



DECEMBER

FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

2007

NEW WINDOWS

In order to fulfill our obligation to comply with US Department of Interior Restoration Standards we had all twenty windows removed last Spring, (seven at a time) and completely restored, painted and reinstalled. Because of the age of the sashes, there were many small gaps that prevented them from being weather tight. We caulked every joint, touched up the paint and, as an added measure, we installed mini blinds on every window. The difference in our air conditioning electric bill was amazing—about half the previous cost. The blinds also serve as an effective way to block ultra violet rays from the sun damaging our collections of books and artifacts. Custom made wood storm windows are in the process of being fabricated and should be in place before the severe winter cold sets in. The “new” windows add greatly to the appearance of our headquarters and improve the thermal efficiency of the building.

SUTLER SHOP ATTRACTS VISITORS

Visitors to our Sutler Shop this past season represented 44 states, Washington, DC and 22 foreign countries.

FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 16th saw a crowd of 40 interested members and guests attend our Fall General Membership meeting, almost filling the large meeting room at #33 Staff Lane. Our Guest Speaker was Mr. Justin Carisio, researcher and author, who kept the audience fascinated by his remarks on the history of the 4th Delaware. The obvious interest in his presentation was evidenced by the questions that were addressed to him at the conclusion of his program. More than ample refreshments were provided by Directors, Kay Keenan, Carolyn Raniszewski, Edie Mahoney, Tom Smith and David Price.

During his welcome, President Bill Robelen remarked that we did not have a lectern (to lean on or hide behind) and said that anyone interested in donating, building or buying one could speak with him after the program. In keeping with the generosity of our members, Stan Hughes volunteered to purchase one. Bill found a very suitable lectern on the Internet for \$150 and told Stan that we could purchase it with our MasterCard and send him the invoice, so that he could determine how much he was willing to contribute. (continued on page 4)

SUTLER SHOP VOLUNTEERS

Proceeds from sales at our Sutler Shop in the Fort make up almost one-third of our operating budget. That's a substantial figure, and it is only possible with the help from our members who volunteer their time to staff the shop while the Fort is open. Those workers not only greatly help our financial picture, they provide invaluable service to the Park and its visitors, by answering their questions and by making them feel welcome. In lieu of Shop Manager Martha Bennett's personal thank you notes to all who participated, we think that it is such a valuable service, those volunteers need to be recognized and praised by the entire membership. Please express your gratitude to the following:

*Barbara Citron
Bob Curtin
Randy & Beverly Hansen
Deb Haskell
Kay Keenan
Brandon Keenan
John & Judy LaRosch
Carolyn Raniszewski
Roger Reynolds
Bill Robelen
Jennifer Robelen
Don Sholl
Hugh Simmons
Tom Smith
Bob Stark*

The Officers and Directors add their sincere thanks to these generous and willing members.

A TALE OF THREE TUBES

If the following sounds a bit confusing and complicated, you will appreciate what it took to straighten the whole situation out to every ones satisfaction.

Let's begin by going back to the early 1970s, when an 1812 cannon tube was dug out of the Christina River by the Pugh-Chalfont-Lenderman VFW Post and presented as a gift to the Fort Delaware Society. We'll call that one *Tube #1*. Then, late in 1974, the Delaware National Guard loaned us two naval cannon tubes. One, which we will call *Tube #2*, was an 850 pound Huss 12-pounder model made in Vienna, Austria in 1828. and found at the Petersburg Battlefield (VA) with an original live Confederate canister in the tube well over 40 years ago. The remaining tube from the National Guard we'll designate *Tube #3*. It was a 1700 pound bronze cannon built by the Ames Company of Springfield, MA in 1853.

So what we have now is *Tube #1* from the VFW; *Tube #2* a naval model Huss on loan from the DNG; and *Tube #3*, an Ames heavy bronze cannon, also on loan from the DNG. (*Please refer to Fort Delaware Notes dated January 1975*).

In 1997, the opportunity arose for the Division of Parks & Recreation to obtain a very rare and valuable 8" Columbiad cannon. It was agreed that the Fort Delaware Society would contribute \$7500 to Parks toward the pur-

chase of the Columbiad, and in addition, the Society would donate the Huss tube in trade toward acquisition of the Columbiad. Since the Huss tube was on loan from the National Guard, we contacted them to obtain permission to trade it. However, there was no one there who remembered the details of the original loan, so we were given verbal authority to make the trade.

That left two tubes at the Fort—*Tube #1* and *Tube #3*. One was on the floor in the Visitor Center and the other on a wood mount on the sidewalk at the northwest corner of the parade ground.

On December 21, 2006, based on insufficient investigation and in the belief that those two tubes belonged to the DNG, a Guard helicopter airlifted both tubes to the Guard facility on Route 9 south of New Castle. The Society was made aware of this action quite by accident, which prompted the Society President to initiate a series of phone calls, letters and e-mail messages to determine why such action was taken without our knowledge. While it was true that *Tube #3* was indeed on loan from the DNG, nevertheless, it was entered into our archival records, and as such, we were responsible for it. *Tube #1* was undeniably ours.

Understandably, the members of the DNG were most embarrassed at the situation. Lt. General (ret.) William H. Duncan; Logistics Specialist Richard C.

Windle and Brigadier General Terry L. Wiley were very cooperative in resolving the matter. The end result was two-fold. Major General Francis D. Vavala wrote a letter to the Society this past June transferring and giving the Huss (*Tube #2*) to the Society and noting the return of the Ames (*Tube #3*) to the DNG. That left *Tube #1* to be accounted for, since it was one of the two airlifted to the DNG. Because both it and the Ames tube were naval cannon, the DNG plans to transport them to the Delaware Military Academy (DMA) in Wilmington for future restoration and display, because the DMA is associated with the US Navy.

Based on a decision by our Board, the Society sent a letter to the DMA in January 2007 offering them the 1812 cannon (*Tube #1*) on indefinite loan for restoration, interpretation and display, with the understanding that should the DMA ever close its doors, the Cannon would revert back and be returned to the Society. The letter was signed by John J. Wintermantle and returned.

To date, both *tubes #1* and *#3* are still stored in a warehouse at the National Guard facility in New Castle. Our tale is told (*for now*).

The Officers and Directors of the Fort Delaware Society extend to you and your families warmest greetings for the Holiday Season and best wishes for a safe and Happy New Year.

*General Membership Meeting
At 33 Staff Lane on October 16, 2007*



Guest Speaker Justin Carisio Gives Presentation on 4th Delaware Infantry



*Members and Guests Enjoy Refreshments
in Board of Directors Meeting Room*





FORT DELAWARE SOCIETY

Founded 1950

P.O. Box 553 • Delaware City, DE 19706

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 10
DELAWARE CITY, DE

Mr. & Mrs. R. Hugh Simmons
1076 Valley Green Road
East, PA 19301

FALL MEETING

(continued from Page 1)

Stan wrote back stating he and his wife Jeanne would send us a check for \$200 plus an application for a matching gift from a private foundation where Jeanne works. With Stan's permission, we were able to purchase a much needed wall-mounted pull-down projection screen with the additional funds. It is worth repeating many times over that the support and generosity of our members exceed our fondest dreams. Thank you Stan and Jeanne and everyone who works to make our Society so efficient and effective.

REMINDER

Annual Luncheon Feb. 3

COMPUTER UPDATE

Computers are a wonderful tool, but technology changes so rapidly, it doesn't take too long before that "new" model is superseded. Our "old" unit was purchased over ten years ago, but we could not justify the expense of a newer model. The Tome school in North East, MD had recently replaced some of its computers, and thanks to the generosity of the school's principal and to former Society Director David Runk, who teaches computer science there, we were able to obtain a commercial grade model with much greater speed and far larger capacity. This is just another example how our supporters keep us current and technologically sound.

RISING COSTS

When the Board was forced to adjust our dues schedule several months ago, some of the categories were dropped, some remained the same, and a couple were increased. We only had three complaints, which indicates that our members fully understand how much it costs to run an organization such as ours. No organization likes to increase dues, but running our Society is a lot like running your own home. We work to conserve energy, but electric charges and fuel prices are rising considerably. Postage costs continue to rise, but we have to keep our members informed. We promise to watch our expenses carefully and continuously.

Published by the Fort Delaware Society

P.O. Box 553 • Delaware City, DE 19706 • (302) 834-1630 • www.del.net/org/fort