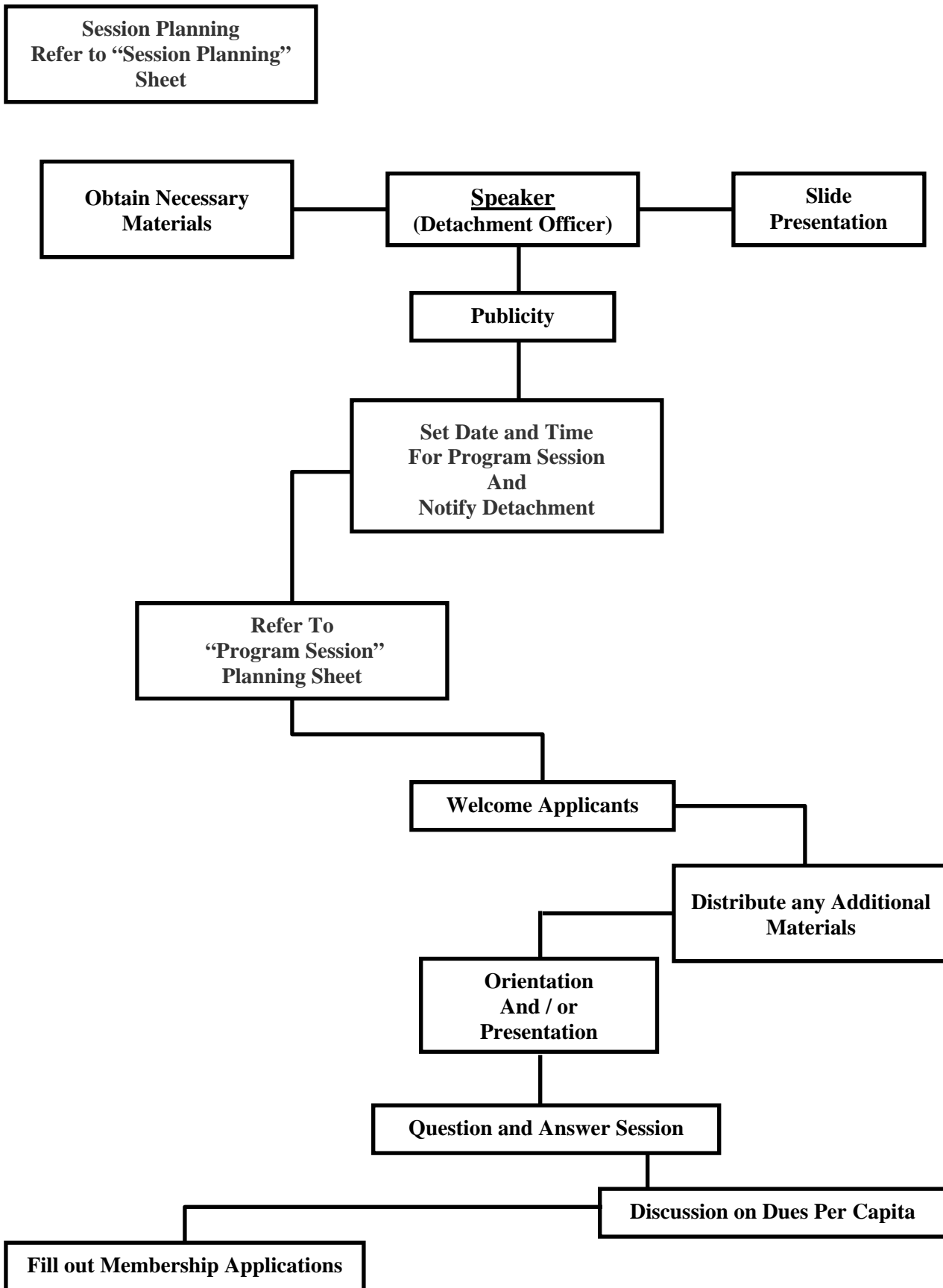
1. The Chairman and Committee members should arrive at the session prior to the starting time, to set up the seating arrangement.
2. The Chairman and Committee members should greet the applicants and handout materials as needed.
3. With everyone seated the Chairman brings the session to order. The Chairman then welcomes everyone and expresses the turnout. You can have the applicants introduce themselves. (Standing, so they can be recognized)
4. An orientation about the S.A.L. organization would then be in order.
5. After the orientation, a question and answer session should be offered.
6. The Chairman should then ask for a show of hands of those desiring to join the Sons of The American Legion. A minimum of Ten (10) members is required to Charter the Squadron.
7. Assuming applicants' desire to Charter, have each potential member thoroughly fill out and sign the membership application. They should also have their names placed on the Charter.
8. Squadron per capita dues should be discussed at this time. The amount charged should be based on Squadron needs.
9. It should be noted that it might take approximately six (6) weeks to receive the official Charter back from National. In the meantime, Squadron meetings should be held to familiarize the applicants with meeting procedures and to discuss purchasing S.A.L. Caps, Squadron Colors, an American Flag and other items.
10. The Chairman should inform the new members of dates and times of meetings. It is recommended that a minimum of one (1) meeting a month is held.
11. Discussions can be held at this time on other plans.
12. Thank everyone for coming. Refreshments can then be served. (Optional)

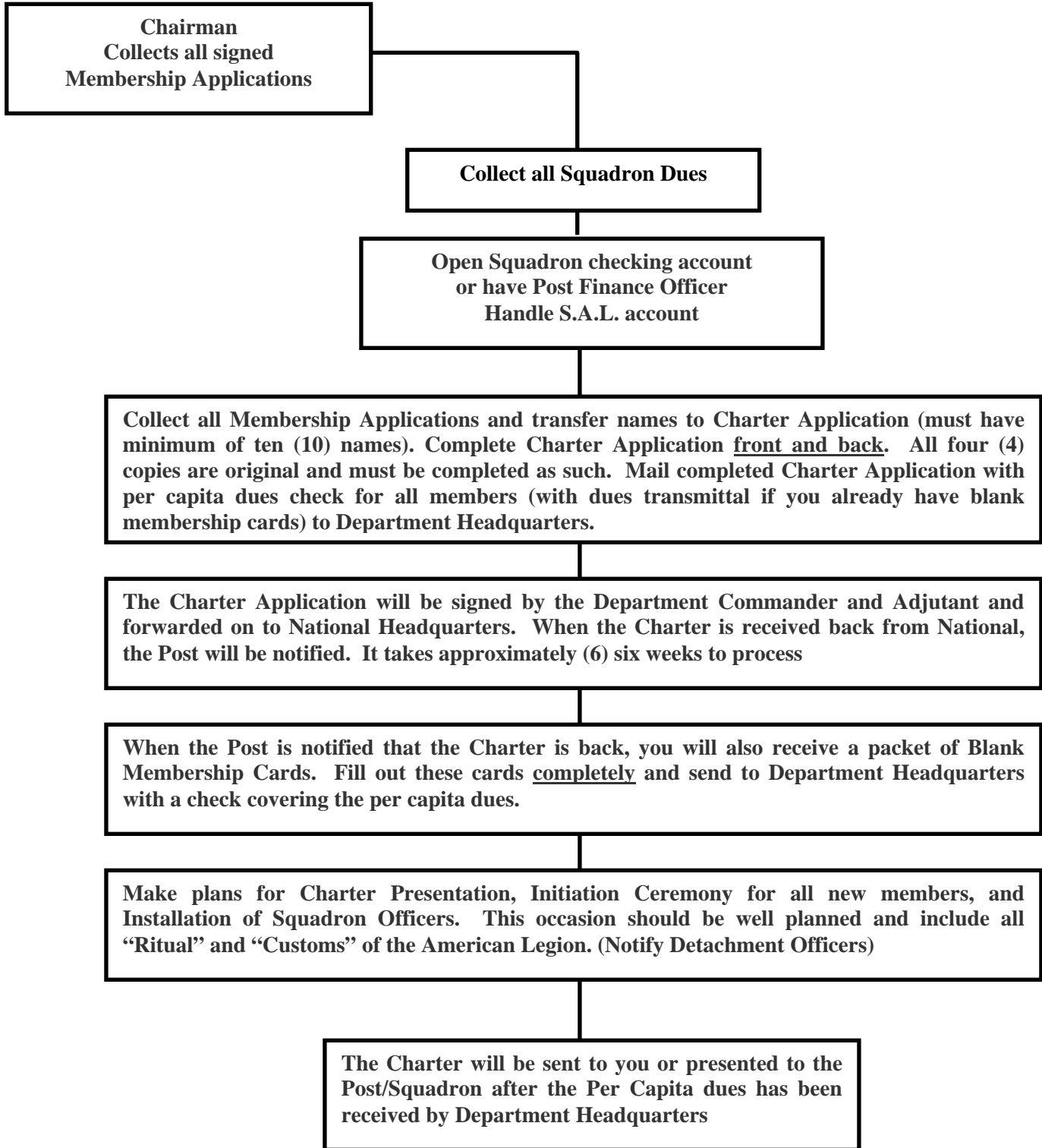
Refer to "Flow Chart" for further assistance.

STEPS FLOW CHART



FLOW CHART





SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

S.A.L. MEMBERSHIP TIPS AND IDEAS

1. You represent the S.A.L. **every time** you wear the Cap. You must present a good image at all times. We are often judged by first impressions so appearance is very important. You do not always need to wear a suit jacket, but you should always wear a dress shirt and tie when representing the S.A.L. at an official affair. Be neat about yourself and present a positive attitude about the S.A.L. and our parent organization, The American Legion, at all times. This is part of our image.

2. The next thing that you must remember is that you are a salesman. You are selling the S.A.L. Therefore, you must be able to convince the customer (the potential member) you have a product he really has a need and use for. You must be able to explain our Programs and what the Organization is all about. You must research the product and be able to answer questions and present reasons why he should buy the product (join the S.A.L.).

3. The most important thing is, if a potential member asks you a question you are not sure of, do *not tell him what you think or lie to him, but tell him you will find out and get back to him*. This is so very important. Once a person loses faith in your word, you have lost him as a member.

4. Your Detachment, District or Squadron must set up *working membership teams* with a Chairman and members who want to serve. Not teams on paper because it is the duty of certain offices. You must have members that really enjoy and want to serve on the team. Membership is our lifeblood. We must want to serve. We must really have the feeling and enthusiasm that it takes to make it work.

5. Your teams must set up goals, target dates, and checks. There are a lot of ways to make the team successful but each team must determine what will work for them. If you have a large Detachment or Squadron you may need more than one team. Whatever works for you.

6. Make your goals tough but within reach. Give ample rewards for meeting them and plenty of recognition. This makes everyone feel they are an important cog in the wheel of success. If a goal is set too high and the Detachment, District or Squadron feels they cannot attain it, they will not try. Stress once a goal is met, do not stop, but continue on to a higher level.

7. An important thing to remember is how well we do in all of our fine programs. The final thing that determines what kind of a year we have is **MEMBERSHIP**. It may not be fair but membership is the yardstick on which our whole year is judged upon.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

MEMBERS SURVEY

Name (print) Telephone No.

Birth Date Age Now Address

Minors Parents name City Zip Code

To help us to help you, we need to know what your interests are. Check or fill-in, those listed and add that don't appear.

<u>SPORTS</u>	<u>INDOORS</u>	<u>PARTICIPATE IN</u>	<u>VOICE</u>
Baseball_____	Bowling_____	Patriotic Events_____	Acting_____
Basketball_____	Boxing_____	Color Guard_____	Arts_____
Biking_____	Cards_____	Drill Team_____	Speaking_____
Track_____	Chess_____	Rifle Team_____	Others:_____
Football_____	Cooking_____	Special Olympics_____	_____
Fishing_____	Dancing_____	Blood Drives_____	_____
Hiking_____	Darts_____	Fund Raising_____	_____
Hunting_____	Handball_____	Picnics_____	_____
Swimming_____	Pool_____	Others_____	_____
Trap/Skeet_____	Others_____	_____	_____
Golfing_____			
Jogging_____		Hobbies/Craft	Musical Instrument(s)
Volleyball_____		_____	_____
Others_____		_____	_____

Have you held Office in other Organizations? _____ What Office? _____

What other organizations have you belonged to? _____

If additional space is needed, please use backside of Survey Form.

What day of week is best for you to attend a meeting.

M T W T F S S (Circle One)

What time of day is best for you? _____

What type of activities do you want? _____

Send Survey Forms To: