

I am writing this soon after we finished with Winter Conference in Minot. In spite of the cold, it was a very enjoyable conference! National President Vickie Koutz spoke about providing funds for veterans' companions expenses anonymously at the Creative Arts Festival and POW/MIA awareness. Other Department leaders gave updates on programs as well. With all the current natural disasters, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund has provided more help for members in the first quarter of 2023 than all of last year. It was stressed that dues be sent in as soon as possible and not to hold them. There are 13 units in the Department that have reached 100% or more already.

We learned 155 members have passed in the last year. Department President Sandra Petermann displayed information regarding the Four Chaplains and reminded us of its history. There are multiple scholarships available from both the American Legion and Auxiliary. Attendees of American Legion Auxiliary Flickertail Girls State apply for the Samsung scholarship on the first day of the event, so applicants need to have researched and put together required documents before arriving. The ALA National \$2,000 Non-Traditional Student Scholarship does not get a lot of applicants. I encourage all students who are eligible to apply.

I am reminding all District 5 units to review and revise your unit Constitution and Bylaws as well as Standing Rules. If you have questions about your unit documents, please feel free to contact Diane Kraemer or the Department Office.

A new topic discussed at the Conference was a future increase in dues from National. It was suggested that the Department dues be looked at and they will likely have to be increased as well. Now is the time to also review your unit's dues.

Spring District meetings will be coming up before long. Put March 25th on your calendar as the tentative date for District 5 in Bismarck. Stay tuned for more details. Other activities that units may choose to participate in include the Americanism Essay Contest, Poppy Poster Contest, Memorial Day activities, and the 2023 Department Convention in Bismarck from June 23-25.

Reporting your volunteer hours and expenses is also important so that information can be compiled all the way to National to help show the need for continuing veterans programs.

Spring is coming! Stay warm and enjoy socializing with your family, friends, and veterans in your communities.

Peggy Moran

District 5 President