



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



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Compatriots, another year has come and almost gone. Over this year, our Chapter has been very active. Many of the events in which we either played an active role or simply attended have been mentioned in previous newsletters. However, since the last newsletter in August, a number of events have occurred. VASSAR held its Semi-Annual Meeting in Roanoke on the 18th and 19th of September. Representing our Chapter were Chapter President Tom Pettit and Chapter Chaplain Rev. Roy Martin who is also VASSAR Chaplain. At this meeting, our Chapter received a Partners in Patriotism Certificate for 2014 in recognition of joint participation in an event with a veteran's group. On the afternoon of the 19th, following the conclusion of that meeting, both attended the ribbon cutting of the monument, still under construction, to Col. William Preston at the site of his home, Greenfield, in Botetourt County. This monument is the signature project of the Fincastle Resolutions Chapter in partnership with the government of Botetourt County. On the 7th of October, Past Chapter President Hank Almond and I represented our Chapter at the 235th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of Kings Mountain which was held at the monument on the site of the battle in South Carolina. Our Chapter wreath was presented in honor of John Sevier who was born in what is now northern Rockingham County. Chapter President Tom Pettit, Chaplain Roy Martin and I also represented our Chapter at the annual Yorktown Day Ceremony held on the 19th of October. Our Chapter wreath was also presented here. Locally, President Pettit along with Compatriots Hank Almond, Bill Blessing and Peyton Yancey represented our Chapter on October 11th at the DAR re-dedication of the Lincoln Family Cemetery north of Harrisonburg. I was able to represent our Chapter in the Veterans Parade held on November 8th here in Harrisonburg in conjunction with representing my American Legion Post. On November 14th, Compatriots Hank Almond, Bill Blessing and I were in attendance at a wreath presentation at the Newtown Cemetery in Harrisonburg honoring four Vietnam veterans who are buried there. The DAR laid wreaths at two of the graves and Compatriots Almond and Blessing laid wreaths at the other two. Hopefully, in the future other veterans buried there will be so recognized.

Our Chapter meetings are now held at Pano's Restaurant on South Main Street in Harrisonburg on the evening of the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6PM. This is on a trial basis to see if our attendance improves from the previous Saturday breakfast meetings. So far, there has been no marked change but we hope that by having a dinner meeting, more Compatriots will attend. This will continue at least through January of next year and then be re-evaluated. We have had very good programs this fall. In September, Mr. Rob Lynch, Manager of Design and Construction for Sentara-RMH discussed the planning of the current facility as well as plans for future expansions. In October, our Chapter recognized Master Police Officer Jay Hensley of the Harrisonburg Police Department with our Chapter Law Enforcement Award. His name has been submitted to VASSAR for consideration for their recognition of his achievements as well. Many thanks to Compatriot Jim Nelson for all his efforts on behalf of this selection and award and for having subsequent coverage of it in our local newspaper. In November, Mark Tueting, an instructor in Social Studies at Harrisonburg High School, presented a very interesting discussion of whether French support was really needed for the success of the Continental forces in the Revolutionary War. Mark has talked to us before and, as with his past presentations, the material he presented was thought provoking and, in this case, questioned long held beliefs. In appreciation of his efforts as a teacher, President Tom Pettit presented him with an Outstanding

Citizenship Certificate and lapel pin. If you have not had the opportunity of hearing Mark or Compatriot Barkley Rosser, I would strongly urge you to do so when either speaks to us in the future. All I can add is that both Norma, my wife, and I have said after hearing either of them was that we wished we had been fortunate enough to have taken one of their classes. You definitely won't go to sleep during one of their very stimulating and thoughtful presentations. We also, during this time, have remained very active in other endeavors as well. We have continued to participate in local Naturalization Programs and I would urge you to attend one of these in the future. I just wonder how well we would do on the test that these new citizens had to pass in order to obtain their citizenship. What we take for granted is, to them, a gift and one that required much effort and study. I also want to recognize and to thank Compatriots Hank Almond and Randy Atkins for their continued efforts on behalf of our Eagle Scout Program. As of late November, our Chapter had presented 21 Eagle Scout Certificates and several more are planned before the year ends. Many thanks to both of them for this superb accomplishment.

In December, Compatriots Hank Almond, Rev. Roy Martin, Jr. and I will represent our Chapter on the 5th at the annual ceremony commemorating the Battle of Great Bridge in Chesapeake, VA. Our December meeting will be held at Pano's Restaurant on evening of the 15th beginning at 6PM. The business portion will be quite short because there will be no program and the only Chapter business will be the election of Officers for 2016. Our current slate of officers, as approved at our November meeting, are: President - Tom Pettit; 1st Vice President - Kirk Sheap; Recording Secretary - Randy Heneberger; Treasurer - Jim Nelson; Corresponding Secretary - David Dean, Jr.; Chaplain -Rev. Roy Martin, Jr.; Registrar - Tim Knight and Historian - Peyton Yancey. The rest of the evening will be spent simply in fellowship among our Compatriots, their wives and guests. As in years past, we have had no one "step up to the plate" for the position of 2nd Vice-President. This simply means that again we are putting off answering the difficult question of who will lead our Chapter in the not too distant future.

As for next year, in January, VASSAR President Reverdy Wright will be with us both to install our Officers and to be our speaker. In February, our speaker tentatively will be Harrisonburg Mayor Christopher B. Jones. There is also preliminary communication with our local DAR Chapter on possibly jointly sponsoring an event on genealogy, open to the public, with lectures on how to accurately discover one's ancestors. Hopefully both the DAR and SAR will benefit by stimulating interest in membership in our organizations. Our Chaplain, Rev. Roy Martin, Jr., has seen the benefits of such a program for his former Chapter in Florida.

In closing let me begin by wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season be it Christmas or Hanukkah and all the best for 2016. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Compatriot Barkley Rosser for his efforts on behalf of obtaining speakers for our programs not only this past year but for far longer than that. Also I would like to thank Mrs. Mary Scott, wife of Compatriot Charlie Scott, for providing much of the calligraphy that was needed for many of the Certificates our Chapter presented. Finally, I want to thank Compatriot Gene Holsinger for his work, not only this year but in past years, in putting together our Chapter's Annual Report to VASSAR. This is not an easy endeavor and Gene has done a great job with it. Unfortunately, Gene and his wife, Jane, will be moving from the area next year but I do hope that he will remain active in the SAR in Pennsylvania.

I do hope to see you at one of our future meetings. Just remember that in order for our Chapter to survive, we need our Compatriots to be active in our endeavors. If there is no support from our members for what we do, then our future can be bleak indeed.

Kirk Sheap

