



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



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Another year is coming to a close and I want to wish all of you all the best for the upcoming Holiday Season and New Year. The second half of this year has seen our Chapter to have been very active in a number of endeavors. On July 4th the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence was held at noon on the steps of the Rockingham County Courthouse. Compatriot David Hatmaker, who organized this event, read the Declaration of Independence with the introduction given by Compatriot and Chapter President John Cloud. On September 11th, our Chapter took part in a program "We remember 9/11" held at the Stonewall Memorial Park in Elkton and which was co-sponsored by the Shenandoah River Chapter of the DAR in which our Chapter wreath was presented. Those in attendance from our Chapter were Compatriots Hank Almond, Hugh Hutchens, Gene Holsinger, Vic Diehl, Tim Knight and Kirk Sheap as well as prospective member William Caldwell. On the 11th of November, our Chapter was represented by Compatriots Vic Diehl and Hugh Hutchens (along with Betty Albrite and Barbara Hutchens) at a ceremony held at Shockoe Cemetery in Richmond honoring the veterans of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 who are buried there. These same individuals represented our Chapter on the 3rd of December in Chesapeake at Great Bridge and Norfolk at St. Paul's Church in commemoration of the December 1775 Battle of Great Bridge and the subsequent engagements in Norfolk. Compatriot Vic Diehl has also represented our Chapter at several other events as well. While our Chapter does not have a formal Color Guard, Vic has served admirably in this regard attending a number of events in appropriate colonial attire and firing his muzzle loader in salute. Compatriot Kirk Sheap along with his wife, Norma, attended the SAR Annual Congress in Winston-Salem, NC in July and Compatriot Sheap also attended the SAR Atlantic Middle States Conference in Alexandria in August. Kirk and Norma also attended a special Flag and Awards Program held jointly by the Col. Fielding Lewis Chapter and the National Sojourners at the National Museum of the Marine Corps at Quantico on the 11th of June.

On a local level, I hope that those of you who receive the "Daily News Record" read the wonderful article on the 14th of October concerning our Registrar, Hugh Hutchens, and the marking of the grave of Revolutionary War Patriot David Rolston in the cemetery of Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church. With Hugh at that event were Compatriots Gene Holsinger, Hank Almond, Dan Pinnell and Bill Robinson. Hugh has also been instrumental in registering a number of graves of local Revolutionary War Patriots with VASSAR, most recently those of Peter Crim and David Rolston. His work with prospective new Compatriots for our Chapter by helping them with the documentation needed for establishing descent from a valid Patriot Ancestor and doing the same with Chapter Compatriots with their Supplemental Applications has been simply superb. Through his efforts, our Chapter has gained new Compatriots who will prove to be tremendous assets. Our Chapter may also be recognized by VASSAR for having a Forgotten Patriot William Sproul, a Patriot Ancestor of Compatriot Vic Diehl. A Forgotten Patriot is a valid Patriot Ancestor who has not been recognized by the DAR or NSSAR. Having three such Patriot Ancestors, I can testify to the amount of work that may well be needed in this endeavor. Also on a local level, due to the efforts of our President-elect, Compatriot Hank Almond, our Chapter has awarded 15 Eagle Scout Certificates this year. This is a great way to recognize the youth who have reached this exemplary Scouting achievement. I would be remiss if I did not also mention the efforts put forth by our Chapter Officers and Compatriots to

participate in the Naturalization Ceremonies held locally. In cooperation with the DAR, the participation of members of both groups has made these events a very meaningful experience not only for our new citizens but for those who witness them.

At our December meeting, Chapter officers for the upcoming two year term were elected. Our Chapter President will be Compatriot Hank Almond; President-elect (1st Vice President) will be Compatriot Vic Diehl; 2nd Vice President will be Compatriot Tim Knight; Treasurer will be Compatriot Jim Nelson; Recording Secretary will be Compatriot Tom Pettit; Registrar will be Compatriot Hugh Hutchens and Chaplain will be Compatriot Kirk Sheap. The position of Historian has become an appointed one and Compatriot Peyton Yancey has agreed to fulfill that position. As for Corresponding Secretary, that position still remains open. However Compatriot Hugh Hutchens has shouldered many of the responsibilities of that position. Both he and Compatriot Jim Nelson were recognized this year for their contributions by being awarded the Chapter Service Medal. This is an award truly deserved by both for their continued efforts on behalf of our Chapter.

As incoming President-elect, Compatriot Vic Diehl has put together a splendid list of programs for the coming year. Each of you should have received it by either e-mail or "snail mail". If this past November's program proves to be a "preview of coming attractions", we are going to have a superb year. If you have not received this list, contact me at 540-828-4669 and I will make certain you receive one. There is one change on the list you received. The speaker for our January meeting, which will be at Spotswood Country Club unlike the past several years, will be VASSAR President Mark Brennan who will also install our Chapter Officers. I do want to thank outgoing President Compatriot John Cloud for all he has accomplished over the past two years. Being Chapter President is a tremendous responsibility and he has shouldered this task very well. Congratulations John for a job well done.

Now in ending, I want to go back to my attendance at the Middle Atlantic Conference in Alexandria in August. This was my first year to attend and, if I had attended any of the other previous years, it may well have been my last. This NSSAR conference has apparently been for many years basically a meeting in which those running for NSSAR offices for the upcoming year came to introduce themselves and present their platforms. Some of that occurred this year but NSSAR Vice President General (for the Mid-Atlantic Region) and past VASSAR President Larry McKinley put on an entirely different program, one whose purpose was to emphasize the varied youth programs of the SAR. I was simply amazed at the youth who participated in the program in Alexandria. Last year the VASSAR entry to the Knight Essay Contest took first place. This is a first for us. However, in 2003, the winner of our Fort Harrison Chapter Contest took first place at VASSAR and came within "hair's breath" (1/10th of a point) of winning at NSSAR). For the NSSAR Orations Contest, the winner this year was from VASSAR. Now if we look at the CAR (Children of the American Revolution), the current President was there and she is from Virginia and a student at UVA. Our Chapter has not participated in these programs for a number of years and has not reached out to our local CAR (and these are the future members of the SAR and DAR). We need to do so but this takes Compatriots who are truly willing to "step up to the plate" and become active. We have a wonderful slate of incoming Officers but they can not do everything. We need active Compatriots who will be willing to help by taking on one of these programs. The continued success of our Chapter depends upon the participation of our entire membership and not just that of a few. Have a wonderful Christmas or Hanukkah and a great New Year and I truly look forward to seeing you during the upcoming year.

Kirk Sheap

