

## **Department Secretary Treasurer Kim Sloan**

Well we've had quite the year haven't we? Full of stress, anxiety and uncertainty for the last few months but also filled with love, hope and compassion. I believe that we've been moving forward toward using more technology for a few years. Unfortunately, this became a reality more quickly than we would have liked but we also embraced it. I am so proud of the Arizona Department and District leadership and the Auxiliaries for being open to change. This has made us all aware of the possibilities for expanding our membership and to be more inclusive with our members. The "Stay Home" rule was difficult for some, not so much for others but it taught us all to be better Americans and better Auxiliary members. Watch out for neighbors, friends and family while appreciating those on the front line. When the call for masks went out – you got out your sewing machines; when the call went out to help with food shortages – you collected and helped distribute food; when "Stay Home" went into effect – you sacrificed seeing family and friends, missed special events, homeschooled kids and just made it work. I could not be more proud of our Arizona members!

To recap the year – we had fun at the 2019 Department convention and then hit the road to build on the Auxiliary foundation. Officers and members got to hear firsthand the duties and responsibilities of the different officers through the "Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation" events held throughout the state. Department Officers and Program Chairmen used allotted time at District Schools of Instruction to promote our programs.

I got to spend an incredible week with grandkids in Maine before getting back to work at the National convention in Orlando, FL. That time is so rewarding – reconnecting with old friends and creating bonds that last a lifetime.

Fall Conference was a fun event for the Program Chairmen and they did a great job interacting with their VFW counterparts.

Western Conference in Anchorage, AK was a good time to share ideas with the other states in our conference.

At Winter Conference, we continued the practice of taking Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen District Winners to the Arizona Capital and held a training that focused on Membership for both the VFW and Auxiliary. I think the Family Feud game was a big hit and I think the VFW has a better understanding of how to recruit Auxiliary members.

Department Sr. Vice President Melody Judd and I attended the Sr. Vice Conference in Kansas City and can't wait to share new program and ideas for 2020-2021!

What can I say about being able to spend a few days in Hawaii for the Mid-Year Conference and the Celebrating America's Freedom Event at the Punchbowl cemetery. Again, time well spent with members from all over the country and time for peaceful reflection and relaxation.

Sadly that's when COVID-19 reared it's head and we all had to start sacrificing for the good of our communities.

The Department Financial Report as of April 30 will be posted to the website as will the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2020 Audit Report which will be considered at the Council Meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Going forward – Be Strong, Be Kind, Be Considerate, Be Understanding! No one know what the future holds but how we react will be the key to peace.