# Tampa Chapter
# Sons of the American Revolution

## December 2023
## Newsletter

In this issue:


◊ President's Message
◊ November Meeting Summary
◊ December Meeting Information
◊ Upcoming Schedule for 2024
◊ Revolutionary War History note
◊ Color Guard Events & Opportunities
◊ Other Reminders and Information


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Tampa SAR
Officers 2023-24

President: Robbie Robinson
1st Vice President: Roger Roscoe
Treasurer: Will Wagner-Hart
Secretary: Bob Yarnell
Sergeant-at Arms: Darren Acosta
Registrar: Dick Young
Chaplain: Matt Balencie
Historian: Bob Yarnell
Past President: Charles Klug
Color Guard Commander: Dick Young
ROTC/JROTC: Terry Doan

# Presidents Message:

Compatriots,

I hope this newsletter finds you doing well as we all prepare for the upcoming holiday season. December is a busy month for all of us for several reasons, but I hope that you find time to join us for a few of the scheduled events we have planned.

The first event has already happened--a Christmas Holiday Parade at Safety Harbor on Saturday, December 2nd, where our Color Guard marched at the front of the Military Vehicles restoration group which has graciously invited us to join them for the past couple years. More information and a photo are included in the Color Guard section of this newsletter.

The next event for the Color Guard will be on December 15th, when we will be supporting the DeSoto DAR at their Christmas luncheon.

The following day, December 16th, will be the Wreaths Across America ceremony at the American Legion Post #5 located at 3810 W. Kennedy Blvd in Tampa. I encourage you to attend the ceremony regardless of being in the Color Guard or not. This is a great time to honor our country's fallen heroes.

Speaking of wreaths, I want to highlight that our vice president, Roger Roscoe, was at Mount Vernon on December 1st, and had the privilege of laying a wreath at the tomb of our first president, George Washington. As you can see from the photos below, Roger did an outstanding job of representing our Tampa Chapter.

Roger Roscoe at Washington's Tomb, Mt Vernon

Tampa SAR Wreath at Mount Vernon, 1 Dec

Well done, Roger!

I also want to highlight a program that has been going on within the Sons of the American Revolution for a few years now, but I think it is time for us to start taking it somewhat more seriously. That program is to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our country's founding. Along those lines, I have asked Will Wagner-Hart, our chapter Treasurer, to provide a brief note about a Revolutionary War event to those in attendance at the Wreaths Across America event on December 16th. This will kick off the start of us holding a short 250th event at each of our chapter meetings. We will provide more information about various aspects of the 250th Anniversary program in the coming months, and I encourage everyone to participate one way or another.

In addition, please see the Member section which we added this month. I welcome any news about our compatriots that you would like to share with the rest of the chapter, so please contact me for any relevant article we can place in this newsletter.
It is also important to let you know that our November meeting will be the last time we are all together at our normal location for several months. In December, we will be at the American Legion Post #5 to support Wreaths Across America, and in January we will be holding our annual induction of officers at a meeting location to be determined in the coming weeks.

Best Wishes to All for a Great Holiday Season. Robbie.

# November Meeting Summary:

Tampa SAR Chapter President Robbie Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:30. Following the usual opening events, the Chapter awarded Past President Cy Gamber the Law Enforcement Commendation Medal for his career in the FBI. Cy made a few comments, concentrating on his part in the ABSCAM bribery/corruption scandal.

Robbie Robinson Awarding Cy Gamber's Law Enforcement Medal and Certificate

Four new members were inducted in the from the Maass family: William, Jonathan, Andrew and Matthew.

Maass Family members after SAR Induction

The chapter then heard a synopsis of the military career of Ryan Agostinis from Treasurer Will Wagner-Hart. Mr. Agostinis will be awarded the SAR Wounded Warrior Medal when is able to attend a meeting.

Next came the election officers. The nominating committee presented the slate of officers and then asked for any nominations from the floor. Since there was none, the slate was approved unanimously.

**Elections :**
Chapter officers for 2024 are:
President - Robbie Robinson
Vice-President - Roger Roscoe
Secretary & Co-newsletter editor - Bob Yarnell
Treasurer - Will Wagner-Hart
Registrar & Co-newsletter editor - Dick Young
Chaplain - Matthew Balencie
Sgt at Arms - Darren Acosta
Members-at-large - Terry Doan
- Thomas Spangler

Treasurer Will Wagner-Hart reported a balance of $11,240.39 in our account, but reminded people that a considerable amount are related to dues that have not yet been sent to state and national. Will also gave a dues reminder. He reported that 60% of the members have paid and encouraged those who have not to send in their dues immediately. Getting reinstated has become more difficult and it requires extra work for Will.

President Robinson gave an update on the George Washington banquet on February 23rd, at the St Petersburg Yacht Club. Social hour will start at 6pm, dinner at 7pm. Please see the flyer about the event in this newsletter.

Following lunch, Past President Charles Klug gave a presentation on Washington's rules of civility.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

**President Robbie Robinson presenting the Tampa SAR Coin to Past President Charles Klug for his outstanding discussion on Washington's Rules of Civility**

## December Meeting:

The Tampa Chapter is once again sponsoring the Wreaths Across America at the American Legion Post #5 Veterans Cemetery at 3810 W Kennedy Blvd. The formal ceremony is on Saturday, December 16, and will constitute our December Meeting. We will gather after the Ceremony to discuss any urgent business, and our Treasurer will provide a Revolutionary War short narrative as part of our 250th Anniversary activities. Our Chapter Color Guard will, once again, present the Colors at this Ceremony. The Ceremony starts at 12:00, but you should be there by 11:30.

For those of you not familiar with Wreaths Across America, please go to wreathsacrossamerica.org and learn their story.

## Upcoming Schedule for 2024:

-December 16th - Wreaths Across America, American Legion Post #5

-January 20th - Officer Installation

-February 23rd - Washington's Birthday Dinner at St Petersburg Yacht Club

-March 16th - EMT/Fire Fighter recognition

-April 20th - ROTC recognition

-May 18th - Speaker from Florida museum

## January Meeting:

Our January meeting will be held at the Bahama Breeze Restaurant on Saturday, January 20th, from 11:30am to 2pm. During the meeting, our elected officers will be sworn in for their term of office for 2024. We will also hold a short 250th Anniversary event, as well as recognize some of our chapter members for their service to our organization.

Please send your payment to our Treasurer, Will Wagner-Hart at the following address:
39441 Pattie Rd
Zephyrhills, FL 33540

Please see the flyer below for more details of the event. We will need a head count about a week prior to the meeting, so please plan accordingly and let us know if you will be joining us.

SAR

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Pease make plans to join us

Tampa Chapter Installation & Awards Luncheon  Saturday, Jan 20, 2024  11:30-2pm

Bahama Breeze  3045 N Rocky Point Dr East

Tampa 33607  813-459-8953

Dress: Business Attire  Guests Welcome

House Salad

Fresh greens, tomatoes, cucumbers, and pumpkin seeds, drizzled with island vinaigrette.

Entrée Selections (pick one on day of the event)

*Jerk Chicken Pasta

Sliced jerk chicken breast, fresh asparagus and mushrooms tossed in a rich Parmesan cream sauce with bow-tie pasta.

*Applewood Bacon & Cheddar Burger

*Coconut Shrimp

Large, crispy shrimp with yellow rice and broccoli

Dessert Shooters

Rebecca's Key Lime Pie or Rocky Road

Choice of coffee, tea, or soft drink

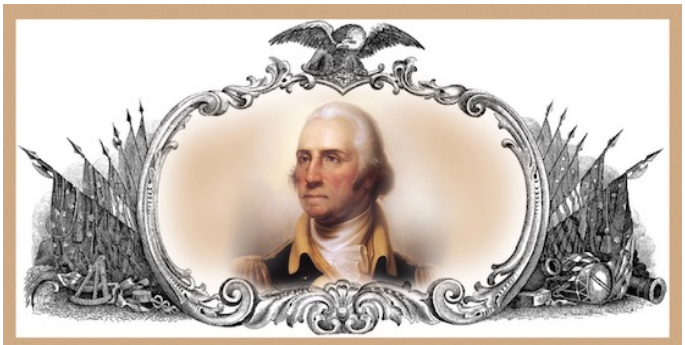
$37 pp includes tip  Checks payable to Tampa S.A.R

Please mail payment to Will Wagner-Hart

39441 Pattie Rd.  Zephyrhills, Fl 33540

Zelle:  tampasar.tres@gmail.com

As mentioned at our November SAR meeting, the Tampa Chapter will be hosting the George Washington Birthday Celebration for the Tampa Bay area's SAR and DAR chapters.  This will be a dinner event at the St Petersburg Yacht Club; attire will be coat and tie for men, formal for women, or Colonial Attire. Social time with cash bar will start at 6 PM; dinner will start at 7 PM.  Price for tickets is $65 per person which will include covered parking at the Yacht Club.  We will be selling tickets in the near future.  This is an event for members, spouses, and guests.  We are limited to a maximum of 250 people and hoping for a sell-out crowd.  During the social hour, attendees can view the silent auction/raffle items. Proceeds will go to designated charities.



Tampa area S.A.R. & D.A.R. chapters invite you to a Gala Birthday Celebration in honor of George Washington.

Friday, February 23, 2024

St. Petersburg Yacht Club - 11 Central Ave.

6 pm Social - 7pm Dinner

Coat & Tie, Formal, Period Attire

$65pp includes covered parking

We are now accepting reservations for what promises to be a very special evening. Guests welcome.

Please reserve your spot now with a check made payable to the Tampa S.A.R.  Mail to: Will Wagner-Hart

39441 Pattie Rd.  Zephyrhills, Fl 33540

Please note if a vegetarian meal is requested

# Color Guard Events and Other Important Dates for 2023:

-Dec 15:  DeSoto DAR Christmas Luncheon

-Dec 16: Wreaths Across America, American Legion Post #5, USS Tampa, Tampa

**Safety Harbor Christmas Parade on 2 Dec 2023.  Robbie Robinson, Matt Balencie, Dick Young, Walter Arnold, and Bill Swain**

The Tampa SAR Color Guard supported the Military Vehicles Restoration organization at the annual Safety Harbor Christmas Parade on 2 December.  The Color Guard led the military vehicles that had passengers giving away candy and beads to the community members who watched the parade.

# Revolutionary History Notes (by Bob Yarnell) Members Section:

I've written about Christmas in colonial America before and decided this year might be a good time to revisit the topic.

In the 21st century we begin our celebration of Christmas around Thanksgiving. Decorations go up…a tree, lights, ornaments and occasionally wreaths and greenery. However, in the 1950's, many parents did not put up the tree until after the children had gone to bed on Christmas Eve. To be blunt about it, they viewed it precisely as a Christmas tree, not an Advent tree.

Today in churches, instead of Advent being a season of preparation, Christmas carols and hymns are sung during Advent.  Christmas is child centric with an emphasis on gift giving. Some people still make room for "the reason for the season", but rarely are church services held on Christmas day, unless the calendar mandates it.

Let's contrast that with colonial America. The Christmas season started on Christmas and lasted twelve days until January 6th, Epiphany.  The main activity on Christmas Day was attending church. During the next twelve days there would be festivities of various kinds, mostly different types of social gatherings with the activities primarily determined by the socio-economic status of the group.

While some decorations may have gone up a few days before, Christmas Eve was decoration time consisting of wreaths, other types of greenery, and candles. In churches, what few Christmas hymns existed would not have been sung until Christmas. Indeed, up until quite recently many churches forbade the singing of carols until Christmas. Some individual churches/clergy still do this.

There was gift giving, but it was not reciprocal. It was top down with the more well-to-do giving out sweets and sweet cakes to their servants, children, and perhaps the less well-to-do. Sugar was the oil of the day, expensive and valuable. Thus, only the rich could afford to use it in cooking extravagances such as cakes and cookies. The giver received, in return, a sincere thank you. (1)

The change, as I'm sure most of you are aware, took place in the mid-19th century. Prince Albert brought many German Christmas customs to England when he married Quenn Victoria—the Christmas Tree, cards, and more extensive gift giving. Then Charles Dickens wrote a small book that "invented" Christmas. (2)

Add to that the Night Before Christmas poem, the commercialization of the 1920's, and a renewed focus on children and the nuclear family in the 20th century, and we get Christmas today.

Were we to be catapulted back to 1770, we could "fit in" and enjoy their Dec 25-Jan 6 Christmas celebration and feast. If the reverse happened, they would be worse than a fish out of water. With the exception of a Christmas Eve church service, our Nov. 25th to Jan 1st Christmas season and celebration would be incomprehensible to them.

Whether you go full bore or whether you enjoy a low-key Christmas celebration, here is a merry Christmas wish to you from the editors of the newsletter: Bob Yarnell, Dick Young, Robbie Robinson.

1 They had a much better grasp of Thanks. They understood that thanks is not the same as indebtedness. Someone helps me or gives me something. I will feel either thanks or indebtedness. Indebtedness occurs when a person perceives that they are under an obligation to make some repayment of compensation for the aid while thanks doesn't carry any obligation – I'm just thankful.

The following excerpt from an essay by Fr James Schall might help clarify.

GK Chesterton wrote: "I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." Why would Chesterton call thanks precisely "the highest form of thought"? I think it is because he understood the world was not made by us. We can only give "thanks" for what we receive that is not ours. And we can only give "thanks" to a "someone," not to a "something." "Thanks" are always addressed to another.

First, there is the "thanks" for what we did not ourselves make. Secondly, there is the wonder at the "thanks." That is, we are the ones who give the "thanks" almost as if this is our highest activity, as Plato would have said that it is. We give "thanks", all the while knowing that this act of ours is itself appropriate and fitting to give in that there is a "someone" to thank, hence the exhilaration.

2. "The Man Who Invented Christmas" by les Standiford recounts the story behind Charles

Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." Standiford credits Dickens with breathing new life into Dec. 25 as a major holiday. The Christmas Carol plot line is now so wrapped into our holiday season that it is hard to imagine this time of year without the themes of Scrooge or Tiny Tim. Feel free to insert a reference here to "It's A Wonderful Life." After all, the greedy Mr. Potter conspires to wreck George Bailey's life, and poor George is only saved from financial despair by the ghost/spirit of Clarence, who shows George alternative timelines of life if George was never there. Sound familiar? How about "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," or " A Charlie Brown Christmas"?

# Miscellaneous Reminders:

The face book page for the Tampa Sons of the American Revolution is Tampa Sar. The password to add anything is American1776.

Please feel free to upload pictures or comments. Invite all your friends to look.

Websites—remember you can find information about the chapter and programs on the chapter website: http://www.tampasar.org/, and that you can find information related to Florida SAR at FLSSAR.org.

**Secretary Request:**

Any officer or committee chairman giving a report that includes numbers or names, I would appreciate it if you could give me that information either via email prior to or after the meeting or hard copy at the meeting. During the meeting I may easily miss those details and that information will enable us to have more accurate and complete minutes.

**Chaplain Comments**:

One of the duties of the Chapter Chaplain is to send cards to our members that are sick. Another is to send a sympathy card to the family of a member who has passed away.

If you know of anyone that should be the recipient of these cards, please mention it to the Chaplain or one of the other officers at our next meeting.