

National History Day and Memorial Day

First a wonderful story of a friend of mine who coaches students grades 5-8 in the Minnesota National History Day contest. This year, about 27,000 students competed in the Minnesota History Day experience. Two were selected to compete at the National History Day in College Park, MD just outside of Washington D.C. Anna, a seventh grade student from Hawley is one of the two representing Minnesota at the National completion. Anna's project was to research and develop a webpage on the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II. Good luck, Anna.

As we approach Memorial Day, I remembered a day about 10 years ago when I received a call from Naomi who wanted to talk to me about hosting a Veterans Day event at Bonanzaville. We scheduled a time to meet and when our conversation was done, I'd agreed to donate money, to help at the event and to find two golf carts so we could transport people from the parking lot to the celebration. Did I say, Naomi was a persuasive person? I remember driving one of the golf carts. It was a cold November day with a strong north wind blowing. I remember, in particular one WWII Veteran. As I stopped at the front door, I asked if he needed any assistance getting out of the cart. This 92 year old Veteran replied "I can get out of this cart by myself, thank you!" and he did. This was the beginning of the annual Veterans Picnic. We held the event for a second year in November at Bonanzaville then moved to the Fargo Air Museum and to May close to Memorial Day. After two years at the Museum, we ran out of room and moved back to Bonanzaville where it has become an annual May event. The first year, we had a couple of politicians as speakers but the planning committee decided to have Veterans speak at future celebrations. We've had WWII, Korean and Viet Nam Veterans speak. We have the Red River Valley Veterans Concert Band perform with colors presented by a local Junior ROTC. This year's event will be held on 26 May with a free picnic starting at 5:30 pm. Eric Marts, Iraq War Veteran and host of WDAY's radio program "Heroes of the Heartland" will be our guest speaker. The Red River Valley Veterans Concert Band will again perform. One of the special parts of the Band's performance is when Veterans from each branch of the service are recognized while my friend Dale signs that branch's service song. Everyone is welcome to help us share this Memorial Day event.

Next week's column will have more Memorial Day information and a schedule of events.

Our Viet Nam Veterans of America local chapter 941 will hold its first Classic Car and Bike Show on Thursday 12 May at the Dilworth VFW starting at 5:00 pm. All are welcome.