

Legion Family,

We held our annual Department Oratorical Contest this past Saturday March 11, 2017. Ryan Klimek, a Senior Home-Schooler sponsored by Post 209 won for the second year in a row. David Densmore, a Freshman sponsored by Post 23 won second place in a very competitive contest. Congratulations to all the 16 candidates who competed. They were all winners even if only one can advance. The final four candidates were presented with Scholarship money, which will come in very handy for the two Seniors in the final four. I fully expect (and hope) to see our Freshman and Sophomore finalists back next year.

If you attended the contest, like me you witnessed first hand a VERY well organized and professional event. We had more volunteers than we had work needing to be done. I love seeing our Legion family work together and this was the consummate example of what can be accomplished by working as a family. We had a great cross-section of Legionnaires, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders working side-by-side to ensure the competition went off without a hitch. I congratulate all for the hard work on making the contest a success.

At the risk of forgetting some folks, I want to call out a few for the exceptional effort on this year's contest.

My heartfelt appreciation to: Roger Masse; Oratorical Chairman

- **Janelle Rodriguez; the Master Organizer and "go to" person that ensured total success**
- **Nick Arceo; our Chaplain and right-arm to the Chairman and Janelle**
- **Ralph Bozella; Judge Overseer who ensured all our Judges knew and understood the "law"**
- **Gary Force; Tabulator Overseer who ensured all the Judges numbers added up correctly**
- **Moderators; Tom (a.k.a. Sundance) Florez, Terri Shelefontiuk, Scott Garrett, and Mike Romero.**
- **Ann Ritacco; Volunteer Check-in Coordinator, then helped Gary with Tabulation and seemed to be everywhere help was needed. These folks did a professional job running the 1st round of contests**

There were several others who assisted as Ushers, Escorts, Timers, and Room Monitors; all from the total Legion family. I walked around all morning in a state of awe at the professionalism and tireless energy from everyone working the contest.

I cannot say thank you enough for all who worked to make this a very successful event. You all demonstrated you strive to **Be Part Of The Solution!**

If you missed it this year, I strongly urge you to make a point to attend next year. You'll see what I did and it will make you proud of our organization, our family, and the amazing youths competing to be The American Legion, Department of Colorado Oratorical Contest Champion!

Jay Bowen
Department Commander
B.P.O.T.S.