



# George Washington Chapter Sons of the American Revolution



## Newsletter

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### **Introducing Congressman Tom Davis Our Guest Speaker for the March Luncheon**

Prior to his election to Congress, Tom was the chief elected official in Fairfax County, the eleventh most populous municipality with the second largest county budget in the United States. In 1993, during Tom's tenure as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County was recognized as the nation's best financially managed county.

Formerly the Vice President and General Counsel of PRC, Inc., a high technology and professional services firm, Tom moved to the position of Corporate Counsel upon his election as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Before his election to that post, Tom served for 12 years as Mason District's representative to the Board. Tom is also a charter member and past president of the Bailey's Crossroads Rotary Club, and he has served on numerous charity boards.

Tom was born in Minot, North Dakota on January 5, 1949, and moved with his family to Fairfax County at an early age. He graduated as president of his class from the United States Capitol Page School following four years as a U.S. Senate Page. He went on to Amherst College, graduating with honors in Political Science, and subsequently earned a law degree from the University of Virginia. Tom also attended Officer Candidate School, served on active duty in the U.S. Army, and served eight years with the Virginia National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve.

Tom's list of legislative accomplishments is both long and impressive. His strong leadership

on a number of committees has earned a reputation among his constituents, colleagues and the media as a strong advocate of federal employees and contractors, and as an expert in federal procurement policy.

Tom continues to fight for those issues most important to Northern Virginians, including securing more federal dollars for transportation projects and seeing to it that federal education funding can be spent as local school districts see fit. Tom was instrumental in securing the final \$900 million for a new Woodrow Wilson Bridge in 2000.

Tom's legislative accomplishments were recognized in January 2003, when he was elected to chair the House Government Reform Committee for the 108th Congress. Under his leadership the Committee conducted oversight on and investigated matters related to the effective administration of government programs of great public interest. These programs included government contracting in support of the war in Iraq, the Agriculture Department's handling of the discovery of Mad Cow Disease in the United States, and the role of the National Guard in national security and homeland defense.

In January 2005, Tom was reappointed to serve as chair of the House Government Reform Committee. The committee will focus on legislation including drivers' license security; reauthorization of Executive Reorganization Authority; and streamlining the Presidential appointments process.

On the oversight side, the Committee will focus on the GAO's high-risk list; management

of the Department of Homeland Security; the battle against narco-terrorism; and other issues.

In February 2005, Tom was appointed to serve on the Homeland Security Committee. He serves on the Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity and the Subcommittee on Management, Integration, and Oversight.

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## **Chapter Members Visit the National Archives**

**Reported by Compatriot Paul Briggs**

On the clear cold Wednesday morning of January 23, 2008, Archivist of the United States, Dr. Allen Weinstein, made good on an offer he had made as guest speaker at a recent chapter luncheon. Arranged by chapter Vice President, Dave Walker, Dr. Weinstein and some of his staff led a personal tour of the National Archives. Chapter President, Kenan Torrans, along with Chapter Secretary Paul Briggs and Board of Managers member, Michael Elston, were in the delegation. Dave's wife, Mary (a DAR member), and two or three of Dave's executive staff from the Government Accountability Office also eagerly took part.

It probably goes without saying that the historical perspectives offered in this once in a lifetime offering were nothing short of fantastic. The tour lasted about three hours. It included a sweeping overview of the nation's founding documents, offering many little known facts and details on both the substantive and technical aspects of their development and publication. For example, the text of the Constitution was likely made more concise and textually shorter for reasons of economy. The evidence: the calligrapher, Jacob Shalits (sp?) charged by the word, and he had passed much of the work to his apprentice son to keep the billable rate lower for the task. Among the many other things, we learned that the Bill of Rights is a reconciled bill, for which the actual first and second amendments deal with the relatively less soaring subjects of the number of representatives per population and caps on congressional salaries, respectively. The original thirteenth amendment, signed by President Buchanan, would not

have eliminated slavery as the enacted later version did, but instead would have established slavery under the U.S. Constitution. This initial version was not ratified in Congress, and as we all know, the nation subsequently further steered towards the often painful course unfolding the ever increasing expansion of liberty envisioned in the words of the Declaration of Independence. This path eventually involved the Civil War, reconstruction and the ensuing national period and the century and a half beyond. The expansion of liberty and participatory democracy mark unique attributes of the American contribution to world history. The Archives' master plan envisions a new wing that will examine them more thoroughly and more exclusively as themes.

We were treated to a visit in the vaults, where the group had the opportunity to view some unique original documents. Included were officer's loyalty oaths from the Revolution; a letter from President Jefferson to a constituent; a hand crafted map of Gettysburg that included Robert E. Lee's report on the battle; an original reward poster and the transcripts of the military trial of the conspirators, who were later executed for President Lincoln's assassination. We also viewed a significant recent find, a letter from President Lincoln to General Halleck dated July 7, 1863, immediately following the federal Civil War successes at the Battles of Vicksburg, MS and Gettysburg, PA. The archivist who discovered the letter was our guide in the vault (he played a role in the recent movie "National Treasure"). His most recent discovery of the Lincoln to Halleck correspondence, penned on War Department stationary, may as well have been Babe Ruth's 60th home run for the excitement it generated. Many of the side bar discussions and questions/answers in the vault, and elsewhere, were as interesting as the basic tour, but are unfortunately too numerous to recount here.

Dr. Weinstein showed us the work spaces offered to teachers and students for research and lesson development. He explained the Archives' commitment to improving public education and his desire to involve more disadvantaged youth

in U.S. historical studies. He closed out the tour in his office with more engaging discussion on the activities and future plans of the Archives, and its private foundation's contributions, educational offerings and activities. The visit concluded as Dr. Weinstein, General Walker and the entourage walked by the original Franklin D. Roosevelt memorial, a small inconspicuous marker stone just outside the main building. We departed significantly enriched, having loved every minute and craving more.

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### **Our February Guest Speaker**

Members and guests enjoyed another great luncheon speaker. Governor Keating described a special project he has been working on for the last few years. He is writing biographies of important Americans for young readers. Children in the six-to-nine year age group have been thrilled with the stories of prominent Americans like Will Rogers and Theodore Roosevelt.

Told in first person language, the stories examine the lives of his subjects by focusing on aspects



Governor Keating receives a bust of General Washington from Chapter Vice President Dave Walker.

that are of interest to children. In writing these

biographies, Keating asks the question, “what would a young audience want to know about this person?” For example, his biography of Theodore Roosevelt includes the fact that, as a child, Roosevelt was severely afflicted with asthma - an aspect of Roosevelt’s life that is particularly interesting to youngsters. Governor Keating stressed the importance of introducing prominent Americans to children and hopes that his books will inspire them to continue to read biographies and histories as they mature. His enthusiasm for this work is quite obvious.

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### **February Activities**

#### **VASSAR Annual Meeting, February 15-16**

Nine compatriots from our chapter attended the Annual VASSAR Meeting in Richmond. The most significant business placed before the membership was the proposal to relocate the office of our national headquarters.

The details of that proposal were featured in the most recent SAR Magazine.



Chapter members attending the VASSAR Annual Meeting. From the left, McGuire, Baldwin, Briggs, Torrains, Walker, Beach, Kraft and Reynolds. Compatriot Bob Carr also attended but is not shown in this photo.

During the General Membership Meeting, President General Wilcox presented the pros and cons of several alternatives that had been examined in exploring possible a new locations for NSSAR’s offices. The

recommended alternative is to sell the present office building in Louisville, Kentucky, and move to a more desirable central location in Louisville where a building is available. There is not space in this newsletter to provide all the details of this important decision. Suffice it to say that our chapter's delegation strongly felt that if the NSSAR headquarters must be moved, it should be returned to the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

Compatriot Dan McGuire rose and made an eloquent plea against the proposal recommended by President General Wilcox. He challenged each point of the analysis presented by the President General and urged that the benefits of returning our national headquarters to the Washington area be fully evaluated before making a final decision.

This important decision will be made later in February when the NSSAR Board of Managers and the National Trustees of each state meet in Louisville.

A motion to instruct the VASSAR Trustee to vote for the proposal recommended by President General Wilcox was placed before the VASSAR membership. A vote taken by raised hands approved the motion by a count of 50 to 14.

Another of the major purposes of the annual meeting is the distribution of awards. For this ceremonial occasion, the venue was moved to the historic Virginia Capitol Building. On behalf of the George Washington Chapter, President Kenan Torrans received a Flag Certificate and flag streamers for NSSAR Congress Attendance and Chapter Excellence.

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### **Washington Birthday Parade**

Our chapter participated in two events in celebration of Washington's birthday. The first was the wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Revolutionary War Unknown Soldier. This colorful event, sponsored by the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment, was well attended. LTG Huntoon, Director of the Army Staff, was the principal speaker. Following his address, wreaths were presented by the Regiment, the Kate Waller Barrett Chapter of the DAR, and our chapter.

This was followed by a three-volley salute by riflemen of the Regiment.



George Washington Chapter marches in the Birthday Parade.

.After the wreath-laying, Compatriots marched in the Birthday Parade. Good weather brought out a large crowd of appreciative spectators. Many organizations participate in this event which is said to be the nation's largest Washington Birthday Parade. All who participate have a good time. If you missed it this year, we hope to see you at the 2009 event.

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**Reservation form is on the following page.**

**March 8, 2008**  
**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 March 3rd.***

**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:

Vern McHargue, Treasurer  
6846 Ericka Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22310

You may also phone (703) 313-0671 and leave a message or e-mail  
[vern.mchargue@heritage.org](mailto:vern.mchargue@heritage.org).

**It is important to provide advance notice of attendance to be sure you get a seat.**  
**Valet parking is available.**