

MISSAR CHAPTER HANDBOOK

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Chapter Meetings

Experience has proven that the most successful chapters are those that meet on a regular schedule. Monthly meetings are recommended, at a convenient location with adequate parking space. Many chapters do not meet during July and August because of member vacations. Attendance at meetings is reflective of the type of programs offered. It is often not necessary to transact all of the business of the chapter at the regular meetings. An executive committee consisting of the chapter officers and two or three compatriots from the general membership can manage normal affairs .

Reports by the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar should be furnished at reasonable intervals. Action affecting chapter policy and projects should be submitted to the membership for a majority decision. The chapter president should appoint a membership committee to stimulate chapter growth, with duties to contact and assist eligible prospective members to join.

A program committee should arrange programs to insure interesting and constructive meetings, thus resulting in a greater attendance. Publicity for the chapter is of vital importance, and it should be sought for every SAR meeting and event. Special attention should be accorded the manner in which chapter meetings are conducted. Regardless of the purpose for which it is called, every meeting should be characterized by adherence to a uniform and proper procedure. A United States Flag should be displayed to the right of the presiding officer or principal lecturer.

The SAR flag and the state flag are placed at the left in the same relative position.

Many chapters have used the following agenda:

1. Call to order by the presiding officer. A gavel should always be used.
2. Invocation by the Chaplain or by a compatriot designated by the presiding officer.
3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
4. SAR Pledge: "We descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution who, by their sacrifices, established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and our Constitutional Republic, and solemnly pledge ourselves to defend them against every foe."
5. Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.
6. Officers' reports.
7. Committee reports.
8. Introduction of new members and guests.
9. Unfinished business.
10. New business and correspondence.
11. Introduction of the speaker or program.
12. Presiding officer's remarks and thanks to speaker or program principal.
13. Motion to adjourn.
14. (Optional, and frequently used) Before adjourning, the presiding officer may ask the members to rise and repeat in unison: "Until we meet again, let us remember our obligations to our forefathers who gave us our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court and a nation of free men."
15. Benediction by the Chaplain or a designee.
16. Adjournment.

MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting should contain:

1. Kind of meeting (regular or special).
2. Name of chapter or state society.
3. Date and place of meeting.
4. Presence of President and Secretary; if absent, their substitutes.
5. Minutes of previous meeting were approved, approved as corrected, or dispensed with the reading.
6. Hours of meeting and adjournment.

7. Number present (to comply with requirement of a quorum).
8. All main motions (except those withdrawn), points of order and appeal, and all other motions not lost or withdrawn.

Minutes should be a record of what is done and not contain discussion or a record of what is said. The names of the person who makes the motion and the person who seconds it are recorded. The action taken on a motion is recorded.

Chapter Officers

The duties of chapter officers closely parallel those of their national and state counterparts, except that their work is limited to the chapter. They are elected or appointed in accordance with chapter bylaws.

Chapter Activities

An active chapter should have interesting and productive activities. Some recommended projects are:

1. Arrange with local school authorities for the annual rewarding of bronze Good Citizenship Medals to a limited number of qualifying students. Both the school authorities and the chapter should approve rules governing the program.
2. Arrange with local high school and/or college ROTC officials for the awarding of ROTC Medals. This SAR program has the full support and approval of the Department of Defense. Further details are available from National Headquarters.
3. Arrange with local high schools for their participation in the Joseph S. Rumbaugh Historical Patriotic oration Contest. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this contest on the Approved List of National Contests and Activities. Contact the state society for details. Copies of contest rules are available without cost from National Headquarters.
4. Consider the possibility of sponsoring a local Society of the Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.). An organized C.A.R. Society always needs SAR support.
5. Provide framed facsimiles of the basic documents (Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence) for local government buildings, bus, train and airport waiting rooms, schools, libraries, courtrooms, fraternal lodges, police and fire stations and banks. The words, "Presented by Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution" should be written in small text at the bottom before framing. It should be positioned so that it will not conflict with the body of these documents. These Our Future Growth facsimile documents are available on order from National Headquarters and will fit in

standard 18" x 24" frames.

6. Support the program for placing and dedicating SAR bronze markers at the graves of compatriots and/or Revolutionary veterans.

7. Furnish capable and interesting speakers to schools, organizations, public meetings, graduations, forums, and to radio and television stations, especially on patriotic holidays and anniversaries.

8. Participate in new citizenship swearing-in ceremonies. SAR representatives should congratulate the new citizens and, if permitted by the presiding judge, publicly address them. Some chapters present the new citizens with miniature U. S. flags or other patriotic mementos.

9. Sponsor or participate in celebrations of historic events and national holidays, especially Washington's Birthday, A American History Month, Patriots Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Constitution Week. A luncheon or dinner is particularly recommended, together with an interesting speaker and/or appropriate entertainment. Chapters frequently cooperate with local DAR chapters in joint meetings on some of these special occasions. Participate in the National Society Historic Celebrations Award Program.

10. Take part in the volunteer services programs at local veteran hospitals, clinics and/or retirement Homes. Participate in the National Society USS Stark Memorial Award and the General William C. Westmoreland Award Programs.

11. Honor public safety officers with appropriate public safety award when justified.

12. Award the SAR Medal of Appreciation to a member of the DAR who has furnished outstanding assistance to a particular SAR chapter, especially in obtaining new members. The presentation, with adequate ceremonies, may be effected at an SAR or DAR event.

13. Take particular interest in the local schools, especially the textbooks issued or recommended, instructional personnel and program employed.

14. Encourage the awarding of the SAR War Service Medals and the SAR Military Service Medals. Many compatriots qualify for one or the other medal. These members may purchase the SAR War Service or SAR Military Service Medal from National Headquarters. It is recommended that the chapter formally present the medal at a meeting or fitting ceremony.

15. Participate in the National Society SAR Eagle Scout Scholarship and Awards Program. Prepare and distribute certificates of recognition to local Scout Troops and

to the current class of Eagle Scouts who passed the Board of Review between July 1 and the next June 30 of each year. Provide applications to each Eagle Scout, as defined above.

16. Arrange with local high school authorities for the participation by students who are in their junior or senior grades in the George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest.

17. Promote "Honor the Flag" activities in support of the Admiral William B. Furlong Memorial Award Program.

Future Growth

The growth of the Michigan Sons of the American Revolution depends not only on recruiting new compatriots, but also on retaining current ones. These retention efforts for new compatriots begin once he joins MISSAR. In addition efforts must be made to retain longstanding compatriots and to keep them enthusiastic about the SAR. Below is some information on starting state and chapter level compatriot recruiting and retention efforts.

Retention Starts Day One

Retention efforts must start immediately after the compatriot has been accepted as a new member in MISSAR. Encourage the new compatriots to take part in state and chapter level meetings and established outings such as grave dedications and color guard activities as soon as possible.

Welcoming Committee

Chapters are encouraged to establish a welcoming committee of several chapter members to provide the compatriot and his family with information on MISSAR., show them pictures and articals from chapter and state wide events, and answer questions they may have.

Induction of New Compatriots

Present the new compatriot with a certificate of membership and rosett emblazoned with the SAR colors and emblem with their number on the certificate. A new compatriot should be introduced to other chapter members, help make him feel at home and inform him of the dates and times for chapter meetings and activities. Introduce his wife to members and encorage membership in our womens auxiliary component of MISSAR.

Car Pooling

Establish a car pool to bring new (and old) members to meetings. Also, as soon as the first meeting is over, get new members interested in other activities such as the state color guard and other committees of interest to help their knowledge and involvement in MISSAR grow.

Questionnaires

Use a Questionnaire to find out the interests of new members. Giving a compatriot responsibilities and assigning him to program committees helps him feel that he is an important part of the chapter. Use the compatriot interest survey form(now under development) to determine what programs compatriots wish to pursue. The survey gives new compatriots the opportunity to list their preferences for possible committee assignments and indicate the areas that they find exciting, challenging and promising.

There is also space for compatriots to express their thoughts on how to improve existing programs. Ask them to also list new programs they think MISSAR should conduct.

Membership/Retention Committee

Establishment of a membership/ retention committee is responsible to examine reasons why compatriots become inactive and let their membership lapse. This committee plans programs to conserve MISSAR membership and anticipate and solve problems that may cause membership to become inactive. The VP of MISSAR chairs the position of membership retention chairman and his committee is composed of one retention chairman from each chapter. Each chapter committee consists of two or three compatriots including the chairman. After discovering problems, the committee should work with MISSAR officers to remedy them.

The MISSAR Secretary should provide the MISSAR membership / retention committee with a list of members in danger of being dropped as active compatriots. Chapter retention chairman and committee members contact these compatriots and discuss their reasons for being inactive and urge them to become active again.

Keeping Chapter Meetings Interesting and Relevant

Keep chapter meetings interesting and relevant. If a compatriot asks himself, (Why am I here?) then something is wrong. Start meetings on time and keep discussions, comments, etc., within appropriate limits. The chapter president should refer any nonessential matters to the appropriate committees. Hold meetings on a night convenient to most compatriots. Allow all members to voice their opinions in an orderly way and try to keep meetings open and relivent.

MISSAR Chapter Meeting Guidebooks

MISSAR Chapter Meeting Guidebooks (under development) explains the guidelines for conducting a chapter meeting, and includes articles on conducting interesting meetings Chapter Presidents should also be familiar with parliamentary procedure.

Encourage a Free Exchange of Ideas

Encourage a free exchange of ideas on chapter programs and business during chapter meetings, but make sure the compatriots remains focused on the issues under discussion. If possible, complete the business portion of chapter meetings within an hour.

Personal Follow-Up

Another way to help retain compatriots is personal follow-up. Let a compatriot member know he is missed the first time he fails to attend a chapter meeting or MISSAR sponsored event. Send him a (We missed you at the meeting postcard message). Call him on the telephone or write a personal note at the bottom of the next meeting notice.

Marked decline in meeting attendance and committee involvement among formerly active compatriots is a sign of lost interest. Although these members may have compelling reasons for reducing the amount of time they give, do not give up on them. Handle such compatriot with tact and consideration. Make missing compatriots feel valued and needed by asking them to take on a task that (only they can do), one which their experience truly counts. Ask them to give just a small amount of their time to one particular chapter project or MISSAR sponsored event. Explain that their contribution is very important. Take time to say thanks. Honor compatriots with a luncheon, ceremony, award or certificate in recognition of their years of involvement and service.

Using Postcards and Announcement Cards

Use postcards and announcement cards to keep compatriots up-to-date on important information vital to the successful operation of your chapter. Contact your local post office regarding what it would cost your chapter to provide such a service to your compatriots. Sometimes in these modern times web sites have taken the place of a personal note and fall far short of accomplishing the mission.

Examine Current Programs and Activities

Look at your current programs and activities to evaluate whether your chapter's resources and compatriots are being fully used. Do compatriots express interest in these programs? Are a majority of the compatriots participating? What type of chapter image do these programs project to the community? Are these programs meaningful, sincere and diversified enough to appeal to all compatriot members?

Retrieving Lost Compatriots

If your chapter has lost good compatriots, develop a campaign to retrieve those compatriots. Organize a number of active members with good telephone personalities located throughout the geographic area your chapter covers. Give each volunteer a list of lapsed members in his area, with details of when they joined, what committees each served on and what each did for MISSAR. Add to the list whatever personal data your records contain. This information serves as a good starting point for conversation. Supply these worker compatriots with up-to-date information about MISSAR including present activities, future plans, a list of the benefits of belonging to such a prestigious organization such as MISSAR.

Recruit Lapsed Compatriots

Recruit lapsed compatriots just as you would finding new compatriots. Sell the organization to former compatriots. Ask them what they enjoyed most about their participation in the past. Keep questioning on a positive basis. Emphasize the aspects of the organization the member is most likely to miss in allowing his membership to lapse.

Through efforts to retain current members and recruit new ones, we help MISSAR remain strong and growing.

Other Membership Retention Ideas

Review the programs outlined, take the steps to get organized, implement your program and follow through on it.

Recruiting new members is essential to the continued growth and well-being of your chapter and to MISSAR. Helping a man become a compatriot in MISSAR gives him the opportunity to connect with his roots and improve his own life and his community. MISSAR membership allows him to experience the fraternal bond that compatriots share.

Utilizing MISSAR Website

Utilize the MISSAR Web site when organizing and implementing successful membership recruitment and membership retention programs in your chapter.

Establish a Chapter Award (Example: Chapter Service Award)

A program that encourages new compatriots to become immediately involved in Chapter and state wide activities. Example: award given for three out of five quarterly activities of MISSAR. This could be one chapter meeting, one state meeting and one color guard activity.

SAR COLOR GUARDS

The Color Guard in the Sons of the American Revolution serves as a means to involve our members in the activities of the Society, especially younger ones. They add a note of color and bearing to our celebrations, both public and private, and attract the attention of the general public to the activities of the Society. The Color Guard is used in ceremonies to open and close meetings of the SAR, DAR, C.A.R. and other organizations. They participate in parades, memorial services and grave markings. They bring favorable publicity to the SAR with their colorful flags, attractive uniforms and colonial style music. In addition, it is fun.

The Color Guard is organized on the state society and/or chapter level. The SAR National Color Guard consists of those uniformed SAR members who participate in the Color Guard at events of

the National Society, but are themselves affiliates of a state or chapter color guard within the Society. Proper attire consists of the standard male regimental uniform as worn by evolutionary War soldiers. While blue and buff were the basic colors of the uniform, some states varied the facings and the cockades. Most color guards choose the uniform of a regiment from their own state or a state from which many of their ancestors came. Uniforms should be identical for color guards within state societies or at least within chapters.

Information on how to buy uniforms and equipment, organize a color guard, find parade invitations and various other details is available from the NSSAR Color Guard Committee, the chairman of which may be reached by writing to the SAR Headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky.