As your new Genealogist General, I first would like to thank you for your support and assure you that I will be doing my best to serve the National Society SAR in the responsibilities of this position.

Genealogy and membership decisions at the Houston Congress. There were decisions regarding genealogy and membership made at Congress as follows:

1. Bylaw 1 Sec. 1 regarding membership removed the inclusion of "residence" in the required fields on our application forms. This now matches actual practice since our forms don't currently have a field for residence. This is only a correction to the Bylaws so they match the existing format of our forms. It does not change requirements that evidence of residency must be provided in support of an application to show that the claimed patriot was in fact the person who provided the service stated.
2. Bylaw 1, Sec. 6 (to be reworded) removed the special onetime payment of an additional fee in addition to the normal processing fee for Memorial Memberships. The fee shall be the same as provided elsewhere in the Bylaws for Regular Members.
3. Bylaw 22, Fees and Dues added a new paragraph regarding Junior Memberships for new Junior Member applications registered on or after September 1st and in which the Jr. Member will attain the age of 18 before the following December 31st. The Jr. Member dues to be included with the application will be the same as those for a Regular Member since the dues will be for the following year in which the member will have become a Regular Member.

Issues with Pended Applications. As GG, I receive copies of emails that are sent to State Points of Contacts regarding pended applications. This is done to allow me to see the types of issues that are causing applications to be pended so hopefully, we can improve the number of applications that get pended by pointing out common errors. In my first month as GG, I received copies of 86 such notices sent back to Points of Contacts, as well as the statistics for the number of applications approved and pended. It appears that nearly 11% of the applications reviewed were pended on first review and required additional information, some of which was found and the issue resolved. Some of these where in response to supplemental information received so not all 86 represented a month of new pending actions. Several have subsequently been resolved. Here is a breakdown of the most common causes:

*   Use of unacceptable sources (undocumented family histories, old or flagged DAR RCs, DAR Lineage Books or the DAR Patriot Index, LDS user submitted information, Ancestry family trees, user submitted narratives on FindaGrave, etc.).
*   Missing proof of the bloodline spouse's maiden name (a census record showing the married name of the spouse and the will of a claimed parent that only lists the daughter by her maiden name does not prove that the spouse is the same person as the daughter listed in the will).
*   Missing documentation for one or more parent/child links.
*   Unreadable documents submitted as proof.
*   Documentation was referenced but not included with the application package.
*   Unresolved conflicts in names shown on supporting documentation (for example, the name on a census record showing the ancestor as a child using one name or just an initial, and another census record showing that person as the parent for the next generation using a different name, possibly a middle name, without proof that both names are for the same person).
*   Missing evidence for questionable situations such as the claim that a 56-year old woman is the mother of the child in the next generation.
*   Proof of service questions such as age at the time of service (for example, military service claimed for a 65-year old man when another man with the same name and only aged 21 is

living in the same town at the time of service), or there are multiple persons of a reasonable age with same name in the same locality.

Many of these issues are ones that should be caught by the Chapter or the State Registrar before they are forwarded for review by the National Staff. Please remember that is it a disservice to a prospective member to forward his application with the required application fees (only part of which are refundable if the issues can't be resolved) when an obvious problem is apparent. Pending an application also requires additional staff time in their review process impacting the overall turnaround time for processing applications. Based on the current statistics, the time from an application entering the queue until it is reviewed by the Genealogy staff is about 6 weeks for new applications and 12 ½ weeks for supplemental applications.

Staff Issues – the Genealogy Staff has also commented on applications regarding some of the problems they are seeing:

- Applications using the online system have unnecessary blank lines in the references field. This is a known problem with the online system which will eventually be addressed when a new vendor is hired to work on our website and the modules in it. In the meantime, it can easily be avoided by not using the return key to separate the references, and by not use the return key at the end of the reference block. It is the return key that is creating the blank lines. Instead, separate references with a semicolon or comma and continue using a single wrap-around entry for the reference block. Since Chapter and State Registrars have online access to make corrections on applications using the online system, it is easy to see and correct this problem before a final application is printed.
- Partial pages are submitted for some references such as census records or parts of a page from a published book. See Policy 3.9002 regarding submission of entire pages.
- References submitted for published sources may be missing the title page of that source. See Policy 5.400.
- Information, either bracketed or corrected on DAR or SAR applications that are used to support a new application should either be left off if bracketed (unless additional supporting documentation is included with the submission) or entered exactly as corrected by the DAR or SAR reviewing staff.

Familysearch.org – in talking with several members, I have discovered that many members are unaware of some of the ways to access digitized records of primary source documents using the free site, familysearch.org. Many digitized records are now available online for the public using their home computers. A free account is easy to setup. Some of those I've talked with regarding using the site limit their search using the "Search/Records" pull down function and either entering a name of interest or using the "Research by Location" option to select a state of interest and then limit the search by name or see what is available by looking at the resources listed as available, either indexed or image only (not indexed).

What is also available, and much more useful for locating digitized records at the county level is the "Search/Catalog" option when using the website. Enter the name of the county of interest. A list of places that have that name will be provided. Select the one that matches the county and state of interest and then click the "Search" button. You will be given a list of record types, 'vital records', 'court records', 'land and property', etc. By click on any one of those record categories, you will get a list of what is available in the Family History Library for that category of records. Most of those that have an author other than the county clerk or court are published records and usually only available at the main library in Salt Lake City. However, many of those that are official records are now digitized. By clicking on the entry, you can see if digitized records are available online. Sometimes a red entry will come up showing that the records are available online and by clicking where is says "click here" you can see the records. Sometimes clicking on a record will give a listed of the filmed entries that comprise the set and there are different icons associated with each film. If the icon is a camera, that means it has been digitized and is usually available online for the

public by just clicking on the camera icon. If the icon is a camera with a key above it, that icon means that it is digitized but can't be accessed by a home computer but can be accessed on a computer in one of their local branch libraries. If the icon is a reel of film, that means that it hasn't yet been digitized. The Family History Library no longer supports interlibrary loans to their branch libraries so, until the film is digitized under their current program to digitize all of their films, it can only be seen at the main library in Salt Lake City.

I encourage all of our members, and especially Registrars helping prospective members locate the needed proofs for their application, to take advantage of the resources available at familysearch.org

Genealogy Policy Manual & Application Preparation Manual.
Updated versions of both of these documents are now available on the SAR website. The major changes to the Policy Manual reflect actions taken at the 2018 Fall Leadership Meeting and include:

- Policy 3.5003 - Removal of acceptance of Chapter DAR RCs as supporting evidence. Only official copies of DAR RCs are acceptable in compliance with DAR policies regarding the use of their proprietary records.
- Policy 6.1001, footnote 1 - Applications must be typed or computer-printed with black print." includes an understanding that the application shall be neat and not smudged but may contain very minor corrections in ink. *Applications that are messy, blurred, or which have several inked-in corrections should be reprinted before submission or they may be returned to the State Society for reprinting.*
- Policy 6.1002a – The provision that the Genealogist General has the authority to permit an adult other than an applicant, parent, or guardian to sign on behalf of an applicant has been removed.

Note also that only the current versions of the four application forms containing the revised certification, the deletion of applicant's children, and the Genealogist General's signature block are now acceptable. The NSSAR website provides links to all four application types.

Access to Genealogical Records
There is a national initiative being proposed by an organization of State vital records Registrars with the aim of lengthening the time frames for public access to vital records. The National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems is seeking a consensus by the States on this issue and is recommending records be closed for 125 years for birth records, 75 years for death records, and 100 years for marriage and divorce records to protect the identity of individuals. Some jurisdictions are considering closing these records to anyone other than direct descents closer than great-grandchildren. Should these recommendations become reality, that could have a significant impact on the ability to obtain needed documents for membership proofs. This would be a good time to consider obtaining those official family vital records that might be needed for future application support not only for you but also for your children and grandchildren.

Membership & Application Status
Currently, the que for processing new applications is 7 ½ weeks and the que for supplemental applications is 10 weeks. As of this date, there are over 37,250 active members in the National Society. The number of applications approved since I was elected Genealogist General last July is 1,771 (1,237 new, 528 supplemental, and 6 memorial applications). There have also been 188 applications that have been pended (some of these have been subsequently resolved and approved). These figures indicate that around 10% of submitted applications are being pended, many for reasons that should have been caught before submission to National. Thus staff is using their valuable

time to make a brief attempt to resolve issues and/or preparing pended notices back to State Points of Contact.

One of the problems resulting in the pending of an application is claiming a patriot with the proper name found living in a vicinity without verifying that there are no other persons in that vicinity with the same name, and thus not providing sufficient evidence to show that the ancestor named was actually the patriot and not one of the other persons with that name. Working on a recent appeal involving this issue, I discovered 5 men of the same name, whose ages were all of the proper age to have served, living in the same town where the claimed patriot resided. It turned out that actually 2 of these men provided military service but the source for one of them only indicated the county but not the town of residency. It took over 20 hours of work to determine which of these 5 men were the two patriots and which was the ancestor listed in the application. This is not the type of work that staff does. If they determine that there is more than one possibility, they will appropriately pend the application. It is the applicant's or their sponsor's/Registrar's responsibility to check for these situations before merely deciding that there is a record that shows a patriot with the correct name and claiming that person is the same person as the proven ancestor without considering the other possibilities.

Print fonts on applications
The Genealogy Staff is receiving some applications that are printed using very small fonts that are difficult to read. For use of the PDF, MS Word, and SARApAid versions, the font size should be set at a minimum of 10 pt . 12 pt is preferred. For the on-line SAR Application, set the scale on the print setup in the range of 90 to 110. A scale smaller than 90 will increase the margins and shrink the font size on the printout making it very difficult to read. For the on-line system, trying different scale sizes between 90 and 110 can fix the page break between page 1 and page 2 of the application so the break falls properly between generations.