



FORT HARRISON SENTINEL

Fort Harrison Chapter

Sons of the American Revolution



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Compatriots, it appears that spring may finally have arrived though some areas of the country have seen snow in late May. Since our last Newsletter in February of this year, a number of events have taken place. On the 12th of February, a number of our Compatriots attended the annual Lincoln Day Ceremony held at the Lincoln Family Cemetery in Rockingham County, north of Edom. Those present included Compatriots John Sipe, Barkley Rosser, Gene Holsinger, Peyton Yancey and Hank Almond. Compatriot Phil Stone, as always, gave an outstanding presentation which reminded us all of the Rockingham County roots of President Abraham Lincoln. On the 16th of February, Chapter President Hank Almond, my wife, Norma, and I attended the Crossing of the Dan Ceremony held by the Dan River Chapter in South Boston. The weather was very appropriate for that time of year with an inch or two of snow on the ground for the reenactment of the crossing. On the 22nd and 23rd of February, Hank, Norma and I attended the VASSAR Annual Meeting in Richmond. At that meeting, our Chapter was recognized with not only a Chapter Excellence streamer for our Chapter's efforts in 2012 but also with streamers recognizing our participation at the VASSAR President's initiative programs for 2012 including the dedication of a roadside marker of the Convention Army in Albemarle County, at the Private Wreath Laying by the NSSAR President General at Thomas Jefferson's grave at Monticello and in the Joint Plaque Dedication held by VASSAR and the Society of the War of 1812 held in Fincastle. We also received a streamer for our participation in the VASSAR Flag Program for 2012 and a star for our streamer for participation in the VASSAR Graves Registration Program. However, it was our efforts in participation in the Forgotten Patriot Program in 2012 that won our Chapter a significant amount of recognition. We were presented 13 stars for our streamer concerning this program. This means that in 2012 a Compatriot of our Chapter provided the information necessary to have 13 individuals, 7 of whom were from Virginia, recognized as valid patriot ancestors. These were individuals whose service during the Revolutionary War had never been recognized by either the SAR or DAR and whose approval by the SAR now opens these new lines by which descendants can join our organization. It was their descendant, Compatriot and Chapter Vice-President Tim Knight, whose research provided the material needed for their recognition. As I have mentioned in a previous Newsletter, Tim now has had about 40 supplemental applications approved and a number of others are pending. This is a truly outstanding effort and one for which all of us should congratulate him. Now just think of all of the new Compatriots that could enter our organization with the help of his efforts. On the 27th of April, our Chapter had its largest representation ever at the Annual Multi-Chapter Meeting held at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA. Not only did Hank, Norma and myself attend (and Hank presented our Chapter Flag) but Compatriots John Sipe and Bill Wampler (and their wives, Joan Sipe and Bonnie Lou Wampler) were also present. A great meeting and a wonderful lunch. You need to keep this one in mind for next year. On the 22nd of April, Hank presented our Chapter's ROTC Award to Cadet Captain Anthony S. Terry at James Madison University and I presented our Chapter's JROTC Award at Harrisonburg High School on the 9th of May to Cadet Lt. Colonel Cecilia Valdez. I was also privileged to present our Chapter's Veteran's Certificates to both Col. Roy T. McCutcheon and Command Sergeant Major Russell A. Wilder, both now retired from active duty, but who now lead this program. The Cadets gave them a standing ovation when presented these certificates. Also we continue to participate in the Naturalization Programs with the last having been on the 9th of May at the Federal Court in

Harrisonburg. If you have the opportunity, I would urge you to attend one of these. It is a very moving ceremony and one that will “bring home” the meaning of citizenship with its blessings and obligations which are something that many of us simply take for granted.

Over the past months, we have had a number of very interesting programs at our monthly meetings. In March, John Mann IV discussed the uniforms of the 10th VA Regiment, CSA. For those whose families were in this area during the War Between the States, many may have had ancestors serving in that unit. In April, the Clerk of the Court for Rockingham County and Harrisonburg, Chaz Evans-Haywood gave a wonderful presentation on what records are to be found in the Clerk’s Office. Under his direction, a systematic effort has been undertaken by which the records of the county and city have been preserved and properly filed. In going through literally boxes and even milk cans of documents, a true “treasure trove” of information was found. This material has been shared with the Library of Virginia so that those researching ancestors in this region now have free access to many of them. Among the documents found was a Colonial Land Grant dating from the late 1730’s. For his efforts on behalf of saving these documents, Chaz was presented with an SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Award. He was also recognized for his military service with a Chapter Veteran’s Certificate. At the meeting, President Almond also inducted into membership our newest Compatriot, Blaine Michael Adams. In May, Eric Bryan, Deputy Director of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia spoke to us on slavery in the Shenandoah Valley and discussed the fact that this was more widely prevalent than many have acknowledged in the past. At that meeting, our Chapter also presented a check for \$100 to Richard Morgan, President of the Shenandoah Society Children of the American Revolution in support of that Chapter.

With summer approaching, we now enter our three month period of rest and rejuvenation. Though there will be no more meetings until September, we will not be inactive. As in years past, Compatriot David Hatmaker will again be reading the Declaration of Independence from the steps of the Rockingham County Court House at noon on July 4th. Over the approximately 20 years he has done this, the attendance has continued to grow. If you have never attended, I would urge that you do so, joining many of your neighbors and your fellow Compatriots in what has become a true “community event”. Over the course of the summer, our Chapter will also be awarding several more Flag Certificates in recognition of the proper display of the American Flag. Finally, in early July the Annual Congress of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution will be held in Kansas City, MO. Norma and I plan to attend where we hope to witness Compatriot Joe Dooley, Past President of VASSAR, be installed as President General.

In closing, I urge all of you to become active members of our Chapter. At the Annual Meeting of VASSAR in February, I was asked to be one of the Judges for the Oration Contest. This VASSAR program is one of a number that we could support on a Chapter level if we just had those willing to give the effort and support needed. We now are faced with a number of vacancies among our Officers as well. Filling these and active participation in our Chapter programs are simply vital to our continued existence. Simply put, if there is no interest and effort then there may well be no Chapter.

I look forward to seeing you at our September meeting but I truly hope that you will consider becoming an active member of our Chapter.

Kirk Sheap