

Americanism Commission
September 30, 2017

The Americanism Commission met at 10 am on September 30th at department headquarters. Present were commission members Mike Carder, Gary Stieg, John Davis III, and Philip Mette. Jimmy Nagel was absent due to a work conflict. We were visited by Department Commander Bob Henderson, Department SV Commander Mike Carder, and Department Adjutant Marty Conatser. Commander Henderson promoted his program of Boys State, and stressed the need for donations for the Gifts to the Yanks program. SV Commander Carder discussed membership and stressed signing Vietnam era veterans. Adjutant Conatser informed the commission of the Department's centennial coin.

The commission members discussed the high school oratorical scholarship program- a constitutional speech contest. The March 3, 2018 department contest is moving to the Crown Plaza in Springfield. This will result in a savings of \$2,000. Posts should have received a new brochure, which is also available on the website. The application deadline to the respective division chairmen is January 19, and the department's deadline is January 26th. Last year we had 33 registered contestants with 25 competing, and our goal for 2018 is to have 30 students compete. Commission members received a list of students who competed in the oration contest at Premier Boys State and Illini Girls State. The constitutional speech contest does require much time and effort, but many students are up to this challenge. Volunteers are needed for the department contest, and should kindly contact Joy Wilson, oratorical contest coordinator.

Mike Carder discussed two resolutions from the national convention. Resolution #10 would eliminate the four assigned topics. Our commission did not favor this as we felt it is watering down the program. Resolution #11 raised the national scholarship awards for first, second, and third places. Both resolutions were referred to the standing commission.

Chairman Mette attended the National Oratorical workshop September 23 & 24 in Indianapolis. National Commander Denise Rohan addressed the group. Ideas were shared from different departments to increase participation in the program. One idea was to include high school teachers and school board members as judges. The National finals will be held April 13-15 in Indianapolis.

Our American Legion family again sponsored the Americanism Essay contest for grades 7-12. The topic for 2018 is "What National Monument Means The Most To

Me?" The essays are due to the local posts, units, or squadrons by February 2, 2018. Americanism is one of the four pillars of the American legion. The essay brochure defines Americanism as an unflinching love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; individual allegiance of the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity.

The commission's meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am. The next meeting is set for March 2nd in Springfield.