



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



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Compatriots, as we look out the window or drive along a country road and see the changing colors of the leaves on the trees we realize that another year is coming to a close. The Fort Harrison Chapter has been very active since the beginning of summer and has a number of activities planned before year's end. On a state and national level, Chapter President Hank Almond and I attended the VASSAR Semi-Annual Meeting in Charlottesville on the 14th and 15th of September and I also attended the Atlantic Middle States meeting held in Newark, DE on August 10th and 11th. In May and June, VASSAR also held ceremonies in Charlottesville and Fincastle at which our Chapter was represented by either Chapter President Almond, Compatriot Hugh Hutchens or myself and for which our Chapter will be recognized with streamers for our Chapter Flag. On the 4th of July, Compatriot David Hatmaker again read the Declaration of Independence from the steps of the Rockingham County Court House. This annual event was well attended by the public and we owe Compatriot Hatmaker our sincere thanks and appreciation for all he has done, and continues to do, regarding the organization and presentation of what has become truly a "labor of love" for not only him but also our Chapter.

As for what has occurred at our Chapter meetings, if you have not attended, you truly have missed several excellent presentations. In September, our meeting was held at Sunnyside Home east of Harrisonburg. Many thanks to Compatriot Jim Nelson for making the needed arrangements. At this meeting, President Almond presented four Supplemental Patriot Ancestor Certificates to Compatriot and Chapter Vice-President Tim Knight. Tim now has received nine such certificates which reflects a tremendous amount of research and a superb dedication in tracing his family history and honoring those who provided so much to ensure our liberty. Also at this meeting, nine of our Compatriots gave interesting and informative presentations on their patriot ancestors. We were also privileged to have with us VASSAR 2nd Vice-President Bill Broadus who inducted six new Compatriots into our Chapter. We welcome William David Kimsey; William David Kimsey, Jr.; Tom Scott Kimsey; Penley Finley Kimsey; Michael Leonard Doyle and Jeffrey Allen Smith. Two others, David Ray Beam and Mark Robinson, have met the requirements for membership and will be inducted at a future meeting. Our Chapter is growing. Also at the September meeting each Chapter member present was given a pocket edition of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. This was in recognition of the 225th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. Later that month both the Harrisonburg City Council and the Rockingham Board of Supervisors read, approved and then presented to our Chapter President, Hank Almond, a copy of resolutions furnished by our Chapter recognizing this anniversary. At our October meeting, we had a wonderful presentation by Frank Kobilis on the history of the Shenandoah Valley Long Rifle. He brought several weapons from his collection made by Valley gunsmiths to show the evolution from the German Jaeger rifle, an example of which was brought by Compatriot Vic Diehl, to what became known to many of us today as the Kentucky rifle. At this meeting, several of our Compatriots were recognized for their contributions to our Chapter. Compatriot Stephen Knight received a Certificate of Appreciation for the superb work he did in creating our Chapter's website and getting it up and running. Yes, we now have a website (fortharrisonsar.org) where you can keep up with our meetings. This is a wonderful addition and one that will enable not only our members but also anyone in the general public to see not only who we are but what we are doing. We hope that it will "stir up some interest" in our meetings and not only help in obtaining new

members but also increase meeting attendance by our own Compatriots. Compatriot Gene Holsinger was awarded our Chapter Service Medal for the work he has done and continues to do in many different areas on behalf of the Chapter and Compatriot Hugh Hutchens received an Oak Leaf Cluster in thanks for all that he continues to do in so many ways in support of our Chapter's programs. The November meeting will have as its program, a discussion by Dr. Clarence Geier of James Madison University on "Archeology of the Civil War-Battlefields of the Shenandoah Valley." It will be held at our usual place, the Houff Center at Bridgewater Home, with breakfast beginning at 8:30AM with the meeting following at 9AM. For those of us who have ever toured these battlefields, this will prove to be an excellent opportunity to gain new insight into them. Now for December. This meeting will be a very special one as it will mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Fort Harrison Chapter. It will be a luncheon meeting beginning at noon on Saturday, December 8th and will be held at the Houff Center at Bridgewater Home. We will begin with a social with refreshments followed by a luncheon at 12:30 with the actual meeting beginning about 1:45. You will be receiving more information concerning this in the future from Compatriot Hugh Hutchens (one of the many ways Hugh has, and continues to, support our Chapter) and we will need an accurate count of those planning to attend. When you receive this notice from Hugh, there will be information provided on how to let us know if you plan to attend (and we hope all who are able to do so will attend). The program for this meeting will be presentations made by a number of our Compatriots on the history of our Chapter, the awards we have received over the years for our efforts in the community as well as the awards we present in the community. An honor roll of our deceased members will be read and we will display an updated plaque recognizing all who have served as Chapter President. In January, we will have the installation of our officers and "kick off a new year". We also continue to be very active in supporting and in participating in the local Naturalization Programs. There were two such programs in September and there will be two in November, both on the 8th with one being at 11AM and the other at 2PM at the Federal Court in Harrisonburg. All are welcome to attend. Our Chapter also plans to recognize all Compatriots who have served in our armed forces in any capacity (active duty, reserves or National Guard) whether it was during war or during peacetime. A Chapter Veteran's Certificate of Appreciation has been created to be presented to each eligible Compatriot. You should have received information concerning this from Compatriot Hutchens. Just let him know of your service so that we can recognize you. In closing, I would also like to mention upcoming events elsewhere in Virginia. On the weekend of November 30th-December 2nd there will be a number of events commemorating the Battle of Great Bridge, VA which was Virginia's first victory over the British in 1775. More information can be obtained on this by going to the website of the Norfolk Chapter, SAR. On the weekend of February 22nd-24th, 2013 the Annual Meeting of the Virginia Society, SAR will be held at the Omni in Richmond. I hope that our Chapter will have an excellent representation. The meeting site has changed from past years but, as always, this will be an excellent meeting and one at which any Compatriot is welcome. I would also urge that each of you exercise your right to vote. The upcoming election is a crucial one for our Nation. No matter how you feel politically, please exercise this precious liberty given us by our ancestors at so great a cost. Finally, Compatriots, I would remind each of you that the success of our Chapter depends upon the participation of its members. No Chapter can be successful, or even survive, if only a very few are active. We have participated in many state and national programs but there are many more in which we could be active and contribute to the community if only we had someone to come forward and agree to spearhead the effort. I urge you not to sit on the sidelines but become an active member.

Kirk Sheap