

The Tampa Chapter, Florida Society Sons of the American Revolution

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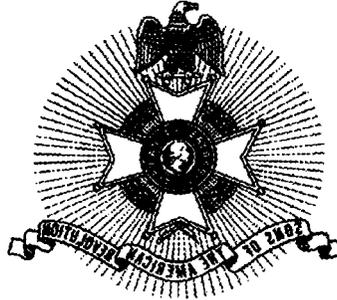
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April 2002 Newsletter

April Meeting:

The April meeting will be at noon on April 20th at the Piccadilly Cafeteria on Dale Mabry. Members will be responsible for their own meal and gratuity.

April Program:

The April program will include the annual presentation of high school ROTC awards. Additionally, it is hoped our essay contest winner will be present to share her essay and receive her award from the state contest. And, as has become customary at our ROTC meeting, Compatriot Kevin Yarnell will give a brief talk. This year he will focus on the topic "The Day the American Revolution Began". While we all usually associate it with the skirmishing at Lexington and Concord, that news did not reach all of the other colonies simultaneously. Thus, the "war" and the effect of its onset became known at different times and was therefore felt differently throughout the colonies. So, plan on being present to honor our ROTC cadet award winners and hear an interesting talk by Kevin.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Due to my own schedule the last two newsletters have been rather perfunctory. This month we return to the expanded format with a brief essay on the Newburgh Conspiracy.

An additional personal note, if I may. Kate Parker, a 7th grade student at Berkeley Preparatory School recently won the Hillsborough County History Fair with a project on Loyalist Florida during the Revolution. She will compete in the state fair on May 3rd. The editor of the Sunland Tribune was so taken with her essay that it will be published in a forth coming issue of the magazine. So, there are students out there who are doing projects and winning awards on topics dealing with the American Revolution.

Minutes of the March 16, 2002 meeting of the Tampa Chapter SAR

President Tetrick called the meeting to order at 12:06. Jim Washburn offered the invocation and Vice President Bolen led the pledge to the flag and Vice President Bolen led the pledge to the SAR.

Members present: Dwight Tetrick, Marty Miller, Jim Washburn, Jack Bolen, Jim Chambers, Dan Stutzman, Walter Lane, Fred Patton, Ed Neugaard, and Kevin Yarnell.

Welcome guests: Billie Washburn, Janet Tetrick, June Bolen, Compatriot and Mrs. Jim Armitage of the DeVane Chapter, Richard McKenzie, and Jane Lane

The SAR membership approved the minutes of the February meeting as published in the newsletter.

The secretary reported that our entry into the state Knight Essay Contest placed third in the state. We hope to have the student at the May meeting. The state informed us that Winfield Patten Nelson and Ryan Patten Smith were accepted into membership. The certificates will be sent later. Janet Tetrick worked on these applications and explained to the membership how these gentlemen came to be in the SAR.

The President inquired as to the status of his supplemental applications. He has two pending. The secretary had no word from the state in this regard.

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$2,247.88.

ROTC meeting will be held next month. The membership agreed to pay for the lunches of the cadets in attendance. At present three units have responded to our invitation but more are expected.

Jim Chambers will be presenting two senior ROTC awards in the coming weeks.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

Vice President Jack Bolen introduced our speaker Compatriot Jim Armitage who spoke on George Washington. He began with remarks concerning historical revision and political correctness as it applied to George Washington. One example concerned the removal of portraits in New Jersey schools.

The speaker then offered some facts and little known events of George Washington's life. Some excerpts for Compatriot Armitage's talk.

He shared some of the "Rules of Civility". As a boy Washington copied this book and carried the pages with him in a small notebook. His father died when George was fairly young. His older brother Lawrence took George under his wing and saw to his education. Washington's military career actually began with the British army serving in the French and Indian war. He married Martha in 1759. Mrs. Armitage then gave some information about Martha. George and Martha met a year after Martha's first husband died. George and Martha never had children of their own, but George raised Martha's two children from the first marriage. Martha made a habit of visiting the troops in the winters and spent her time assisting with the care of the men.

Jim Armitage then resumed with other stories about Washington. He related the story of the Purple Heart medal. It was officially adopted during WWII, but its origins can be traced to an award that Washington gave some of his soldiers.

President Tetrick presented Compatriot Armitage with an SAR pin in appreciation for his talk.

Ed Neugaard won the 50/50 drawing. \$9.50 was thus added to the treasury.

The recessional was led President Tetrick and Jim Washburn gave the benediction. The meeting adjourned at 1:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Yarnell
Chapter Secretary

(ed. note.—as space and time permit we will include on this page of the newsletter brief biographies of overlooked or less well known figures from the colonial/revolutionary period or a brief discussion of an over looked or less well known incident from the period. The following story is offered as a follow-up to last month's program on G. Washington.)

THE NEWBURGH CONSPIRACY

Following the victory over the British forces under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in October, 1781, the main American Army had little to do except sit outside of New York and keep an eye on the main British force there while the diplomats negotiated the peace treaty in Europe. As a result, the army became bored. And, as weeks and months passed with no improvement in conditions (food, clothing, and, most of all, pay), parts of the army and members of the officer corps began to contemplate extreme measures for dealing with these problems. By the spring of 1783, many officers were openly talking about using the army to overthrow the Congress and start a military dictatorship which would take care of the army and run the country more efficiently. While all of this was going on, Gen. Washington did his best to communicate to Congress the growing resentment of the army towards Congress and tried to encourage Congress to find some way to better pay and provide for the army. None of this did any good as Congress did not have the means to rectify the situation in any meaningful way. Knowing that he had to do something, Washington called a meeting of his officers for March 15, 1783.

Upon arriving at the spacious hall where the meeting was being held, Washington noticed that for the first time in seven years the officers looked at him not with affection, but with anger and resentment. He began to explain the situation and called upon the patriotism they had shown throughout the war. When he finished his prepared speech, Washington noticed that the faces had not changed. He then announced that he would read a letter from a trusted member of Congress. At that moment a murmur went up throughout the hall as they all saw Washington fumbling through his uniform. He pulled out a pair of glasses and put them on. As he did so, he remarked in a quiet, almost melancholy voice, "Gentleman, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray but almost blind in the service of my country."

He quickly read the letter and exited. His statement reduced many of his officers to tears as they questioned their motives and compared their personal situations to that of their General. The conspiracy was ended.

In that single moment George Washington did just as much to insure that the new United States would begin its life as a representative republic as had been accomplished at Valley Forge, Saratoga and Yorktown. While it is sometimes considered hyperbole to say that George Washington was the indispensable man that was never truer than at Newburgh on March 15, 1783.