



# FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MAY

2010

## 60th ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Fort Delaware Society held its 60th Anniversary at the Annual Luncheon on March 7, 2010 at the Christiana Hilton. Originally scheduled for February 7, the event had to be postponed due to a major snow storm that dumped 25 inches of the white stuff on northern Delaware the day before. In his opening remarks, President Bill Robelen made it clear that his promise made when he was first elected President in 1984 that it would not snow the day of the meeting was still valid, despite the fact that most roads were impassable and parking lots had not been cleared. The featured Guest Speaker was David Rickman, Publications/Exhibits Coordinator for the Division of Parks & Recreation. David is a talented artist in his own right and presented an excellent Power Point assisted talk about Max Neugas, a Confederate POW who was imprisoned at Fort Delaware after the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. While there, he made a number of beautiful and detailed sketches of the Fort and of his fellow prisoners. The Boston Atheneum has one original in its collection, the Delaware Historical Society has one, and the Fort Delaware Society is proud to have six originals. They are included in our *Catalog of Historical Photographs*.

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ELECTED

The business portion of the Annual Luncheon is for the purpose of electing Officers and Directors for 2010. The following slate was elected:

Chairman: Bill Craven  
President: Bill Robelen  
Vice President: Edith Mahoney  
Treasurer: Kay Keenan  
Secretary: Tom Smith

**DIRECTORS:** Dan Cashin, Richard Hoffman, Brendan Mackie, Jayne McCormick, David Price, Carolyn Raniszewski, Roger Reynolds, Hugh Simmons, Bob Stark and Roberta Steele.

Former Treasurer Don Sholl had to resign his position due to pressing and time consuming matters in his business. Chairman Craven praised Don for his contribution in establishing solid business practices and accounting procedures. Kay Keenan, a Director for the past 19 years, graciously agreed to assume the Treasurer's duties. In the short time she has been in office she has demonstrated her eagerness to be involved in every aspect of the position. The task of managing an organization like the Society becomes more complicated each year, and the Board deserves your support for all their efforts throughout the year.

## LIBRARY DATA BASE COMPLETED

The W. Emerson Wilson Memorial Library has been an invaluable asset to the Society as well as to the many researchers and authors who have used this resource for many years. It has continued to grow through the generosity of members and others who have contributed to it, bringing the total to over 1800 volumes. The old card system has served us well, but the computer age makes things more efficient, plus it offers more information and related benefits. Using a data base system designed by Director Hugh Simmons, Office Manager Martha Bennett, V.P. Edie Mahoney and Director Jayne McCormick have worked diligently to examine each and every book and entered the pertinent information into our computer. The process began late last fall and is now complete. What remains now is to compile a CD with the data and distribute it free of charge to all libraries and Civil War related organizations in Delaware and surrounding communities. In time it will also be posted on our Web site so that interested persons may be informed of this valuable research resource. We are indebted to Hugh, Martha, Edie and Jayne for all their efforts to bring this project to completion.

## **VICTORIAN KIDSFEST**

The Second Annual Victorian KidsFest will be held at the Fort on Sunday, June 13 from noon to 4 PM. The Park has purchased a 20' x 60' tent that will be used to conduct all activities outside the Fort, keeping everything in one dedicated location. Notices will be distributed to school children in the three local districts in May. The exhibition 19th century baseball game with players in period-correct uniforms will be repeated. Children again will be invited to "enlist" in the Army and to participate in a variety of crafts, including making cloth dolls, pine cone bird feeders, clothes pin soldiers and pin-wheels. Everyone will be able to examine a fascinating collection of artifacts from the Civil War era, and we plan to have special live music throughout the day.

Many more exciting activities, games and prizes are being planned to round out the day, but parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles need to mark their calendars now for Sunday, June 13, 2010 and round up all the kids they can to be a part of this very special day at the Fort.

Don't forget to bring your cameras to record all the family fun.

### **2010 SEASON TO START**

The Fort will be open to the public at the usual schedule of Wednesday through Sunday beginning June 16. Groups are advised to make reservations for the Delafort ferry. Call the Park office for details 834-7941.

## **WE LOSE A FRIEND**

All of us who are associated with Fort Delaware State Park as well as those at other Parks throughout the state were saddened to learn of the death of Lee Jennings on March 4th. His impact and influence will serve to keep his memory alive now and in the future. Lee played a major role in the refurbishment of Fort Delaware and always expressed his special love for the Fort. A Celebration of his life was held at Fort Miles in Lewes, DE on April 24.

## **VERIZON FOUNDATION SUPPORT OF THE FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY**

The Verizon Foundation sponsors a Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP) for its employees/retirees by recognizing contributions of time and talent to non-profit organizations such as our Society.

Under the program, employees are eligible to apply for a grant of \$750 on behalf of the qualified organization where they volunteered 50 hours or more during the year. We always have work to be done in our office as well as on the Island. If you are or know of a Verizon employee/retiree, please consider volunteering with the Society and qualifying for the award. It's a unique way to provide two-fold support. For info: <http://foundation.verizon.com/employee/vip.shtml>

We welcome assistance from any and all sources. Call Martha at our office 834-1630 to offer your help.

## **VOLUNTEER BRIGADE NEEDS WORKERS**

The Fort Delaware Society's Volunteer Brigade coordinated by Director Jayne McCormick worked diligently this past season at the Fort under the direction of Superintendent Becky Webb with projects in and around the Fort. There are always more tasks on the Island than the present Park staff can handle, and this is an excellent way to involve more members in the community. It is hoped that some of them may become active members of the Society. We, as well as the Park Staff, are indebted to the many hours of hard work put in by all these volunteers, and Superintendent Webb has expressed her gratitude for the help. Do your part and become one of the Brigade. It doesn't require a major commitment of time or effort. Some projects only take a day. All ages are invited.

## **BUS TRIP PLANNED**

Director Dan Cashin is planning a Civil War Sesquicentennial bus trip event, "*On the Path of the Gettysburg Prisoners*" tracing the path the Confederate POWs took from the time of their arrival at Baltimore's President Street Station to their disembarking at Fort Delaware. It will start in Delaware City and include stops at Fort McHenry and the C&D Canal Museum in Chesapeake City. Plan to spend a whole day from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM. More details remain to be worked out including the date. We will keep you posted on the status of this interesting and educational event.

*March 7, 2010 Annual Meeting*



*President Bill Robelen*



*Chairman Bill Craven*



*Lee Jennings Remembered*



*David Rickman Discusses Max Neugas*



*Drawing Door Prizes*



*Guests Awaiting Presentation*

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### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Net proceeds from sales in our Sutler Shop are the single largest source of revenue for the Society. It is a major job to staff the shop, but when spread out among lots of volunteers, it does not represent a huge investment of time and effort for any one person. And as any one who has done it will tell you, it is a rather enjoyable experience. First time volunteers will be given a thorough orientation by Shop Manager Martha Bennett, who will not leave you on your own until you are perfectly at ease with the task. You'll meet a lot of interesting people and will do a lot for your Society.

### **ANOTHER WAY TO SUPPORT THE SOCIETY**

Two years ago we made arrangements with Charles Schwab & Co. to allow individuals to make contributions to the Society by donating appreciated stocks. It provides a definite tax advantage to the donor and is a unique way to financially support the Society.

It was agreed upon at the March meeting of the Board to use these funds as a "set aside" to provide for future maintenance or repair of our headquarters. The time will come when we need a new roof or repainting of the exterior, both of which are major expense items. Now we are prepared.

### **OUTREACH SPREADS THE WORD**

Your Directors are hard at work throughout the year to promote both the Park and the Society. Here is a partial list of the venues where we played an active role.

Speeches at two Masonic Lodges; Manor College in PA; Newark Sr. Center; Salem County Genealogical Society; Marple Township Historical Society; and Delaware Valley Civil War Roundtable. Participated at Finns Point Memorial service; Newark Community Day; Neshaminy State Park, PA; Delaware Valley Civil War Roundtable; Newark Night and C.W. Memorial event at Mt. Salem Methodist church.