

Compatriots and guests,

I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me by electing me President of the South Carolina Society. I do not take this confidence or this assignment lightly. I will do my best to honor that confidence.

This year we have the honor and privilege of hosting the National Congress; an event that has never occurred in the history of the South Carolina society. We need to support this event or forever be embarrassed. I ask for your help.

As many of you know the South Carolina Society Sons of the American Revolution has grown by about fourteen percent over the past five years and is still growing. But large numbers in membership is not the ultimate goal. We must be dedicated to purpose. Members of our society must be known by their deeds, not rhetoric. We must measure up in terms of the key purposes called for in the objectives in our SAR Constitution. We are a patriotic, historical and educational society. As members and chapters of the SAR, we are called on to fulfill the following objectives.

We are to perpetuate the memory of those who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the independence of the American people and to unite and promote fellowship among their descendants. Some of our chapters are excellent at fellowship with compatriots and many of us could do a much better job at that. This is an important part of what we do in the SAR.

We are to inspire our compatriots and the community at large with a more profound reverence for the principles of the government founded by our forefathers. Notice that it says, "...and the community at large". This means that in addition to what we do amongst ourselves, we are to reach outside of our chapters; outside of our membership, to the community and inspire them with a more profound reverence of these principles. . . It tells us that while having meetings and socializing within the society is important, it is not enough. We need to use our National and State SAR projects (we have many) to reach students in our schools. We also need to reach non-members and help them with their lineages so they can join.

We are tasked to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to carry out the purposes expressed in the preamble to the Constitution of our country and the injunctions of Washington in his farewell address to the American people. These tasks are at the heart of patriotism and pride in our nation. Teaching these purposes to our youth is imperative to the longevity of our American society and the integrity it still holds. We overlook these at our peril.

As members of the SAR we are to acquire and preserve the records of the individual services of the patriots of the Revolutionary War, as well as documents, relics, and landmarks. As members and chapters we preserve these documents each time we submit a new member application as well as any supplemental applications we are fortunate enough to be able to complete. Not all of us are fortunate enough to have

relics from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century so we should look to legitimate local museums and libraries and offer help where we can to preserve relics from the Revolutionary War.

We are asked to mark the scenes of the American Revolution by appropriate memorials. We accomplish this by placing roadside historical markers and marking Patriot graves. Distinctively in South Carolina, we have over 450 revolutionary war sites and over 1400 known Patriot Graves. Our chapters can easily do at least two wreath layings and two or more grave markings each and every year for many years to come without duplicating a single one. A few chapters are already doing this but I challenge each chapter in the South Carolina Society to review our Patriot Grave database, select at least two graves and mark them this year.

Another purpose of the SAR is to celebrate the anniversaries of the prominent events of the war and of the Revolutionary period. This is one of the SAR's most visible and important purposes of our society. Several of our chapters are doing this while many struggle with it. We have state leadership ready, willing and able to help get this done in each and every chapter. If you aren't sure how to do it, or have questions about protocol, please ask. Our state leaders will help you.

Especially with the condition of our public schools we must encourage historical teaching and research in relation to the American Revolution. We accomplish this in the schools with our youth programs. We have the poster and brochure contests at the elementary and middle school levels; there is the "Knight Essay" contest, Eagle Scout program, the ROTC medals and enhanced ROTC award. We have the Rumbaugh oration contest at the high school level and we even have our own South Carolina Society SAR Scholarship that is given each year. National has available to any member who asks for them, the "America's Heritage" and "Keyhole to History" CD's that can be given at all school levels.

Lastly, through all of the purposes I mentioned we fulfill the most important; we foster true patriotism in those around us, members and non-members alike.

It is our duty as leaders of the South Carolina Society SAR to instill certain practices in the chapters. WE; here today, need to hold ourselves responsible for ensuring that the chapters are active in the communities. WE need to promote the education of our youth. WE must teach the history of the founding of our nation.

In short; WE must be about the business of the SAR.

Thank you.  
Dan Woodruff  
President, SC Society SAR