



George Washington Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



Newsletter

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Volume 9, Issue 9

November, 2009

FINAL NOTICE

ALL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE NOT LATER THAN NOVEMBER 15, 2009

On October 21, 2009, a REMINDER STATEMENT was mailed to all members that had not sent in their 2010 dues. December 1, 2009, is the deadline for all chapters to send their 2010 membership dues to VASSAR. Any dues sent to VASSAR after December 1, 2009, must be accompanied by a reinstatement form (Form 0918) signed by the member. So let's avoid all this extra work and hassle by getting all our dues in on time. Please call any BOM member if you have questions.

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Our Next Meeting Will Be Held on November 14

At the November meeting, Compatriots will receive the report of the Nominating Committee which was appointed to prepare a slate of officers for the coming year. Election and induction of officers will take place at the December meeting.

Selection of a guest speaker for the November meeting is pending.

As soon as details are available, they will be posted on the events page of our website, <http://www.gwsar.org/events.html>. Alternatively, you may contact any chapter officer.

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Highlights of the October Meeting

Guest Speaker Dr. Matthew Spalding

In his presentation, Dr. Matthew Spalding, the Director of the B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies at The Heritage Foundation, reviewed the

political history of the formation of our unique government. Beginning with the Magna Carta, he followed the evolution of the concept of a republican government in colonial America. George Washington's return to civilian life after leading the army which won our freedom from English rule was cited as "the beginning of a very special time" in our history.



Dr. Spalding is introduced to those assembled for the October 10 luncheon.

From L to R: Chapter Vice President McHargue, Dr. Spalding, and Chapter President Walker.

Our national leaders in those heroic times sought answers to important questions. What is the legitimate source of a government's power? What should be the framework of a nation governed by the people rather than by the King?

Perhaps because of a lack of serious study of our history, the principles of self-government sought by our revolutionary ancestors are now being

challenged. This is evident in the trend toward administrative control over many facets of our daily lives. Love of independence and equality is giving way to a centralized government in which government assumes the role of a parent. Dr. Spalding urges us to rediscover our national principles and reclaim our future. That is the theme of his recently released book *We Still Hold These Truths*.

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Induction of Richard James Elston

Compatriot Elston was born and raised in Rockford, Illinois. In 1994, Richard received his B.A. from the University of Tulsa with a double major in History and Secondary Education. Richard earned his Master's Degree in Education from National-Louis University in 2006.

Richard has been employed as a high school teacher in Rockford Public Schools for 15 years. For the last ten years, he has worked in the social studies department at his alma mater, Guilford High School, teaching U.S. and World History. He currently teaches world history and geography classes and serves as coordinator for Guilford's 9th grade program.



Richard Elston takes the oath to become our Chapter's newest member.

L to R: Chapter President Walker, Richard Elston and his brother Chapter Secretary Michael Elston.

Richard lives in the Rockford area with his wife, Melanie, and his two step-children, Garrett and Zabrina. He enjoys fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities with his family. In his free time during the long northern Illinois winters, Richard enjoys reading, particularly historical non-fiction and fiction books.

Compatriot Elston's membership in the Sons of the American Revolution is based on his bloodline descent from Patriot Benjamin Elston who assisted in establishing American Independence while acting in the capacity of a Private in the New Jersey Militia, Captain Love's Company, 1st Regiment, Essex County.

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The Chapter President's Column

Dear Compatriots,

At the Board of Managers Meeting in October, I advised the other chapter officers that Mary and I had decided to move to Connecticut no later than the spring of 2010. Therefore, I would not be able to stand for re-election as Chapter President for 2010. In accordance with our by-laws, the Board of Managers approved the establishment of a Nominations Committee comprised of Don Reynolds, Kenan Torrans and myself. The Nominations Committee will recommend a slate of officers for the 2010 year at the November meeting for election in at our December meeting.

I am very pleased to announce that General Eric Shinseki, former Chief of Staff of the Army and current Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has agreed to accept the Gold Good Citizenship Award and speak to our chapter on the evening of Saturday, January 9, 2010. This event will be in lieu of our regular monthly meeting. We will invite VASSAR officers, other SAR chapters in our area and the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter of the DAR to participate in this event. We are exploring alternative venues since Belle Haven is not available that evening. We will announce the venue and details in the near future. Please mark this date on your calendar. It is important for all chapter members to make timely reservations for themselves, their spouses and guests since reservations will be limited and we expect considerable interest in attending this very special awards dinner.

The Chapter has a number of other events planned for the balance of this calendar year. For example, we will participate in the annual Veterans Day event at Mount Vernon with the Kate Waller

Barrett Chapter of the DAR. On Saturday, November 21, our chapter will lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. In addition, Kenan Torrans has agreed to lead a chapter grave marking ceremony at the auxiliary cemetery for OPMH in Old Town. This will occur on a weekend in December that will be announced at our next meeting.

We currently have 249 chapter members and 25 pending applications for membership. Of our current 249 members, as of the October meeting date, 133 had paid their 2010 dues and 74 had sent in member surveys. Thanks to all of our compatriots who have done so. For the balance of our members, please pay your dues and complete the member survey as soon as possible. We want to avoid the time and frustration associated with reinstatement if at all possible. In addition, we want to hear from our members regarding how we can continuously improve our chapter.

I hope to see you at our November meeting.

Compatriotically yours,

Dave Walker
Chapter President

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Arrival of Emilie Shearer

I am delighted to report that Michelle put down her Blackberry long enough to welcome the arrival of Emilie Shearer (pronounced "Emily") on Monday, October 26, 2009, at 1823. Emilie is well and weighed in at seven pounds, four ounces; nineteen and one half inches long. She is named after Michelle's paternal great-grandmother, who immigrated to the United States from Germany (Michelle's extreme efficiency now makes sense). Michelle is likewise well and has her Blackberry in hand — typing, feeding, asking innumerable questions, giving her husband instructions, and performing a multitude of other, simultaneous tasks.

C. Russell H. Shearer

[Ed note: As most Compatriots will remember, Russell is a past president of our chapter.]

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Dues Deferred for Compatriots with 60 Years Service

If you have been a member of the SAR for sixty years or more, NSSAR will defer your annual dues. Emeritus Member status was recently conferred upon Dr. Levi Old, Jr., of the Norfolk Chapter and John Redd

Smith of the Col. George Waller Chapter. If you believe you have been a member for sixty years, please contact Bob Carr, Chapter Registrar, who will notify the VASSAR Secretary.

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THE VIRGINIA BULLETIN Now On-Line

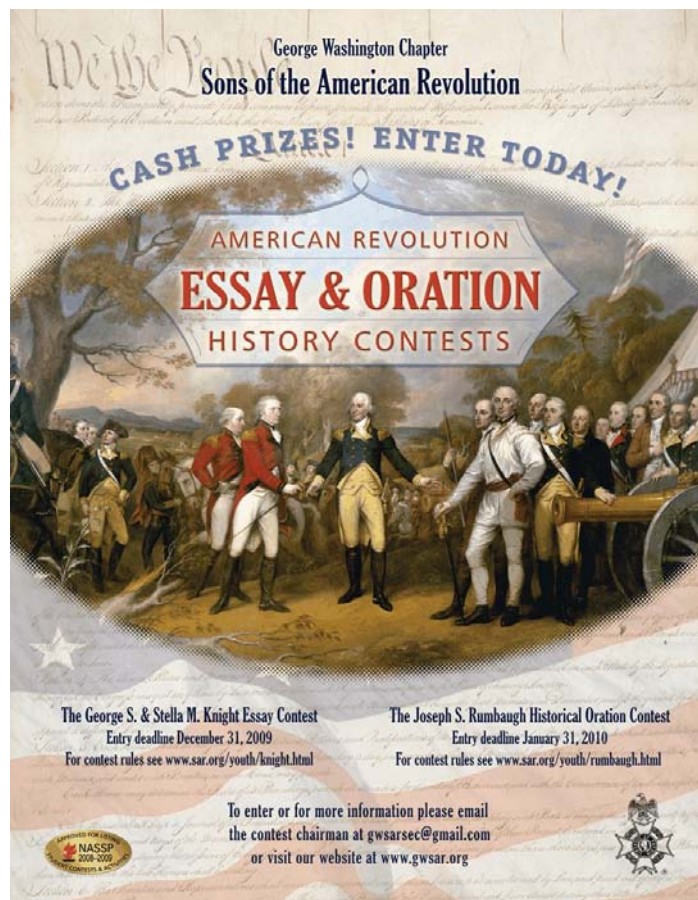
The latest issue of the Virginia Society's newsletter, *The Virginia Bulletin*, is available on line. Page 4 includes a nice picture of Registrar Bob Carr (in a shirt that must be seen to be believed) receiving the Liberty Medal

You can view the entire *Virginia Bulletin* by going to our chapter website, www.gwsar.org, and clicking on the LINKS page.

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High School Essay and Oration Contests

If you know a high school student looking for cash (and what high school student isn't?), tell them about the SAR Essay and Oration contests. Entries are now being accepted for the Knight Essay Contest (deadline December 31, 2009) and the Rumbaugh Oration Contest (deadline January 31, 2010). Winners will receive a CASH PRIZE and will be eligible to



compete for more at the state level. Winners at the state level will compete at the national level. First place prizes at the national level are \$2000 and \$3000, respectively, and significant prizes are also awarded to second and third place winners.

Contest rules and forms are available via links on our chapter's website, www.gwsar.org, or at [http://www.sar.org/Youth/Knight Essay](http://www.sar.org/Youth/Knight_Essay) and [http://www.sar.org/Youth/Oration Contest](http://www.sar.org/Youth/Oration_Contest). All entries must be submitted by the appropriate deadline to the contest chair, Chapter Secretary Michael Elston, at gwsarsec@gmail.com.

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Inputs for Our Website

The Chapter is collecting short biographies of the patriot ancestors of our members for publication on the website. If you have not already submitted yours, please do so as soon as possible. Your biographies and any other comments you have for the website should be directed to Chapter Secretary Mike Elston at gwsarsec@gmail.com.

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Registrars Report

Membership

Our Chapter continues to grow with the addition of new members, transfers and reinstatements. Since my last report, we have received one new application, two requests to transfer from CAR to SAR, and one former member requesting reinstatement.

Presently, five new applications are at National level for approval. Twenty-four applications are in progress. One has been sent to VASSAR for forwarding to NSSAR; eight are complete in draft and have been returned to the applicant for review and attachment of additional supporting documentation. Eleven are in various forms of draft or awaiting documentation from the applicant with four in question whether applicant intends to complete his application.

Application Notes

If you have family members or friends who are interested in joining SAR, you should encourage them to submit their applications as soon as possible so that they can take advantage of the current application fees. With the current fee increases for 2010, applicants can save at least \$20.00 by doing so. The cost of all applications after January 1, 2010 will increase from \$60.00 to \$80.00. Compatriots with names of prospective members should contact me at 703-780-3066,

703-407-4496 or e-mail capt7cs@aol.com and provide him with the prospective member's telephone number and home address. A New Member packet with application instructions and membership benefits information will be provided. If you would like a New Member packet to give to a prospective member, please let me know and I will get a packet to you.

Life Membership: If you are considering a life membership, you should be sure to have your application in the mailed before November 1, 2009. After that date, Life Membership increases in cost.

Bob Carr
Registrar

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George Washington and the Constitution

[After listening to Dr. Spalding's talk, a few of General Washington's observations on the still unratified Constitution seemed appropriate.]

After the Constitutional Convention a Long, Quiet Wait at Mount Vernon

Washington's long, hot summer in Philadelphia where he presided over the Constitutional Convention finally came to an end in September, 1787. On Tuesday, September 18th, he dined early at Mr. Morris's, then began his trip home to Mount Vernon.

In his diary for Saturday, 22d, Washington wrote: "Breakfasted at Bladensburg and passing through George Town dined in Alexandria and reached home about Sunset after an absence of four Months and 14 days."

Thus began a long, quiet wait while each of the states debated ratification of the newly drafted Constitution. Almost immediately the press was filled with a continuous string of anonymous essays. The most important of those which were designed to inform the public of the merits and faults of the Constitution we now know as the Federalist Papers.

General Washington, busily occupied with the management of his plantation, remained close to his home. A quick review of his diaries shows that after the beginning of 1788 Washington left the boundaries of his plantation only three times before Virginia's ultimate acceptance of the Constitution. He went to Alexandria twice — once to vote in the election of county delegates to Virginia's Ratification Convention and once to attend church. On another occasion he was absent for a short period to travel to Great Falls to inspect progress of the Potomack Canal.

In spite of harsh winter weather, Washington

normally made the routine horseback inspection of his plantation. On February 5th, he wrote Henry Knox, "The Navigation of this river has been stopped for near five weeks. At this moment we are locked fast by Ice, and the air of this day is amongst the keenest I ever recollect to have felt." The ground was snow covered. On February 7th, his diary entry reads, "Mercury in the Ball in the Morning. By noon it raised to 24 and by Night was at 26. . . . At home all day." Can you imagine how cold it must have been in the study, where on that day Washington wrote three long letters? One of them was to the Marquis de Lafayette.

In that letter you will gather an insight on Washington's thoughts on the outcome of the ratification debates, his concern for world affairs, and a forecast for the expansion of the United States.

To the Marquis de Lafayette

Mount Vernon, Virginia

February 7, 1788

"You know it always gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear from you, my dear Marquis, and therefore I need only say that your two kind letters of the 9th and 15th of Octo. so replete with personal affection and confidential intelligence, afforded me inexpressible satisfaction."

"You appear to be, as might be expected from a real friend to this country, anxiously concerned about its present political situation. So far as I am able I shall be happy in gratifying that friendly solicitude. As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the New Constitution, I will disclose them without reserve (although by passing through the Post offices they should become known to all the world) for, in truth, I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle, that the Delegates from so many different States (which States you know are also different from each other in their manners, circumstances and prejudices) should unite in forming a system of national government, so little liable to well founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial or indiscriminating admirer of it, as not to perceive it is tinctured with some real (though not radical) defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable, I therefore forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points (the pivots on which the whole machine must move) my Creed is simply:

"1st. — That the general government is not invested with more Powers than are indispensably necessary to

perform the functions of a good Government; and, consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of Power delegated to it:

"2^{ly}. — That these Powers (as the appointment of all rulers will forever arise from, and, at short stated intervals, recur to the free suffrage of the People) are so distributed among the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches, into which the general government is arranged, that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarch, an Oligarchy, an Aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form; so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the People.

"I would not be understood my dear Marquis to speak of consequences which may be produced, in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness for the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind; for of the successful usurpations that may be established at such an unpropitious juncture, upon the ruins of liberty, however providently guarded and secured, as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least be a recommendation to the proposed Constitution that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction of Tyranny, & those of a nature less liable to be surmounted, than any government hitherto instituted among mortals, hath possessed. We are not to expect perfection in this world: but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of Government. — Should that which is now offered to the People of America, be found on experiment less perfect than it can be made — a Constitutional door is left open for its amelioration. Some respectable characters have wished that the States, after having pointed out whatever alterations and amendments may be judged necessary, would appoint another federal Convention to modify it upon those documents. For myself I have wondered that sensible men should not see the impracticability of the scheme. The members would go fortified with such Instructions that nothing but discordant ideas could prevail. Had I but slightly suspected (at the time when the late Convention was in session) that another Convention would not be likely to agree upon a better form of Government, I should now be confirmed in the fixed belief that they would not be able to agree upon any System whatever: So many, I may add, such contradictory, and, in my opinion, unfounded

objections have been urged against the system in contemplation; many of which would operate equally against every efficient Government that might be proposed. I will only add, as a farther opinion founded on the maturest deliberation, that there is no alternative — no hope of alteration— no intermediate resting place — between the adoption of this and a recurrence to an unqualified state of Anarchy, with all its deplorable consequences.

“Since I had the pleasure of writing to you last, no material alteration in the political State of affairs has taken place to change the prospect of the constitution’s being adopted by nine States or more. Pennsylvania, Delaware, Jersey and Connecticut have already done it. It is also said Georgia has acceded. — Massachusetts, which is perhaps thought to be rather more doubtful than when I last addressed you, is now in convention.

“A spirit of emigration to the western Country is very predominant. Congress have sold, in the year past, a pretty large quantity of lands on the Ohio, for public Securities, and thereby diminished the domestic debt considerably. Many of your Military acquaintances such as the Generals Parsons, Varnum and Putnam, the Cobs. Tupper Sprout and Sherman, with many more, propose settling there. From such beginnings much may be expected.”

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“It gives me great pleasure to learn the present ministry of France are friendly to America; and that Mr Jefferson & yourself have a prospect of accomplishing measures which will mutually benefit and improve the commercial intercourse between the two Nations.

“Every good wish attend you & yrs & I am &c.
Go. Washington”

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Calendar of Coming Events

[Ed Note: Final arrangements for several events listed below were still being developed at press time. As soon as details are available, they will be posted on the events page of our website, <http://www.gwsar.org/-events.html>.]

November

- 11 GW Chapter participates with Kate Waller Barrett Chapter DAR in Veterans’ Day Ceremonies at Mount Vernon. Details TBA.
- 14 GW Chapter Luncheon Meeting. Nominating Committee will report a slate of officers for next year. Guest Speaker TBA.
- 21 **Tentative** Wreath-laying Ceremony at Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery. Details TBA.

December

- 9 Battle of Great Bridge. Details TBA.
- 12 GW Chapter Luncheon Meeting, **Officers for the coming year will be elected and inducted at this meeting.** VASSAR President Bill Simpson will be our Guest Speaker.
- 14 Wreaths Across America, National Cemeteries, noon.
- TBD Our Chapter will conduct a ceremony to dedicate a plaque recognizing the patriot ancestors buried in the Old Presbyterian Meeting House Auxiliary Cemetery at Hamilton Lane.

January

- 9 Special Evening Meeting. General Eric Shinseki, former Chief of Staff of the Army and current Secretary of Veterans Affairs will formally accept the Gold Good Citizenship Award and speak to our chapter at this meeting. Details TBA.

February

- 12-13 2010 VASSAR Annual Meeting, Richmond.

November 14, 2009

Lunch Meeting Reservation Form

Please use this form to make a reservation for the chapter's lunch at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia. The lunch cost is \$35.00 per person. Check in and social time begin at 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be called to order at 12:00 noon. Feel free to invite your wife and friends as your guests.

RSVP no later than Monday, November 9th.

Walk-ins will be accommodated if possible, but note that to cover the Club's charge for serving those without a timely reservation a walk-in price of \$37.00 is required.

Name: _____

A check for ____ persons in the amount of \$ ____ payable to **G. W. Chapter SAR** is enclosed.
Mail this reservation form with your check to:

F. Paul Briggs, Treasurer
7213 Regent Drive
Alexandria, VA 22307

You may also phone (703) 768-6910 and leave a message or e-mail gnpbriggs@cox.net.
Please include "SAR reservation for (spell out name)" on the subject line of the e-mail.
It is important to provide advance notice of attendance to be sure you get a seat.

Valet parking is available.

The George Washington Chapter was chartered in its present form on April 2, 1954. With over 200 members, it is Virginia's largest SAR chapter. Meetings are held at 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month (June, July & August excepted) at the Belle Haven Country Club, 6023 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria, Virginia.

Present officers are:

President: Dave Walker 703-619-9751
Vice President: Vern McHargue 202-439-1530
Secretary: Mike Elston 703-680-0866
Treasurer: Paul Briggs 703-768-6910
Registrar: Bob Carr 703-780-3066

This monthly newsletter is edited by Don Kraft, who depends heavily on inputs from chapter officers and committee chairmen. Inputs from others are always welcome. Please send your inputs and comments to kraftdon@att.net or call 703-451-6132.