



Commander, District and Post Commanders, Voice of Democracy (VOD), Patriot Pen (PP), Teacher Award's (TA) Chairman and Comrades,

Good Information:

Kris Harmer has retired. The new points of contact for the Voice and Democracy and Patriot's Pen have been given to Quentin Carroll. His email address is qcarroll@vfw.org and his telephone number is (816) 968-1155. Tammy Beauchamp will have Teacher's Award. Her email address is tbeauchamp@vfw.org and her phone number is (816) 968-1155.

Below is a reminder of the procedure to follow when forwarding your Department Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen winner packets to VFW National Headquarters, by January 15, 2018.

NOTE: The deadline for your completed Department report & summary forms (for Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen) to be sent to VFW Programs at National HQs is not until January 31, 2018. Please let us know if you need blank Department report forms e-mailed (in PDF or Word format) by contacting Quentin Carroll at qcarroll@vfw.org or calling 816- 968-1155. The District Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen report forms are now located online on www.vfw.org under the VFW member log-in. You would click on MY VFW, then VFW Training and Support, then "Citizenship Education, Youth Scholarships and Activities." Quentin can also e-mail you the district report forms if needed. The official Department report forms do need to be obtained by contacting Quentin in VFW Programs. A deadline date listing is attached.

Your first place Department Voice of Democracy winner packet should include:

1) Official student entry form Quentin at National will NOT contact your winner about the DC trip until after the Department has officially notified the student that he/she is the first place Department winner. Because extensive preparations are needed for the March 3-7, 2018 Voice of Democracy Washington, DC finals trip, your notification date should be January 31st or sooner. Please verify the date that your first place Department Voice of Democracy winner will be notified that they are the first place Department winner by e-mailing this exact date to qcarroll@vfw.org. Additionally, please include this date on the Department chairman section of the entry form. We will send a letter to the Voice of Democracy winner about their DC trip after this date, and we will also purchase the winner's round trip air transportation to Washington, DC.)

2) Typed essay.

3) Audio recording of essay (either an audio CD or USB flash drive...or "stick" is acceptable. Please review for sound quality and for length of 3-5 minutes, and ensure the student does not identify themselves – either by their name, city, state, school, national origin, race, etc. when reciting their essay verbally.)

4) Photograph (should be a good quality, head and shoulders photo – this photo can be e-mailed to qcarroll@vfw.org in jpeg form - at least 300 dpi is preferred - or mailed as a hard copy photograph in the packet.)

The first place Department Patriot's Pen winner packet should include:

1) Official student entry form.

2) Typed essay (please count number of words - should be 300 to 400, and ensure the student does not identify themselves – either by their name, city, state, school, national origin, race, etc. within the text of the essay.)

3) Photograph (should be a good quality, head and shoulders photo – this photo can be e-mailed to qcarroll@vfw.org in jpeg form - at least 300 dpi is best - or mailed as a hard copy photo in the packet.)

When your Department judging's are completed and the winners are selected, please mail these winners' packets to VFW National Headquarters (see below address). The deadline for National to receive the winner packets is January 15, 2018 (even if they have not been notified they are the winner, either personally or at your Department Mid-Winter awards ceremony.) Please do not delay mailing because they have not been notified, the packet must still be received by Jan 15. We will not contact the Voice of Democracy or Patriot's Pen student until after the date you give us on the reverse side of their entry form.

Both winner packets need to be received in the VFW Programs office at National HQs on or before January 15. This does not mean postmarked by January 15, they need to be in our hands on or before January 15. If you are missing any required item in any of these winner packets, or if you have an unavoidable delay that might keep the packets from arriving on or before the deadline, please call our office at 816-968-1155 to let us know the situation, and we will be glad to work with you. Please remember that you have until two weeks later (January 31) to get your Department Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Department reports mailed in.

Please ensure that the Voice of Democracy winner keeps a copy of his or her audio CD (or USB flash drive) and either an electronic version or a hard copy of their photograph, in the event the originals get lost in the mail. If possible, keep copies for yourself as well. Please try to avoid using first class mail; instead use FedEx, UPS or Priority/Express mail (because you can receive a tracking number.) This January 15 deadline must be met in order to protect your winner(s) from the potential of being disqualified from the national judging(s).

Voice of Democracy trip for first place state winner

The March 3-7, 2018 Washington, DC finals is a very special trip that the winner has earned on his or her own. In recent years, we have found an increasing number of winners' families desiring to come to the Voice of Democracy finals with their student. Family members or friends are welcome to attend only one event, the Monday night March 5th "Parade of Winners" ceremony that will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City. This is a totally open ceremony (there is no cost and no tickets are needed.)

Due to the size of our group (53 students total) and other liability issues, we are not able to accommodate any additional family or friends on our tour bus, on our rental vans, or at any other scheduled event during the four-day trip. If family members or friends do choose to attend the "Parade of Winners," they must pay for and arrange their own transportation and lodging. Only the student winner will be picked up at the airport on March 3rd by VFW staff and, with the exception of during the post Parade of Winners photo session, the winner cannot visit with any family or friends until we release them on Wednesday, March 7th.

NOTE: Only the first place national Patriot's Pen winner (which is announced in mid-February 2018) is invited to attend the VFW Legislative Conference (Parade of Winners) in Washington DC, with one parent (all-expenses paid for both).

Just another quick reminder (for your advance planning) - please note the dates of upcoming Washington, DC Voice of Democracy student finals trips:

2018: March 3 – 7, 2018
2019: March 2 – 6, 2019

Please note that the Washington, DC Legislative Conference dates are slightly different than the students' trip:

2018: March 4 – 8, 2018
2019: March 3 – 7, 2019

If you have any questions, please let us know.

"Leading, Mentoring, and Caring"

Yours in comradeship and service,
Ronald Monninger
Voice of Democracy / Patriot's Pen / Teacher's Award Chairman
Department of Pacific Areas
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