

# **Public Relations**

## **2016-2017 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan**

Public Relations and the 2014-2019 Centennial Strategic Plan – Promoting who we are, what we do and why we matter strengthens our brand (Goal 5) and makes us appealing to potential members who will recognize our common goal of helping veterans, service members and their families (Goal 1).

### **Committee Contact Information**

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## **What is this program, and why do we have it?**

Public Relations promotes who we are, what we do and why we matter.

## **What can you do?**

**1. Promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary by supporting and promoting the efforts of Goal 5 of the Centennial Strategic Plan (*With The American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty*) and the use of the variety of public relations materials and resources available online.**

### **Ideas:**

#### **Member**

- Give an *Auxiliary* magazine gift subscription to your local library and doctors' offices. See the subscription form at the end of this program Plan.
- Distribute ALA brochures and posters in the community at libraries, job fairs, medical facilities and post homes. Print brochures online from the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), or order them from your department secretary.
- Wear your officially branded ALA apparel and "Honoring Their Service" button when out and about. Button order forms are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Be prepared to answer when asked who the Auxiliary is, what we do in your community, and why we matter.

#### **Unit**

- Develop a list of local media contacts for your unit to use. Step-by-step instructions are included in the *Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, available in Marketing & Promotional Materials in the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Build relationships with your local media and political figures to educate them on who we are, what we do and why we matter.
- Write a letter to the editor and/or news release for patriotic holidays and events. Templates can be found in Marketing & Promotional Materials in the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
- Familiarize yourself with and utilize the *Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, *ALA Branding Guide* and other tools available in the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Order a copy of the "Step Up, ALA" public service announcement DVD (\$10) to take to your local television stations and request they air it, or request a free 15-second version for your public broadcasting station. To order the 60-second version DVD or request the 15-second version, email [pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org).

#### **Department**

- Compile a list of media contacts for distributing department news. Step-by-step instructions are available in the *Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, available in Marketing & Promotional Materials in the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Be familiar with Auxiliary public service announcements (PSAs), brochures and other ALA publications. Educate units on materials available and how to obtain them. View the compilation of resources in the *2015 Marketing Resource Guide*, available in the Marketing & Promotional Materials in the Member Resources section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

- Monitor news coverage to share with department and national leadership, if needed.
- Each department PR chairman must ensure that her department's ALA Impact Report is submitted.

## **2. Build brand loyalty of the American Legion Auxiliary through the utilization and promotion of websites, social media and other electronic communications.**

### **Ideas:**

#### **Member**

- Promote Auxiliary events on your personal social media accounts.
- Subscribe to *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* via [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Link to [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and/or the "Step Up, ALA" commercial (<https://youtube/tgahjxlhGC0>) in your personal email signature.

#### **Unit**

- Create or improve and actively maintain a unit website that adheres to brand standards (see *ALA Branding Guide* at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).
- Create and maintain an active social media presence for your unit on one or more platforms that you are comfortable with (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

#### **Department**

- Create or improve and actively maintain a department website that adheres to brand standards. Be familiar with "Department Website Best Practices" available in the *ALA Branding Guide* at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Promote American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion collaborations through links to [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) and [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).
- Create and maintain an active social media presence for the department on one or more platforms that you are comfortable with (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
- Encourage members to sign up for *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* via [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Forward electronic publications such as *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* to your unit PR chairmen.

## **Public Relations Reporting**

### Mid-Year Reports

Mid Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department. Each department Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report by January 5, 2017, to the division Public Relations chairman. Please submit a brief overview of your units Public Relations activities to the department chairman, listed on the front of this guide, by December 28, 2016.

### Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department. Each department Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report by May 15, 2017. Please fill out and submit the Department consolidated report by the deadline to ensure our information is counted.

**As part of your Narrative Report, please include the answers to the following questions:**

- How has your department website and/or Facebook page inspired units to develop social media at the local level?
- Have units in your department been mentioned in local media promotion of mission- related activities? What type of promotions have they received?
- Were PSAs distributed in your department and what type of response did you receive?
- How does your department keep an active and updated media contact list? How has this list impacted units?
- Has there been specific social media events sponsored by either a unit or department that broadly spread the brand of the ALA?
- What specific activities have you done to work toward Goal 5 of the Centennial Strategic Plan?

## **Department of Michigan Public Relations Awards**

**Gladys Lee Citation** – To the Unit with the most of publicity in a WEEKLY newspaper, substantiated by articles in the press book. Will be judged based on the word count.

**Alma Viergever Citation** – To the Unit under 75 members with the most publicity in daily, weekly or monthly papers, substantiated by articles in the press book. Will be judged based on the word count.

**Viola Starkey Citation** – To the Unit with the best narrative describing their outstanding effort/event that positively projects our image or programs

### **Criteria for Viola Starkey Citation**

1. Article must be written in narrative form, not to exceed 300 words.
2. Articles must be of some outstanding activity pertaining to American Legion Auxiliary programs or some special community event that involved the Auxiliary. Activity must have taken place in the current Auxiliary year (April 1st to March 31st).
3. Unit may submit more than one entry in any given year.
4. Articles must be signed by Unit President and Secretary or Unit Public Relations Chairman.

**Kanaby Broadcast Citation** – For the best script for either radio or TV program by a Unit. Script verification from radio and/or TV with the written confirmation from said radio and/or TV

**Ivy Lee Reinhardt Citation** – To the Unit with the best all-around press book

**Ada Bogart Citation** - For the best Junior publicity press book.

### **Criteria for Press Book Entries**

1. Material must be prepared in a press book no larger than 12"x 15". ON 8 ½ " x 11" pages
2. The first page of the entry must include the name, address, and phone number of the Unit Chairman, name of the Unit and the total number of inches and pictures in the press book.
3. The entry must also include a completed copy of the Unit's Annual Report Form.
4. Photostat copies of articles may be used.
5. The name of the newspaper, date and page number must be at the top of each article.
6. Newspaper articles, bulletins and photographs concerning an Auxiliary and/or Legion Family function/program should be included in chronological order.
7. Paid articles are not to be included.
8. The press book should tell the story of how the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary was promoted in the Unit.

9. *Do not underline anything!*

10. American Legion Auxiliary or American Legion should be included in each article.

**Leslie F. Kefgan Citation** - To the Unit with the most inches of publicity in a DAILY newspaper, substantiated by articles in the press book.

**Marion “Pic” Webster Citation** - Website award to the Unit creating/ maintaining the best website.

**Unit “Letter Style” Newsletter** - This award is for those Units who are unable to publish a large newsletter but send out a newsletter in the form of a letter.

**District “Letter Style” Newsletter** - This award is for Districts who prefer not to publish a large newsletter but wish to get the news out to members.

#### **Criteria for “Letter Style” Newsletters**

1. Send one copy each of three (3) issues to be judged (published from April – March), to the District Chairman postmarked no later than the deadline.
2. Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.
3. Entries will be judged as follows:

Unit or District name, number, address, editor’s name	10 points
Meeting information (time, place & contact if needed)	10 points
Member information (new members, illness, etc)	15 points
Summary of just completed projects or activities	10 points
Upcoming Unit activity	25 points
Auxiliary programs	15 points
General appearance	15 points
Total Possible points	100 points

**Best Unit Newsletter** - To the Unit with the best newsletter publication

**Best Unit/Post Joint Newsletter** - To the Unit with the best joint newsletter publication.

**Best District Newsletter** - To the District with the best newsletter publication.

#### **Criteria for “Newsletter” Publications**

1. Send one copy each of three (3) issues to be judged (published from April – March), to the District Chairman postmarked no later than the deadline.
2. Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.
3. Entries will be judged as follows:

Masthead (emblem, name of newsletter, date & editor)	10 points
Meeting information (time, place & contact if needed)	10 points
Unit Officers & Chairmen (list or names by articles)	5 points
Member information (new members, illness, birthday, etc)	10 points
Summary of Unit activity/projects just completed	10 points
Unit activity/projects coming up information	15 points
Auxiliary program reports	15 points
Calendar of Events (incl. Dist. and Dept. mtg. & events)	10 points
General appearance	15 points
Total possible points	100 points

\*Items listed as Unit should include Legion/SAL if joint publication.

## **National Public Relations Awards**

NOTE: Please be sure each award entry includes a cover sheet found at the end of this program Plan, and make arrangements for the return of materials in advance, if desired.

Mid-year and Annual narratives are separate from awards. All must be noted as such and all award narratives entries must have a cover sheet attached to be considered.

- A. **Member Award:** ALA Brand Ambassador
- Award: Citation
  - Presented to: One member in each department who achieves excellence in promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary with her use of social media, her appearance in public wearing ALA-branded apparel, and other activities that showcase the Auxiliary's unique branding through visual identity.
  - Materials and guidelines:
    - Document with action photographs, screen shots and other evidence of brand promotion activities.
    - Activity must occur between May 1, 2016, and May 1, 2017.
  - Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Public Relations chairman.
  - Deadline: June 1, 2017
  - Send to National PR Committee Member, Shylynn Jones, via email at [raven14378@gmail.com](mailto:raven14378@gmail.com)
- B. **Unit Award:** Website or Facebook - New Website or Facebook Page Launch
- Award: Personalized mouse pad and congrats letter
  - Presented to: All units developing a properly branded website or Facebook page during the 2016-2017 ALA administrative year.
  - Materials and guidelines:
    - Web address/URL, Webmaster/administer name and contact info, or name and contact info for ALA coordinator if Webmaster/ administrator is a third party vendor.
    - Site/Page must have been created after September 1, 2016.
    - Website/Facebook page must conform to "Website and Social Media Guidelines" in the *ALA Branding Guide* (found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).
  - Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Public Relations chairman.
    - Deadline: June 1, 2017
  - Send to National PR Committee member, Karon Cook, via email at [klckaron01@sbcglobal.net](mailto:klckaron01@sbcglobal.net)
- C. **Unit Award:** Public Relations - Outstanding PR Program
- Award: Plaque
  - Presented to: One unit chairman in each division (5)
  - Materials and guidelines:
    - Include three different media placements/coverage, highlighting different ALA programs, featured in three different months (September 1, 2016 – May 1, 2017).
    - Acceptable media publications must support the Auxiliary's mission and goals.

- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Public Relations chairman.
- Deadline: June 1, 2017
- Send to national division chairman via email. Diana Sirovina at [sirovina@att.net](mailto:sirovina@att.net)

**D. Department Award: Public Relations - Outstanding PR Program**

- Award: Plaque
- Presented to: One department chairman in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Articles, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.
  - Narrative not to exceed 500 words
- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Public Relations chairman.
- Deadline: June 1, 2017
- Send to national division chairman via email. Diana Sirovina at [sirovina@att.net](mailto:sirovina@att.net)

## How To Sheets

- How To Write a News Release
- How to Utilize Facebook and Twitter to Promote Auxiliary Events and Activities
- How to Set up a Department or Unit Website

## Additional Resources You Can Use

1. "Photography Guidelines," see *ALA Branding Guide* pages 20 and 21, available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
2. *Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
3. *American Legion Auxiliary Branding Guide*, available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
4. *ALA Style Guide*: available by emailing [pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org); and the *AP Stylebook*: [www.apstylebook.com/](http://www.apstylebook.com/)
5. [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org): for submissions to *Auxiliary* magazine, posters, flyers, news releases, marketing materials, and much more.
6. Goal 5 of the Centennial Strategic Plan
7. Your national committee members (see cover page of this program Plan).



## HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE

Committee:

### Public Relations

Submitted by:

National Public Relations Committee

Contact information for questions:

[pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org)

How to write a news release:

- Gather correct and pertinent information.
- Prepare a news release with the **Who** (who is invited and who is the sponsor), **What** (what is the ALA information/event/program), **When** (day, date, time), **Where** (location, street address, city), **Why** (provides a reason the event is being held) and **How** (other special information a member or the general public would need to know in order to participate in this event). Templates are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).



- The inverted pyramid (shown above) is a common method for writing news articles and releases. It can be thought of as a simple upside-down triangle. The widest part at the top represents the most important information, and it tapers down in order of diminishing importance. **Who, What, When, Where, Why** and **How** should all be included in the opening paragraph or two. This format is valued because readers can leave the story at any point and understand it, even if they don't have all of the details. By placing less important information at the end of the story, it can be removed so the article can fit a fixed size, or it can be "cut from the bottom."
- Include contact information: a name, phone number and email address.
- Provide deadline information if applicable.
- Distribute public relations information via resources available in your community—to newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, blogs; post to a website; display advertising posters on community boards, in city hall, grocery stores, VA hospitals; share information with other persons who may help your unit reach the target audience such as a veteran service officer, Family Readiness Group or National Guard armory personnel.
- With today's technology, it is imperative that your information be shared electronically. Utilize Auxiliary websites, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- Online public relations resources are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).





## HOW TO UTILIZE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER TO PROMOTE AUXILIARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Committee:

### Public Relations

Submitted by:

National Public Relations Committee

Contact information for questions:

[pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org)

### Facebook

*Set up a personal Facebook account (if you do not have an account already)*

1. Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).
2. Enter your **name**.
3. Enter your **email** where indicated.
4. Create a **password**.
5. Enter your **birthdate** and **gender**.
6. Click on the **sign up** button.
7. You are now on your Facebook **home** page.
8. Click on **your name** in upper right hand corner. This is where you update your **profile**.
9. Click on **find friends** in upper right hand corner. You can import contacts from your email address book, or request to be **friends** individually in the **search** bar by name or email address.

### Twitter

*Set up a Twitter account (if you do not have an account already)*

1. Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com).
2. Enter your **full name**, **email** and a **password**.
3. Click **sign up for Twitter**.
4. On the next screen, you will **choose your username** and agree to the terms of service.
5. Click **create my account**.
6. Go through the welcome and follow five accounts (such as @ALANatIHQ, @AmericanLegion, @AmLegionNewsCt, @DeptofDefense and @DeptVetAffairs) and click **next**. Then select five well-known people or agencies (consider categories like government and news) and click **next**.
7. You are then given the option to see if your friends are already on Twitter by searching your email address book. If you do not want to do this, click **skip**.
8. You can choose to upload an image for your profile picture and write a brief bio about yourself. If you do not want to do this, click **skip**.

### Smartphones with Facebook and Twitter

If you own a smartphone, be sure to download both the Facebook and Twitter apps to post and tweet about the American Legion Auxiliary while you're on the go! Facebook and Twitter do not charge for these services; check with your phone provider for data charges.

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## Got Something to Share?

### Twitter

### Facebook

#### How-To

Using your smartphone or computer, send tweets about the accomplishments of your unit's service in the community. Tweets can also include photos (see "Photo Tips" at right). You can even link to a news article or website.

#### Sample Tweets: (140 characters or less)

- #ALA members teaching 8th graders meaning behind 13 folds of #flag
- 13 #ALA volunteers at @DeptVetAffairs VAMC visiting hospitalized #veterans and passing out socks
- #ALA Unit 98 distributed 750 #poppies today, raising money to assist & support #veterans and their families
- #ALA #LegionRiders @AmericanLegion & SAL members building wheelchair ramp for Iraq #veteran
- #ALA Unit 1 & friends packing care packages & writing thank-you notes for #servicemembers #NationalDayService #2015MLKDay
- @ALANatIHQ Learning about awesome new PR materials #dlnc

Other suggested hashtags: #veterans, #SOT, #SOV, #military

Remember to use descriptive adjectives that will draw attention to your tweet.

Using your smartphone or computer, upload ALA program events and action photos of your unit or department members.

#### Posts Might Include:

- Meeting date and times.
- Reminders of report deadlines.
- Photos and summaries of ALA members filling backpacks for military children.
- Volunteers serving food to veterans.
- Members in Auxiliary attire distributing poppies.
- Legion Family members painting the exterior of a veteran's house.
- Junior members participating in mission-focused projects.
- Combined functions with the entire American Legion Family.
- How and where to apply for AEF grants in times of need.

#### Photo Tips:

- Take action shots, not just portrait style.
- Aim for tight, close-up photos.
- Avoid "back-of-head" shots.
- Remember to get vertical shots as well.
- Collect photo release statements when necessary.
- Pay attention to what else appears in the photo (i.e., beer signs, etc.).

A computer, smartphone or tablet with the ability to send text messages or download an application. Additionally, tweets can be posted from your Internet browser at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). Include **#ALA** in your tweets.

A smartphone with a built-in camera and data plan, or a computer and a digital camera.

Share your posts and photos with **American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters** Facebook page through tagging or private message for maximum distribution.



## HOW TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT OR UNIT WEBSITE

### Committee:

### Public Relations

### Submitted by:

National Public Relations Committee

### Contact Information for Questions:

[pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org)

1. Determine the purpose of the site – to attract new members, communicate with current ones, or both.
  2. Decide on a domain name (YourSiteName.org) and hosting (service that connects your site to the Internet). You will probably have to pay a nominal fee for the domain name. You may be able to find a host for free.
  3. Using the *ALA Branding Guide* (available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)), design your website with a professional appearance.
  4. Include general information about the American Legion Auxiliary.
  5. Use the content suggestions located in the *ALA Branding Guide*.
  6. Include at least one link to [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) on your website.
  7. When including information on your website from [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), include links to the information rather than posting it directly to your site. If information changes at the national level, the link will ensure your website visitors receive the latest information.
  8. Update your website regularly. People visiting your website will keep checking it if the content is current and fresh.
  9. Avoid including information on your website that contains internal language and acronyms that may confuse users. Examples include NEC, PNP, PDP.
  10. Care should be exercised when linking to other websites. Information included on websites linked to external sites should be supportive of the Auxiliary's mission, message and values. Suggested links include [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org), and your department American Legion Auxiliary website.
  11. Check your website regularly to ensure the links are working properly. Broken links will frustrate users, and they may stop checking your site.
  12. Be sure to include contact information for your department or unit in an easy-to-find location on your site. Also include contact information for the webmaster.
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# American Legion Auxiliary Auxiliary magazine gift subscription

Send Auxiliary magazine Gift Subscription to: (Please print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First name Last name

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street, Apt. # or P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

This Auxiliary magazine Gift Subscription is purchased by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First name Last name

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street, Apt. # or P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip Code

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

(Print multiple copies of this form for additional subscriptions)

Mail completed form to:  
American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters  
ATTN: Auxiliary magazine gift subscription  
8945 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46260  
Make \$15 check payable to: ALA National Treasurer

Gift subscriptions to Auxiliary magazine are good recruitment and public relations tools. Consider giving them to: friends, medical offices and health clinics, beauty salons, churches, schools, congressional offices, community centers, VA medical centers, nursing homes, hospitals, offices of employment and senior centers. Pass it on!



## American Legion Auxiliary 2016-2017 National Award Cover Sheet

This cover sheet should be attached to each narrative submitted for a national award. Please fill out the information as completely and accurately as possible.

Award certificates will be completed using the information given on this sheet, so please write carefully. All awards will be mailed to the department office after national convention. Department presidents may wish to recognize award recipients by presenting them at a department function.

National committee sponsoring award: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Award:         Department         Unit         Member

Name of the award you are applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete the following if you are applying for a department award:**

Name of department: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of department chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman's phone number: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_ ALA member ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete the following if you are applying for a unit award.** Be sure to give the complete name of your unit. The award certificate will be prepared using the information you include below.

Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_ Full official unit name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of department: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit president/chairman (circle one) name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_ ALA member ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete the following if you are applying for a member award.** Be sure to give the complete name of the member. The award certificate will be prepared using the information you include below.

Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_ Full official unit name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of department: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ALA member ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Member (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Phone number: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please see your committee Programs Action Plan to determine where to send this form.*