

June 2019

Convention 2019 is a wrap and I find myself honored and humbled to have been elected by our membership to serve as your President for 2019-2020. For those of you who know me, you already understand that I take this honor very seriously and will work very hard to represent every single member in this State. If you do not know me yet, I look forward to meeting with you and the members at your Local Auxiliary so that you can come to your own conclusions. My theme for this year is Focus on the Future. The issues that will be presented in my newsletters and bulletins this year will focus on ways that we can get ready for whatever comes next.

At convention, concerns brought forth by your Auxiliary sisters are as pertinent to us in Department as they are to the Districts and Locals. For instance, some of those present during meetings spend more time talking to each other than listening to the views and opinions of those who have the floor. A couple of items from our Code of Ethics apply here:

- *To be courteous at all times; to be considerate of others.*
- *To respect my Officers, my fellow members and the opinions they may have.*

We have all, myself included, spoken to someone next to us while another person is speaking. In so doing, we are being discourteous to everyone present and dismissive of the opinions of our Auxiliary sisters. I am going to work more on this problem myself. I ask that each of you reflect on the last meeting that you attended. If you are guilty, try hard to break the habit. If you witness it happening by others, raise your hand and ask to speak on the issue. It is a difficult subject but, please, consider that someone else's opinion and comments are equally important as your own. I understand that there are instances where having that side conversation is important but more often than not, it can wait. Thank you to the person who brought this issue to my attention.

At the Department and District levels, we can do much more to help our organization grow and promote leadership within our Local Auxiliaries. In our Code of Ethics, we agree:

- *To assume leadership in right thinking and action.*

In our Aims and Purposes, we are reminded of our responsibility:

- *To inspire in our membership a sense of responsibility and to develop leadership for the preservation of our American democratic way of life.*

At Convention, a member shared with us that she really did not know about the qualifications to assume a leadership role at the Department level. When she was advised to check on-line for Officers Instructions to use a guide to evaluate her qualifications for a particular office, some critical information was missing because it is in our By-Laws. Then, when she thought about running for another office, she was discouraged after being told that she could not win. I met this woman at Convention and do not know anything about her. What I do know is that we are not doing enough to foster leadership.

Whether it is sharing the basic information about what is expected of an officer or encouraging women to run for office. Current officers at every level should be encouraging others to step forward to take on that mantle of responsibility. If you believe these women to be prepared for the role, become their mentor. Encourage them to run for office. If they are qualified and capable, encourage them to run again. If someone is not ready for that responsibility but is interested, help her to understand what areas she can improve upon to prepare for leadership.

Undoubtedly there are other women in our organization as qualified, if not more so, than am I for my current position. So how did I get here? I attended Fall Conferences and Conventions and served on committees. My name and face became familiar to our leadership. I had those mentors at the Local, District and Department levels who helped me prepare for this role. And for that I am very grateful.

We will be working on these very issues throughout the year. Get involved! Participate in meetings, trainings, and conventions. Our future depends on all of you. I welcome your comments and recommendations to help us move forward into the future.

Yours in service to Veterans and their Families.

Bert

I will be contacting all Local Auxiliary President's over the next few months to share information and answer questions. If you have a topic that you would like me to discuss, pass it along! I can be reached by email at lema81@wowway.com or by phone at 586.214.1019.