



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



Vol. 16, No. 3

August 2016

To begin this Newsletter, it is my sad duty to report the passing of former Compatriot Dr. Harry Yancey Canter on June 27th. Dr. Canter had been a member of our Chapter for a number of years before demitting at the end of 2015. Also, since our last newsletter, two Past Presidents of VASSAR have also passed: David H. Harpole, Sr. MD [1999-2000] on July 21st and Capt. John N. Dickie (USN Ret.) [2004-2005] on July 23rd.

Compatriots, I hope that you have had a very pleasant summer. Our Chapter has continued to be quite active even though there has been a summer hiatus from formal meetings. On Memorial Day, several of our Compatriots joined with the Massanutton Chapter, DAR in reading the names of those from Harrisonburg and Rockingham County who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our liberty from WW I through the current conflicts in which our nation is engaged. This was performed at the monument bearing their names which is found adjacent to Memorial Hall (the old Harrisonburg High School) of James Madison University. Those of our Chapter who participated were Chapter President Tom Pettit, Hank Almond, Peyton Yancey, Randy Heneberger, Joe Price and I. I want to thank the Massanutton Chapter Regent, Penny Cummiskey, for asking us to participate in this very moving event and congratulate their Chapter in planning and executing this program. I hope that you noted the coverage of it in "The Daily News Record" on Tuesday, May 31st. On the 4th of July, our Chapter again held its annual reading of the Declaration of Independence at noon on the steps of Rockingham County Court House. Stepping into the role of his father David, Compatriot Paul Hatmaker did an excellent job. David, who has done the reading for over 20 years, again planned and put together a wonderful event this year. Even though the weather was not perfect, the turnout was good and the event received coverage from WHSV-TV. All of us owe both David and Paul our sincere thanks and deepest appreciation for their efforts.

From July 8th-13th, the 126th Annual Congress of the SAR was held in Boston, MA. Norma and I were among those from Virginia in attendance. VASSAR and a number of its Compatriots were recognized during this Congress. VASSAR was recognized for its participation in a number of SAR Youth Programs and its contestant, Alexandria Rodriquez, placed second in the Joseph S. Rumbaugh Orations Contest. VASSAR was also recognized for its participation in the 2015 Flag Certificate Program by again receiving the Admiral William R. Furlong Award and also for being one of nine State Societies having 100% Chapter participation. The George Washington Chapter received Honorable Mention for a chapter of its size in the President General's State Society and Chapter Activities Competition and received The President General's Cup, for a chapter of its size (200+ members), in recognition of exhibiting the most complete program of activities. VASSAR also placed first for the Genealogist General's Award for having the lowest percentage of pended applications for the year (in this case, none). VASSAR Historian Rev. Larry G. Aaron was awarded the Minnesota Society Stephen Taylor Award which is given to "the Compatriot, who by his research and writings has made a distinguished contribution to the preservation of the history of the American Revolutionary era and its Patriots". Other VASSAR Compatriots receiving recognition were VASSAR 1st Vice President Mike Elston who was appointed to the Executive Board and VASSAR Past President Mark S. Brennan, Sr. [2011-2012] who was named Vice-President General for the mid-Atlantic District. J. Michael Tomme of the Georgia Society was elected President General. Mike is also a dual member of the Col. Fielding Lewis and George Washington Chapters in Virginia. One of

the major topics discussed was the proposal from Family Search to digitize our records at our National Headquarters in Lexington, KY. This process would include the documentation and patriot biographies found with our membership applications. While such digitization would not only aid in insuring the preservation of these records, it would also provide access for further research by prospective members. This access has, of course, raised privacy concerns which have to be addressed before any agreement with Family Search can be finalized. Another concern raised, of course, was paying for it. The idea of a dues increase was proposed but was not approved. Funding for this project will instead be sought by seeking voluntary donations from individuals, State Societies and Chapters.

Norma and I were also among those from Virginia in attendance at the Atlantic Middle States Conference which was held in Albany, NY on August 12th-14th. As at this year's Annual Congress, the proposal from Family Search concerning the digitization of our records in Louisville was discussed and the same concerns over privacy and of raising the funds needed to pay for this project were expressed. Interestingly, John D. Sinks of the District of Columbia Society who is Genealogist General voiced his concern that neither he nor the Genealogy Committee of NSSAR had been consulted concerning this project. The Conference then endorsed a proposal to be sent to NSSAR stating that both John and the Committee be involved in all further discussions held with Family Search.

Locally, we continue to participate in the Naturalization Ceremonies. The next one will be on September 20th at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. I hope that you will consider attending one of these as it is a very worthwhile endeavor. Next year, it appears that there will be 12 of these ceremonies and our Chapter certainly plans to continue to be an active participant. We also continue to recognize the Eagle Scout program. Past Chapter President Hank Almond and Compatriot Randy Atkins have now presented 12 Eagle Scout Certificates this year.

Our Chapter continues to grow. The membership transfer of Compatriot Steven Giddens from the Vermont Society to VASSAR has now been completed and he has already attended several of our meetings. NSSAR also approved the membership applications of Matthew Lacovitch, Steven Owen, Gregory Owen, James Owen and Eddie Knight. In the near future we look forward to their induction into membership in NSSAR and our Chapter. Eddie is the uncle of our Chapter Registrar, Tim Knight. We have also received notification of the approval of supplemental applications from Compatriots Tim Knight and Bill Robinson. This is Bill's first supplemental and is for his patriot ancestor Caleb Robinson. This is Tim's 60th supplemental and is for his patriot ancestor John Baugher. Neither supplemental is a "Forgotten Patriot" (those who have never before been recognized by either the SAR or the DAR).

State and National events on the horizon include the VASSAR Semi-Annual meeting to be held in Williamsburg on September 16th-17th at the Woodlands Hotel and Suites. On October 7th the annual commemoration of the Battle of Kings Mountain will be held at the site of the battle in South Carolina. On October 19th, the annual commemoration of the British surrender at Yorktown will be held at that site. Both ceremonies are well worth attending. As for our Chapter, I wish to again remind you **of our new meeting site, Wood Grill Buffet located at 1711 Reservoir Street in Harrisonburg.** We meet at 5:30 PM on the third Tuesday of the month (January through May and September through December of the year). However, the location and date may be subject to change because of scheduling conflicts. We will notify you of such changes. Our September meeting will feature the presentation of our Fire Safety Award to retiring Harrisonburg Fire Chief Larry Shifflett. In October, our speaker will be Compatriot Randy Atkins whose topic will be "How We Memorialized and Honored Our Fallen Soldiers from WWI". Randy has been very gracious in rescheduling this presentation because of conflicts with other programs or events which could not be rescheduled. **Please note that the date of our October meeting has been changed to the 25th with the location and time remaining the same.** This was required because several of our Officers will be attending the Yorktown commemoration on the morning of the 19th. At this meeting a slate of proposed Chapter Officers for 2017 will also be presented. Another change is that our December meeting

is now scheduled to be held at 7PM on the 20th at the Bethesda Theater at the Sunnyside Retirement Community.

Again, I hope to see you at our fall meetings but I also hope that you will become active in our Chapter. It is only through your active support that our Chapter can continue to exist.

Kirk Sheap