

DAR - THE SECOND CENTURY

(The Speaker should have a small packet of seeds as a prop.)

As we look back on the Centennial Year of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, it is important that we take the time, not just to pat ourselves on the back for all that we have accomplished, but to take a good look at what we might have done better - and what we can do to make sure our Second Century is even better than our first!

Has it ever occurred to you, how much of a difference DAR made - even in those very first years. For the first time in thirty years, American women, and hence, American families, could put behind them the heartbreak, the divisiveness, which came from the War Between the States.

Most of us often have the occasion to see nearby a huge bridge such as the one that spans the Mississippi River, opening easy commerce and communication between Illinois and Missouri or Iowa.

DAR was also a bridge. For the first time, the sister in Georgia and the sister in New York were able to find a bridge over those troubled waters which had separated them at the time of the Civil War. For the first time the sister in Mississippi and the sister in Pennsylvania could forget the horrendous, deadly battles which scarred their hills and valleys.

This bridge was DAR - an organization which strove to pay

homage to the men and women of a much earlier war - a war which took us from beneath the scepter of a tyrant, into a land of freedom.

Like all families, the American family found reasons to fuss; sadly, the disagreements between northern and southern families filled many cemeteries and broke many hearts.

With DAR, American women once more had a common goal - the growth of a nationwide organization dedicated to educating our children, preserving our past, and building for our future.

With DAR, countless wounds of the Civil War were bound up and all but forgotten in a new endeavor, a new challenge.

With DAR, American women moved firmly into the future, taking their entire households with them.

Today the challenge that faces us is whether the next century will see as many positive results from the work that we do.

Perhaps I should preface my next remarks by saying, "There's good news, and there's bad news."

First, the bad news: We must first look at our membership. Each year our chapters are faced with the loss of members through death and disability, and sadly, and perhaps worst of all, disinterest. Many things have added to this situation.

First, over the past fifty years the organization has borne the onus of media diatribes which usually bordered on something other than the absolute truth.

Secondly, today's young women are not the women of fifty years ago, who looked forward to getting out of the house for church on

Sunday, and afternoons at Sewing or Book Club - and DAR - once a month.

Today's young women are often engrossed in careers as well as families, and time is something very precious to them.

Today's young women are designing space suits instead of ball gowns; they are cooking up medical formulas to cure diseases instead of perfecting their grandmother's secret rum pie recipe. But even with microwave ovens and prepackaged foods, there are just not enough hours in the day.

And so, we must also ask ourselves, what can we offer a young mother with a job, small children, and little in any spare time?

What do we have for the young mother who remains at home to care for her children, who must depend on her husband's income alone, and thinks twice before hiring a sitter, let alone paying approximately \$50 to join DAR and a substantial amount from her family's budget for annual dues?

And what, other than a particular image of patriotism, does DAR have to offer an 18-year-old? Most of the time, not much.

That's the bad news; here's the good news. While there is obviously nothing we can do about the loss of our members to death and disability, we can overcome the negative image pressed upon us by the liberal media. But it will take action on our part.

If we are to grow instead of barely holding our own, we must do a few things to change the image which has been cast upon us by those who make their livings by disparaging morals, traditions and "good deeds".

And we must do a few things to change the less than always positive image we ourselves may have created for DAR.

In short, we must change, not the face, but the complexion, of DAR.

The D in DAR should no longer stand merely for Declining Daughters serving Dessert, but for Dedicated, Dynamic Daughters serving up Dividends! And we can't forget the Dream. D must always stand for "The Dream." The dream of every little girl to dare, to accomplish, to succeed.

The dream of every American which can't really be described, because for each of us it is a bit different. The dream. D stands for the Dream.

We can't let the A stand for Absentminded American women or Atrophied Ancestors, but for Active and Accountable Americans. A must always stand for Anticipation, for Answers, and for Applause for a job well done.

The R can no longer seem representative of Revolution and Recession, but of Regenerated Recyclers, recycling both ecological products and our membership papers, so that every eligible person in our families become a member of the organization we care for so much. R must stand for Rededication, for Representation, and for Reality, just enough to keep the Dream in perspective.

DAR, Daring, Anticipating, Ready-to-Go!

DAR, Definite, Assertive, Ready to Grow!

Ready to grow.

Did you ever consider that we might grow our own members?

Consider this. How many of us in the room right now would deny our children and grandchildren the privilege of growing up and living the principles taught by DAR?

I'm sure the answer is a great big zero.

And yet, how many of us in this room have blood relatives who are eligible for DAR membership but we have never even taken the time to ask them to join? Why? Why not?

And how many of us have children and grandchildren who could belong to C.A.R.?.

Most of us know that it's often very difficult to convince a dynamic young woman into becoming a DAR member, because she has little concept of what our wonderful organization is all about.

On the other hand, when we begin our children in C.A.R. we are creating the very thing every Daughter should pray for - young members to take up the banner in DAR and SAR, so that the things our forefathers fought and died for continue in full force and effect. Otherwise, what are we doing, except socializing?

A child brought up in C.A.R., who has worked with co-members to carry out a project or program, who has had the opportunity to meet other CAR members across the state, who has shared the fun of getting little or no sleep at State Conference, is a huge asset for your DAR Chapter.

That small CAR member grows up with a feeling of patriotism and service to others, and is ripe for the picking when it comes to DAR membership.

Let me tell you the story which was the original inspiration

for the founding of CAR:

Lieut.-Gen. Count Mathieu Dumas was an aide-de-campe to General Rochambeau, who accompanied General LaFayette to America to aid the cause of liberty. In his memoirs, Count Dumas tells of an event in the winter of 1780-81. The weather precluded major battles, so Washington used the time collecting information gathered from informants, hoping to profit by using that knowledge in battles during the coming spring which would turn the tide of the war.

Accompanied by the Marquis de la Fayette, General Washington went to French headquarters to receive additional information gleaned by the foreigners. Dumas was then given the task of accompanying Washington back to his headquarters near West Point.

As night fell, they approached Providence, and were amazed to see that the townspeople had come out to greet them, among them a large crowd of children carrying torches and calling out their support for the hero they called "father," General Washington.

The children swarmed around Washington and his troops so closely it was unable for them to march further, each child wanting to see the military leader chosen to lead the nation into a new freedom, again and again calling him 'Father Washington.'

Washington was greatly affected by their loving attention. Still astride his horse, he gestured kindly to the children and then reached out and placed his hand on Count Dumas's arm.

"We may be beaten by the English; it is the chance of war," he told Dumas, "but behold an army which they can never conquer."

That army, Daughters, is the Children of the American Revolution, and it is an army which is waiting for you to call to arms. You are the only ones who can find a C.A.R. home for the children in your families and community.

By organizing a C.A.R. Society, YOU CAN GROW YOUR OWN DAR MEMBERS!

First of all, it doesn't take a lot to organize and support a C.A.R. Society. Organization procedures are quite similar to those of DAR, but only six (6) new members are required. Only six! Their ages may range from Birth through the age of twenty-one.

It's important that children become involved in C.A.R. before they have become so busy with Scouts and school and other groups that they don't have time for C.A.R.

Are you thinking about meeting places and programs for the young people? Don't let it worry you. The C.A.R. society need not hold a meeting every month, but once you get the C.A.R. ball rolling, you will find the children will be greatly disappointed if you don't.

And now I can hear what you're thinking: These six kids are bright and beautiful, but how can you hold a meeting with only small children? That little boy over there isn't even old enough to read well yet! I'll tell you how:

Pick a date on the calendar, bake a few cookies, and invite the kids and their mothers to your house, or perhaps to the church basement or some handy location. Plan a simple agenda - nothing fancy. Start with the Pledge of Allegiance - most of the children

will already know all or part of that. Then the American's Creed, and the C.A.R. Creed which can be read - or read to them - until they learn it better. Copies are available from your State C.A.R. Chairman or the National Headquarters in Washington.

Perhaps there's a piano here, so one of your members can accompany the kids while they learn the words to the C.A.R. Song - which, for the record, was written by a C.A.R. member from Indiana, who grew up and became an Illinois DAR member. (Again, copies are available).

Now, let your mind see one of the youngest - perhaps your grandchild who is too young to read. Let that child hold a small American Flag during the Pledge. Perhaps you told the children a little about how to the proper way to salute the flag before the Pledge, and told them about proper respect - never letting it touch the floor, never holding anything else in your hands while reciting the Pledge, etc.

And now the most beautiful sight of all for your mind's eye to see: Watch that small youngster into whose hands you placed the American Flag as he heads out the door for home. Did you ever see so much pride in those small shoulders!

Let's say you choose Conservation for your first program. Conservation is a National Committee for C.A.R. and both the State DAR and State C.A.R. Conservation chairmen can provide you with material to begin this program. In Illinois, the Department of Conservation makes it easy for you to come up with an interesting program for the kids, as it has a great deal of material suitable

for programs which means one of your annual meetings is all taken care of, using their materials. Many of their colorful posters and coloring sheets or books are free. They also have a free program called KIDS FOR CONSERVATION for kids three through fourteen, which includes a colorful, informative, fun-to-read magazine several times a year. Check with your own State Department of Conservation or Natural Resources and see what they have to offer. You'll likely be amazed!

In March it's time for C.A.R. State Conference. Watch the kids pack their best Sunday school clothes to wear to the sessions, and perhaps the older girls will be packing their first long skirt. Of course, they aren't required to attend State or Regional meetings, but just this once, you're going to do your duty and let them go. Open your eyes now to the face that now, you have a tiger by the tail!

Once they meet all the other members, and get acquainted, you'll be making plans to join the fun, as a family, every March - and you'd be surprised at the wonderful friendships you'll make along the way.

Another thing to note is that working with C.A.R. is tax deductible, and includes the travel expenses of senior leaders and of parents or older family members who accompany their young children.

Most DAR members who've worked as C.A.R. Seniors firmly believe that C.A.R. is the insurance policy which assures that DAR never dies. And when you become involved, first thing you know

you'll feel young again.

So my first advice on how to increase DAR membership is to grow your own - by working with C.A.R.

Another way to find new interest and new members is through public relations - and not just an article in the weekly paper about where your next meeting will be.

How do you say thank you to your guest speakers for your meetings? It's not always easy to find someone who will take the time to come to your group and present a program. And most chapters just do not have the resources to pay their speakers.

But - NSDAR has a way you can say thank you to these speakers, and send them home with something they will want to show off.

This is the "Certificate of Award" which your Treasurer can order from National for the huge amount of ten cents each, and the certificate itself is lovely. For a little extra, you might choose to purchase an inexpensive frame for it, but it comes in its own neat envelope.

You might even make these awards retroactive. Look over last year's program book and find the names of your speakers. It's not too late to send, or deliver, this certificate to them, to show them how much you appreciate the time and effort they gave. When the attorney or educator or government official who spoke at your meeting hangs this certificate on his or her office wall, people are bound to notice.

Write up a press release for your local paper telling about the speaker, the speech, and the award.

Another way to change the sometimes jaded image of DAR is to toot your own horn and show the wealth DAR has to offer! This is not the wealth of finances, stocks or bonds, but something much more important - actual awards - medals your DAR Chapter can award to private citizens.

Make yourself familiar with the awards listed in the DAR Handbook. The page from our 1991 DAR calendar shows just how colorful you can make your star shine right in your home town. And - it's not going to cost your chapter an arm and a leg.

Each year we present DAR Good Citizen medals to graduating seniors, and History Medals for excellence in history, usually to eighth grade students. In some communities, the ROTC award is also part of a chapter's activities.

BUT - the recipients of these awards are all selected by persons other than DAR members or chapters. They are selected by fellow students, teachers and principals - **not by you**. All you do is present the medal at the appropriate time - with appropriate ceremony, because these are important parts of our DAR program.

Your Chapter can receive permission to present the Medal of Honor. It is awarded to an adult native-born everyday citizen - preferably not an elected official - who has exhibited leadership, service and patriotism and who contributed to the betterment of your community. If yours is like most chapters, you have many in your area who are worthy of this service award if you would just stop and think about it for a while.

Another award is the DAR Americanism award, which is intended

to honor naturalized citizens for outstanding contributions to their adopted country - America.

Another award is the Conservation Award; if you have a local citizen who has worked to conserve our precious soil, set up recycling centers, taught children how to make birdhouses for threatened species, etc., you may make application to give this award.

There is still another award we can use to honor young people in our community, and make the whole darned town take notice of DAR. This is the Good Citizenship Award. (Note - DAR Good Citizen for high school Seniors, and Good CitizenSHIP for other young people.)

When your DAR chapter takes the time to submit his or her name, and then goes on to award the medal - at a public meeting, with follow-up publicity - your community will definitely stand up and take notice.

They will take notice that DAR members are not just wading around in the weeds of old cemeteries or the catacombs of old county buildings. That DAR members are proud enough of an everyday citizen who went the extra mile for the community, to express a very special thank you. Each of these awards makes a positive statement about DAR and it also says something about your chapter and you as a member.

Information concerning individual prices and how to apply for these awards can be found in your Handbook. You must FIRST contact National for the appropriate application forms, which must then be

filled out and submitted for approval.

For this reason, you should NOT - never never - tell anyone they will be the recipient of such an award, or mention it outside of chapter, unless and until you have received approval from National.

These awards are not for someone who spoke at your meeting - unless that someone also qualifies in other ways. These are special awards for special people.

Think about your neighbors, and acquaintances, and the extra-special things they do for those in need, and for the community as a whole.

Then - discuss it at your chapter meeting, send off for the application forms, and get ready to give the image of DAR a real shot in the arm!

The folks who live next door to you may already know you belong to some sort of silly club that lets its members wear long ribbons and medals on their chests, but they may not realize that DAR is more than its insignia, more than its books of genealogy in the National Library, more than white gloves and corsages.

When you begin to put your DAR chapter into the local news - not by telling about your seventy-two ancestors who fought in the American Revolution - but by giving credit to your very own present day neighbors, people will notice. And they will be intrigued - and first thing you know, you'll be getting a phone call from someone you've known for years who suddenly says, "You know, I was reading our old family Bible, and I found where my

great-grandmother had written down all about her grandfather and how he served in the Virginia Militia in 1777. Do you suppose I'd be eligible to join DAR? I think I'd like to know more about your organization."

When you pay attention to those kids down the block who drive by your house with their radios blasting your eardrums off - by seeing they receive commendations - perhaps for the playground they built for the local handicapped children or acts such as this - you will reap the benefits of young people who respect the laws - and the flag of this country.

If your chapter is to be a viable chapter throughout this second century, we all have to do our share.

Nothing can be accomplished by sitting on our behinds, filling out yearly reports and preparing an annual Yearbook. Only by each of us becoming involved in sharing the message of DAR can we accomplish anything.

If all we care about is the dessert we're serving, or how much the bus to Washington costs, or how many ancestor bars we can wear on our ribbons, new members are not going to happen.

What will happen is the loss of still more members, and the stagnation of our chapters.

What will happen is children growing up without an inkling of the importance of 1776. Today's history books put less and less emphasis on what happened back then and these children will be young people with no roots, simply because we failed to take the time to till the soil so that those roots could grow deep and

strong.

What will happen is young people who respect neither their flag, their fellowman, the law, nor anything else. Young people who take things for granted, instead of giving of their best.

What will happen is young adults going to the polls - or worse, staying home on election day - with no idea of what their vote or non-vote represents.

These bad things will happen unless DAR members take the time to change things, because no one else is going to do it. Our churches have important agenda of their own, the doors of our school buildings are open fewer and fewer hours each year, and saddest of all, too few homes offer what is needed to restore national and personal pride - or that sadly abused recent term "family values" - in the hearts of today's children.

We can make the effort to change the course of future history - by making our DAR a visible, viable part of each community, and by assuring that every child in every DAR family has the opportunity to become a part of that historic army which Washington spoke of - an army which can never be conquered - C.A.R. An army of Americans, arm in arm, hand in hand, building on the foundations set into the soil of America generations ago.

It was written in a special book long ago - "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Let us sow pride in America in our young people before they lose the capacity for such pride.

Let us sow pride in America in those who have only recently

come to our shores, so that they see their new home not as just a land of freedom, but one where their fellow citizens extend the handclasp of welcome and friendship.

And let us sow our pride in America in those we all too often take for granted - the ordinary man and woman who do quite unordinary things for friends or strangers alike.

Let us sow the seed of beauty as we pass through this life, so that when the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution celebrates its Bicentennial one hundred years from now, the sacrifices of our forefathers will still be celebrated in the patriotism of our own descendants.

This tiny seed in my hand is like DAR and like C.A.R. - such an insignificant little thing - but it is capable of wondrous, great things. Of creating beauty from common soil.

However, if it remains here, safe and dry, it will never have the opportunity of reaching the potential with which God endowed it.

It must know the darkness of the earth, the chill dampness of the rain, before it can reach up to the warming sun. It cannot succeed alone.

But, if it is planted in warm soil and blessed by the falling rain, each tiny seed will take root and grow. Soon buds will appear and burst into bloom like a glorious rocket on the Fourth of July.

It will remind us that those brave men and women of 1776 placed a special responsibility in our hands, and that it is up to

each of us to assure that the seed of liberty - and of patriotism and pride - bursts into bloom in the hearts of Americans each day throughout the next century - and beyond.

Thank you.

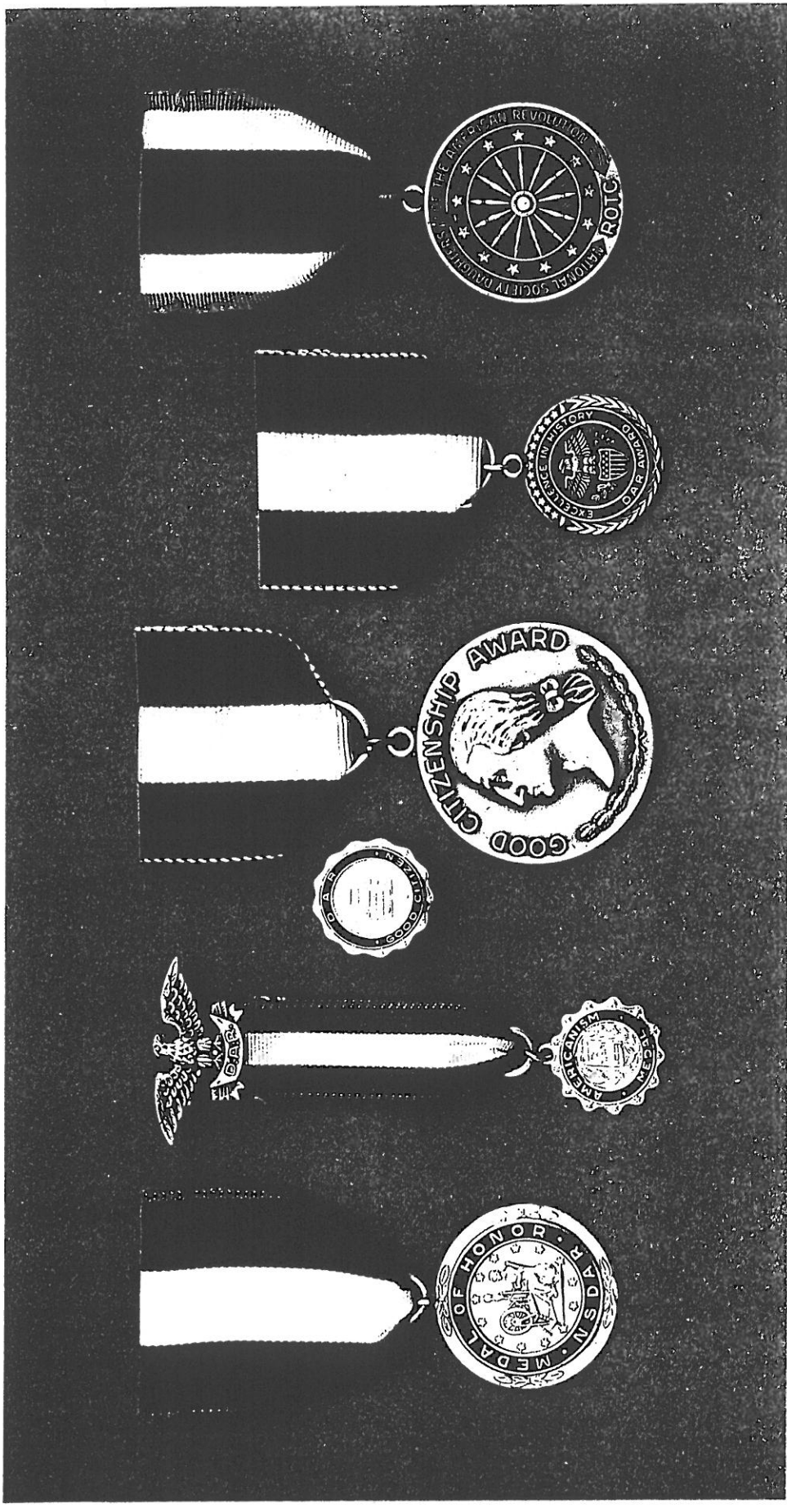
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- 1) *Medal of Honor* is awarded to an adult native-born citizen who has exhibited leadership, service and patriotism and who contributed to the betterment of the community.
- 2) *Americanism Award* is presented to adult naturalized citizens who have demonstrated leadership and patriotism and have actively assisted other aliens to become American citizens.
- 3) *DAR Good Citizen Award* is given to high school seniors. Candidates are chosen by the school faculty on a merit basis and must possess the qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism.
- 4) *Good Citizenship Medal* awarded by the National Defense Committee to

- boys and girls in elementary, junior and senior high schools who fulfill the qualities of honor, service, courage, leadership and patriotism.
- 5) *American History Month Award*. American History Month is sponsored every February by the NSDAR. It encourages the study of American history in all grades of school and conducts an American History Essay Contest for the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades.
- 6) *ROTTC Medal* presented by the National Defense Committee to graduating students who have demonstrated qualities of dependability and good character, adherence to military discipline, leadership ability and fundamental and patriotic understanding of the importance of ROTTC training.