



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



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Compatriots, I hope that all of you had a wonderful Holiday Season and are tolerating what has proven to be an “old fashioned winter” well. Hopefully spring is around the corner and this winter weather will soon be a thing of the past. But most of us can remember the mid-March snows of about 20 years ago. Our Chapter has not been in hibernation during these cold spells. At our January meeting, then VASSAR President Kent Webber was our speaker. He made it from northern Virginia through wintery conditions there and also managed to make it up a somewhat slick road to our meeting place. He spoke on the history of a tract of land on the Potomac that had been George Washington’s along the Potomac and later became, and is now, a facility, formally known as Collingwood, belonging to the National Society of Sojourners and future plans for this tract. If you are not familiar with the Sojourners, they are Masons who also are military veterans (officers and noncommissioned officers with a rank of E-7 and above). Among the organizations to which I belong, is the James Monroe Chapter in Charlottesville and so I am very familiar with this fraternity. Kent also installed our Chapter Officers for the year of 2014. These are Compatriots LTC Lamar Sale III as President; Tom Pettit as President-elect; Tim Knight as 2nd Vice President, Randy Heneberger as Recording Secretary; Jim Nelson as Treasurer; David Dean, Jr. as Corresponding Secretary; David Hatmaker as Registrar and myself as Chaplain. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, all of us owe a tremendous thanks to Compatriot Barkley Rosser for this list of Chapter Officers. The task of putting together a list of Officers for the following year is not an easy one and that now falls upon the shoulder of our Past Chapter President, Hank Almond, for 2015 and I know that he will do a superb job. In February, the Vice-Mayor of Harrisonburg, Charles Chenault, gave a superb presentation on the history of our city, especially on why Cantrell Avenue received its name. We hope to have him back to talk about the history of Woodbine Cemetery in Harrisonburg which is something very special to him and which has a tremendous amount of history associated with our community. At this meeting, our Chapter awarded its Fire Safety and Service Award to Battalion Chief Larry Werner of the Harrisonburg Fire Department. Many thanks to Compatriot Jim Nelson for his efforts on behalf of this award. Also in January, our Chapter presented two Flag Certificates in recognition of the proper display of the American Flag. Both Blue Ridge Power Sports in Harrisonburg and the Bridgewater Volunteer Rescue Squad were recognized. If you know of some individual, business or civic or governmental organization that you think should be recognized, just let me, as Chapter Flag Chairman, know.

In February, the annual meeting of VASSAR was held in Richmond (Valentine’s Day weekend) and those attending were Compatriot Rev. Roy Martin, myself and my wife, Norma. At this meeting our Chapter was awarded four streamers for our Chapter Flag for Chapter Excellence, Participation in the VASSAR Flag Program (as well as a Flag Certificate), participation in the VASSAR Plaque Dedication Program at Hebron Church in Winchester (and many thanks to Compatriot Vic Diehl for representing our Chapter) and, what I call “the big one”, the State Award for Law Enforcement. Our Chapter’s recipient, Rachel Hammer, was the recipient. At a future meeting, we want to present her with her Award and also a monetary award from VASSAR in recognition of her service. Many thanks again to Compatriot Jim Nelson who not only selected her for our Chapter Award but nominated her for the VASSAR Award. We also received 5 stars for our Forgotten Patriots Streamer. These were for the supplemental applications submitted by Compatriots Tim Knight and Vic Diehl in recognition of the proof of

service of Revolutionary War Patriot ancestors who had not yet been recognized by the SAR or DAR. The recognition of their ancestors has opened three new ancestral lines for use for SAR membership. Since two of these Patriot ancestors were from Virginia, we received two stars for each. On the 22nd of the month, Compatriot Hank Almond, Norma and I attended the annual Crossing of the Dan Ceremony in South Boston, VA at which we presented our Chapter wreath. For our attendance, our Chapter did receive a streamer for our Chapter Flag. This ceremony is now a NSSAR sanctioned event and the 4th such for Virginia. This is the third year that our Chapter has participated in this event and the attendance continues to grow. Last year's speaker was Travis Bowman, a descendant of Peter Francisco, often called the "Hercules" of Revolution. Travis, like his famous ancestor, is 6 feet 6 inches in height and, in appropriate costume, portrayed Peter and gave a wonderful presentation on the life and Revolutionary War service of his ancestor. This year, the speaker was Patrick Henry Jolly, a descendant of his namesake, and who, again in appropriate costume, portrayed Patrick Henry and gave a superb presentation concerning the life and the political beliefs of his ancestor. I would urge that you put this event on your calendar for next year. It is well worth the drive for the program and for the reenactment of the crossing that follows. Also, on February 12th, several of our Compatriots were present for the 39th Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony held at the Lincoln Family Cemetery on Route 42 between Harrisonburg and Broadway. Compatriot Dr. Phillip Stone again gave a wonderful presentation on an aspect of the life of the President, this year concerning the events of 1864 and their effect not only for the President and the Union but also for those of his cousins who then lived in the Shenandoah Valley.

Our Chapter also continues to participate in the Naturalization Ceremonies held in the Federal District Court at Harrisonburg and, at times, at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. The first of the year was held on the 11th of February but others are planned for March 10th, April 17th, May 12th and June 19th. We will hopefully be presenting a Chapter Award to an outstanding Cadet in the ROTC Program at James Madison University and JROTC Program at Harrisonburg High School again this year. These units have been contacted concerning our willingness to do so.

We have a number of superb programs coming up. In March, Richard Martin will speak on 18th Century Architecture, in April Carole Nash will speak on the Archeology of the French and Indian War in the Valley and in May Charles Chenault will return to talk on the History of Woodbine Cemetery in Harrisonburg. I certainly hope that you will be with us for these presentations. Again, we meet on the morning of the 2nd Saturday of the month at the Bethesda Theater at Sunnyside Retirement Community with breakfast beginning at 8:30 and the meeting at 9:00 and conclude about 10:00. There is **one important exception** which is that the May meeting will be on the 17th and not the 10th. I would also remind you of the Annual Reading of the Declaration of Independence by Compatriot David Hatmaker, a wonderful event held at noon on July 4th on the steps of the Rockingham Court House in Harrisonburg.

Compatriots, while we have been very active in several events, there are others in which we could become active in our community if only we had Compatriots willing to take these on. I am earnestly asking for you to consider "stepping up to the plate" and pitching in to help. We would love to expand the SAR programs in which we participate but, as of now, we cannot simply because we don't have the manpower to do so. But this is not simply a question of expanding our efforts. We need your active participation in all of our current activities. I am looking forward to seeing you at one, if not all, of our upcoming meetings.

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