



Paul "David" Arnold  
Junior Vice Commander  
**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT**

**SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR**

710 Mitchell Ave #10  
Lansing, Michigan 48917  
517 321-6013  
suvcw@hotmail.com  
<http://www.suvcwmi.org/>



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### Department of Michigan Camps Commanders and Brothers:

Most all of us struggle with the subject of ***How to Increase Camp Membership***. After this Department of Michigan-Membership Initiative was developed last spring, we asked for your assistance in providing additional input from your respective Camps on different ideas/methods that have worked well for you in the past, regarding recruiting new members. Those ideas have been incorporated into this document. Although the initiative is geared primarily toward newly formed Camps, we hope it provides both new and existing Camps with ideas on promoting the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War within your community

All of us have heard the old saying "***Many Hands Make for Light Work.***" By increasing our membership, not only does it help to sustain and grow your Camp and bolster the department, but also gives us the manpower to conduct projects pertaining to the Work of the Order. Many times we as Camps would like to get more involved with "work of the order projects," but because of the age or the number of our active members, we feel reluctant to do so.

With the Civil War Sesquicentennial approaching in 2011, SUVCW Camps and Departments throughout the country will have a unique opportunity to bolster their membership roles like never before and help keep green the memory of the soldiers, sailors, and members of the revenue cutter service that served our country during the great War of the Rebellion. In the mean time, we would like to offer some suggestions on different methods that Camps can use to make it easier to grow your membership.

I hope that you will find this CD version of the Department of Michigan Membership Initiative helpful in promoting the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in your community.

Yours in Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,

*Paul "David" Arnold*

Paul "David" Arnold, PCC  
Junior Vice Department Commander  
Department of Michigan  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

# Building Camp Membership

## Within Your Camp:

**Invitations.** Actively challenge your membership to invite friends or associates to each Camp meeting or function.

**Work of the Order Projects.** Invite non-SUVCW members to participate with “Work of the Order” projects. Take photos at these events and send email attachments to them. This starts to create a sense of positive participation and fraternalism associated with your local Camp. Follow up by sending a Camp created “Certificate of Appreciation” to the non-member helping out. This can be done either by US mail, e-mail or better yet, invite the person back and present the Certificate of Appreciation to them at the next Camp meeting along with discussing joining the Order.

**Special Events.** Once a year plan a Camp Potluck, Picnic, or Campfire. Gear this not only toward Camp members but also as a means of inviting potential new members to see what the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is all about. This could be done in conjunction with a Camp meeting.



(Invite Non Members and Friends to a Work of the Order Event)

## Use of Promotional Devices

**Display Boards.** There is an old saying a friend once shared with me pertaining to visibility events. That saying was “**Look Sharp, Be Sharp.**” You only have one chance to make a good first impression with the public. The creation of a well done display board set up at special events can not only attract attention, but also leave a positive and professional impression with the public, making them want to learn more

about our organization. Display boards can either be professional models or foam core displays:

**Professional Models.** These usually are multi-fold tabletop versions. They are constructed of a high impact gator core foam board covered by a carpet type material. A header board also is included for advertising your organization (Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War). The carpet type backing allows you to purchase lightweight photo frames to display Camp related photos using Velcro attached to the back of the picture frames. The picture frames are then easily stuck to the carpet covering the display board. This creates an extremely professional looking display for maximum visual impact for the public. You can find these on line (EBay) for approx \$150.00. They are very sturdy, fold up, and have their own box with a carrying handle. If your Camp budget cannot afford this particular model, there are less expensive options.





**Foam Core Displays** – These also are offered in multi-fold versions. They are usually smaller than the professional models, compact, and offered in a variety of colors. From experience, I would suggest purchasing a display in a colored foam core to attract the attention of the general public. A solid blue or yellow background provides an excellent contrast for displaying photos. These are usually available for under \$30.00 at most craft stores (***Note: The most important part of the display board is the header. If you spend your time or money anywhere, make a professional looking header board.***)



**(Table Displays Create Maximum Visual Impact)**

**Camp Advertising Material.** Develop a Camp Brochure and include the *Goals* and *Purpose* of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War stressing the importance of

being a Congressionally Chartered Veterans organization and legally recognized heir to the Grand Army of the Republic. Include some of the work of the Order projects our organization does, such as Soldier Grave Identification and Registration, GAR Record Preservation, Civil War Monument Location and Recording, Participation in Parades and Ceremonies, etc. This can be printed to hand out at visibility events. A less expensive option is to develop a Camp business card with a Civil War photo insert and your Camp name and email address where you can link the public to your Camp website and have the Camp brochure available there.

<p><b>Our Goals &amp; Purpose</b></p> <p>The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (S.U.V.C.W) is a patriotic &amp; educational organization similar to the Grand Army of the Republic. Its purpose is to perpetuate the memory of the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and members of the Revenue Cutters Service who served the Union during the Civil War.</p> <p><b>Soldier Grave Identification</b></p>  <p>The S.U.V.C.W through the Graves registration Committee is working to register graves of those that served in the military during the Civil War. Some of our projects include when needed, the maintenance, repair, restoration or replacement of Civil War veterans tombstones.</p> <p><b>G.A.R Record Preservation:</b></p> <p>A concerted effort continues, to locate &amp; preserve G.A.R. post records &amp; make them available for research when appropriate.</p>	 <p><b>Who We Are</b></p> <p>We are the brothers of the Lansing/Sunfield, Curtenius Guard, Camp #17, Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. We are the descendants of soldiers, sailors, marines &amp; members of the revenue cutters service, who served in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. The S.U.V.C.W. was created in 1881 by Union Veterans of the Civil War, (The Grand Army of the Republic) &amp; was congressionally chartered in 1954. Curtenius Guard, Camp #17 is the namesake of a militia unit formed in Mason Michigan in Ingham County. The militia unit was formed by Frederick W. Curtenius prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1861. The Curtenius Guard then became Company B of the 7th Michigan Infantry. The unit fought gallantly during battles involving the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. Frederick Curtenius, who had been Adjutant General of Michigan later served as a Colonel of the 6th Michigan Infantry. After the war he served in many high offices, including two terms as state senator. Curtenius Guard, Camp #17 is housed at the Samuel W Grinnell, Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Sunfield Michigan. It is one of the last remaining original G.A.R. halls in use in the State of Michigan.</p>	<p><b>Goals &amp; Purpose Cont.</b></p> <p><b>Monument Preservation</b></p>  <p>We also work to locate, preserve &amp; restore G.A.R. Monuments &amp; Memorials that were raised to honor our fallen ancestors. Rededication ceremonies accompany the restorations.</p> <p><b>Parades &amp; Ceremonies</b></p> <p>As the heirs of the G.A.R., we encourage public remembrance of our Civil War ancestors through participation in local events &amp; parades. The camp is a regular participant in the Lansing Memorial Day Parade, in addition to the traditional Memorial Day services at local cemeteries throughout the Ingham, Eaton &amp; Barry county areas.</p> 
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(Develop a Camp Brochure)

## Community Visibility Events:

As we all know, a good way to promote your Camp is by taking advantage of community based visibility events. Take advantage of the large numbers of people attending special events in your community or nearby communities. Attend these events in uniform or civilian attire representing the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (regardless of what you wear, make certain that you wear your membership badge and/or kepi if you own one). Set up a table display, talk to the public and offer information on the organization and your Camp. Develop a Camp brochure or business card to give out to people so they can contact a representative of the Camp in the future. Have a signup sheet to get interested parties, names, address, or (E Mail addresses) and follow up. Some good opportunities to showcase your Camp can include:

- 1) **Civil War Reenactments,**
- 2) **Living History Events,**

- 3) ***Community Festivals,***
- 4) ***History or Government Related Functions,***
- 5) ***Community based Events and Parades,***
- 6) ***Active Military Events***
- 7) ***Community Concerts and Gun and Knife Shows,***
- 8) ***Patriotic Holidays, Ceremonies and Parades, and***
- 9) ***Genealogy/Historical Fairs***



**(Visibility Events are an Excellent Source of Promotion)**

## **Educational Seminars:**

Create a series of community based, Civil War history seminars. Host a Civil War round table or Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War open house. Make sure these are geared toward the general public first, with secondary emphasis on the Camp. This, along with a great looking table display, can go a long way in regards to attracting new members. Make sure you have a sign in sheet for people attending which includes an email address. This makes it easy for your Camp Junior Vice Commander to create an email group, to notify the general public of future Camp programs and events and keep interested and potential members in the loop. It also makes it easier to follow up with potential new members as far as sending SUVCW information or an application.

For Speakers, consult:

- 1) **Area Colleges –(History Departments),**
- 2) **Local Historical Societies,**
- 3) **Area Museums Curators and Staff,**
- 4) **Knowledgeable Camp Members, and**
- 5) **Local Civil War Historians and Authors.**

**Presentations.** Have your Camp Patriotic Instructor or member with public speaking experience develop a talk or power point presentation on the history of the Grand Army of the Republic and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. Graphics or displays can really create a lasting visual image for those attending. Every effort should be made to incorporate them into your presentation. Try to keep this approximately 30 minutes with a question and answer period at the end.

Offer your services at the same venues as the visibility events including:

- 1) **Other Fraternal Meetings.**
  - a) Veterans of Foreign Wars.
  - b) American Legion.
  - c) Masonic
- 2) **Genealogy and Historical Societies.**
- 3) **Service Groups.**
  - a) Lions Club
  - b) Optimist Club.
  - c) Rotary Club
  - d) Shriners



(Have an Interested Camp Member Develop a Presentation)

## Utilization of Print, Radio and Television Media Sources:

**Newspapers.** Larger newspapers are quite often driven by the available *space vs. story vs. profit concept*. To most large newspapers, *space = money*. While driven to get interesting stories, available advertising space means a way to create revenue for the company. In recent years, the daily subscription rates of printed newspapers have declined dramatically due to Internet newspaper viewership. Therefore, they might not be willing or able to run all of the stories the general public would like.

Chances are you will be more successful if you request coverage of larger events such as Re dedication Ceremonies, or Memorial or Veterans Day events. If you have a large project or history related story of which you want an extensive article written, find out who your local staff writer is who covers and writes those type of stories. Make an appointment to meet with them to discuss your idea.

*Always* try to meet the staff writer in person if possible. Have information and photos ready to share with them when you meet. This humanizes the story and helps create a positive response. The longer the lead-time you give the better, so the writer does not have to rush to meet their deadline.

Small community-based and independent newspapers are geared more toward the local community in general. Experience shows smaller newspapers are eager for community based stories and events; especially if **You** write the story and submit it. This makes it a lot easier for the newspaper editor if all they have to do is quickly review it. Most of the time, they will run the story as written. My Camp has gotten terrific press in this way, with stories averaging a quarter to half a page in length.

**Photos or Graphics.** *Always* include some type of Civil War, SUVCW based or other graphic (with a photo description), in either a .jpg or .gif file. Call the editor before hand and ask what the minimum or maximum size the file needs to be. When running these articles, I have discovered that a great photo attachment incorporated in the article will increase your attendance of a special event by 20 to 30 percent over an article written with no photo. Photographs draw the public's attention into the article and creates a visual image they will associate with the event.

**Magazines and Periodicals.** Another excellent source of promotion is through the publishing of articles in history related or civil war magazines/periodicals. Have someone in your Camp take the time to sit down and write an article concerning an interesting Civil War Veteran or event, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Grand Army of the Republic or one of the Allied Orders. In virtually every community, there are wonderful stories that involve local Civil War veterans just waiting to be told, **Remember, if it is interesting to you. It will most likely be interesting to someone else.** Within the article try to link the event or story with how it relates to the Grand Army of the Republic or one of the Allied Orders. Close the article with mentioning the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War or Allied Order and how readers can contact the organization to receive additional information.

A common mistake people make, is not submitting articles for publication to established magazines or periodicals in the first place. Many times we think, *I'm not a journalist, I have never written anything before, why would they choose me, or I don't have any experience.* Go ahead, submit the article. Most magazine editors will do a fair amount of editing to the story anyway. If the story content is solid and interesting, that is the most important part. Magazines quite often want articles to be between 1000 to 3000 words, double-spaced and footnoted on sources. You can use your (word count) link under (Tools) on your computer to determine this after the

article is written.

Include **(Lots....)** of photos with the article and try to make them 300 dpi or larger. Editors will select the ones they want. Downsized photos reduced to fit on websites or the Internet, quite often are not large enough in size for proper clarity in magazines and periodicals. Footnote your photo sources as well.



Michigan History Magazine  
July/August 2007

**(Submit an Article to a Magazine or Periodical)**

## Radio:

**Large Market Stations.** Again, it would be great to get interviews or promos done by your local large market radio station. Always try, but don't be surprised if you are turned down. Most large market stations operate on the same premise as large newspapers, only with radio stations *Air Time = Advertising Dollars*.

**Universities, Colleges and Community Colleges.** Higher education institutions quite often are publically funded or participate with National Public Radio. It is quite common for them to conduct on air interview shows on interesting topics or people. Have your Camp Commander or a Camp member comfortable with this format, go on, to talk about the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War or an upcoming event



you want publicized. This is usually a source of **“Free Publicity.”** Not only does your Camp reach students attending the educational facility, but often these radio stations also broadcast over the public airways as well. A large number also will have forums promoting upcoming community events

## Television:

**Large Market.** Television stations have hard and soft news stories that they cover. They are more apt to cover a hard news stories such as a fires, robberies etc. If you have events you would like covered, always make contact with the **“News Director”** a week before you want the story run. Furnish them the Type of Event, Day and Time, Location and Contact Person within your Camp. Also, provide them with a cell phone number where they can reach you before or at the event.

The day before the event, re-contact the **“News Director”** again to remind them, and **ask if they know the name of the reporter that will be covering the story and write it down.** The news director is usually the one scheduling the crews. Newsrooms are hectic places (I have found if you call to far in advance, the scheduling tends to be overlooked because it is not fresh in their minds). I actually had a news director share this with me. It is a good idea to give them the coverage time at least 15 minutes before your actual event time. It is common for news crews to be busy and run behind schedule. Keep in mind that *Hard News* always takes precedence over Soft News. Try to make **contact with the news reporter** assigned by the news director the day of the event, to let them know who they will be making contact with when the crew arrives. This also confirms they are scheduled to come.

**Public Access Television.** An often-overlooked form of free publicity to promote your Camp and gain the interest of potential new members is the use of Public Access Television. Most local cable television stations have public access channels you can use to re-broadcast video coverage of an SUVCW or other related event. This will most likely encompass participating in training at your local cable company on how to operate the equipment. If any of your members are interested in this sort of thing, it can be a terrific means in which to present our organization and your Camp to potential new members and cover SUVCW events at the same time.

There are undoubtedly many other ways to promote your Camp and our Department that have not been mentioned in this document. Try to think **“Outside”** the box and **Good Luck** with your endeavors.

Yours in Fraternity, Charity, & Loyalty,

*Paul “David” Arnold*

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