

NATIONAL SOJOURNERS, INC.

Old Dominion Chapter #364

March 2007



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President's Ramblings, and this month he covers a lot of ground.

February's meeting went well; I believe all enjoyed the speaker. We bid farewell to Joe Geer and his lovely wife; we will miss them but hope they will pass through the area again sometime at least for a visit.

Well the year is winding down, the nominating committee will soon be beating the bushes for next year's officers, and a whole new series of problems and concerns will be surfacing. Think about how you might want to serve the Chapter. The budget, what ever happened to the budget? Better luck next year. We were able to support both the CLMA Operating Budget and the new American Legacy Center thanks to a little juggling. Because the generosity of the members sponsored most of our guests this year, we had funds that had been set aside for that purpose that I added to the budgeted ALC amount to allow us to give \$500 to this new endeavor.

Where to meet? Are the meals going to be good? The meal in February was well received and I have informed the American Legion Manager that we would stay on month-to-month at the new rate and that a decision would be made by the next administration whether or not to sign a full year contract in May, probably a good idea, get a copy even of the draft.

Who is handling the bar and why does it never have everything everybody wants? Joe Spruill has taken the bull by the horns and decided to get the bar to be the way it should be according to Navy standards. I understand he has experience in this area. He feels we don't need Champagne and wine, unless it has a screw top lid that is replaceable, no we are not leaning toward Boone's Farm. Several of us who are not really drinkers but get assigned this duty can really create a challenge for the more serious appreciators of a proper drink. Hopefully you enjoyed the surprise "gifts" last month, there will be more of these in the next couple of months, and then we will be at a more manageable level. Donations are always welcome but please no Champagne. Thanks Joe for taking charge of this.

March Meeting Information

The next chapter meeting is on **Wednesday, March 21, 2007**, at 1830 hours at the American Legion Post 176, located at 6520 Amherst Avenue in Springfield.

Make your reservations through Brother JOE SPRUILL, Chairman of Membership/Call Committee, at: J_S22309@yahoo.com or cell: 703-615-6275. Or notify your Calling Committee Member. Dinner cost: \$20.00 per person.

NEW DEADLINE IS 1200 HOURS, THURSDAY, March 15, 2007!

The next Heroes Bivouac will be held at Collingwood on Tuesday, March 29, 2007.
Meet at 1800 with Dinner at 1830 hours.

President's Ramblings (continued)

Is it time to make our reservations for the next meeting already? (the answer is probably yes) Did this one get notified of that? What is going on with the newsletter and the web page? I think we have made great strides in publishing a pretty good newsletter and getting it posted to our web page timely. This is thanks to the coordination of our Secretary Brother Ron Dooley, the effort of our new editor at Collingwood, and the continually strong support by Brother Handley Ward. These three people are our primary communication lines and are doing a great job, thanks to all. If you have internet access check the web page frequently, we are trying hard to keep it current and have meaningful news and links available.

Who is the speaker this month? That one I can answer, in March it will be one of our own. Brother Lou Hoffman will regale us with stories of his experiences in Afghanistan this past year. This will be particularly relevant as the news indicates renewed activity in that area. Louis indicated he will have some insight into some of the reasons. As for all the other questions, many of them will go unanswered for a little while longer.

The recognition of George Washington's Birthday at Mount Vernon and Pohick Church, by our Chapter did not go quite as planned thanks to Mother Nature. With the snow starting early Sunday morning and the State Police recommending individuals not go out unless they absolutely have to, I deemed it necessary in the interest of safety to cancel the formal ceremony. Brother Steve Brundage, who orders and donates the wreath as a part of his commitment to the Chapter and I hoped to place the wreath later in the day when conditions improved but it was determined that the grounds at Mount Vernon were not open so we were again thwarted in our efforts. Later in the week the wreath was placed to uphold the tradition thanks to the persistence of Brother Steve. One more instance of the best-laid plans. I wish you better weather Brother Ralph. A copy of the Program that would have been handed out at the Ceremony is posted at our web site if you are interested.

Just up the road from Mount Vernon is our National Headquarters, Collingwood, also known to our members of Light Horse Harry Lee Camp as "Fort Collingwood"? There are many new things happening to include the new resident caretakers, Brother Jerry Kunkle, and his lovely wife Judie, who we are sorry they could not make our February meeting as intended but will join us real soon for a meeting and introductions. We are all excited about the new building that will be appearing on the grounds and the many other new developments. As a part of all this, in addition to our financial support, which is always welcome and greatly appreciated, we need to provide physical support by getting out and participating in the Clean-up Days. Your next opportunity is coming up on April 7th, rain date the 14th. The lunch after the morning work session is well worth a little sweat. I was able to go last year and am glad I did. Let's get out and give something back to the home site of our organization, it will be rewarding and well-spent time. Put it on your calendar!

Williamsburg is a great place to visit in June, and our National President is hosting the Annual National Convention the 12th through the 16th, I hear that we should be making our reservations early to make sure we get in. Many great activities are planned and there is important work to be done. We should seriously consider supporting our National President, one of our own members, and also a potential future President, also from our Chapter, who could use our vote. We will have several delegate positions available so see how this fits in your calendar, at least for part of the time. See you there.

Once again, I make my plea for new members and the return of our inactive members, our March meeting takes place on the first day of spring and I hope to recognize that day in some little way. Come to the meeting and see how. We really could use the practice on performing the initiation ceremony, so see if there isn't someone you know you would like to have dinner with once a month, beside that lovely lady next to you, whom we also always look forward to seeing. See you on March 21st for a good evening of fellowship, good food, and interesting information.

President's Ramblings (continued)

Sorry if there is no room left in the newsletter for anyone else, I seemed to have a little more time available than usual and I had a lot on my mind, hope a few of these comments will get you thinking too.

Sincerely and fraternally, EIAR,

Bill Sanner

Annual Wreath Laying

Bro. Steve Brundage was at the South County Government Building on Thursday, March 1, for a meeting and had the wreath with him, which was scheduled to be placed on the Tomb of Wor. Bro. George Washington by the Chapter on February 25, 2007, but was cancelled due to inclement weather. He delivered and set up the wreath at the Tomb and was joined by a group of Intermediate School Kids from Ohio who were on tour. He gave them a short (2-minute) overview of National Sojourners and what we generally do each year in laying the Wreath at the Tomb. They were impressed. It was a great time, which Bro. Steve thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you Bro. Steve.

An Irish Senior Driver

Driving down Interstate I-70, his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Daniel, I just heard on the news there's a nut going the wrong way on Int. I-70. Please be careful!"

"Heck," said Daniel, "It's not just one idiot, it's hundreds of them!"

Light Horse Harry Lee Camp, Heroes of '76

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Well, I hope all are surviving the snow, ice, sleet and rain. It can only get better. Tonight, February 28th, 4 Heroes, Past Commanders, Harry Sanders, Larry Lisle, Bill Turner and myself presented the Colors at a convention in Alexandria and Bill Turner did his usual fine job in his presentation of the Toast to the Flag.

Please don't forget the Honor Guard we will be doing for the Tall Cedars at Mt. Vernon on Sunday, March 18th. We will meet at the gate at 1:30 PM

Just a reminder that we will be having another Bivouac on March 29th. I look forward to all being there to help in this presentation. A great dinner is being planned.

Dan Levin, Commander



FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK...

Minutes of the Meeting, February 21, 2007

The dinner bell rang at 1900 hours at the American Legion Post 176 in Springfield, VA with 36 souls present. Bro. Dan Clark offered Grace and we enjoyed a meal of chicken filets and sides.

At 1950 hours, President Bill Sanner called OD Chapter No. 364 to order for business. The colors being in place, all recited the Pledge of Allegiance and Chaplain Bro. Dan Clark attended the Bible and gave the Opening Prayer. Bro. Scotty Cameron recited the Toast to the Flag and 1st VP Bro. Ralph Smith presented the Purposes of the National Sojourners. Pres. Sanner then conducted full introductions of all VIP members, Ladies, and guests. All are entered in file.

Secretary: The minutes of the January meeting were unanimously approved with no corrections. The Secretary read a letter from James D. Cole, PGM, Chief Executive Officer of the Masonic Home of Virginia, thanking the Chapter for the donation of \$200 to the Home. A letter was read from MWor G. Bernard Dungan, Jr., Grand Master in Virginia, thanking Pres. Sanner and the Chapter for the hospitality and gift on his visit as speaker at the January meeting. A letter was mailed to a Bro. Charles A. Stafford who recently moved into the area inviting him to our meetings. There were no applications.

Treasurers Report: Bro. John Mayers reported we have \$1708.24 in the bank account and \$8257.96 in Capital One Savings.

Sick and Distressed: Lady Patti Turner reported that Lady Helen Eller, wife of Bro. Robert Eller, Chairman of National Education and Training Committee, passed away last week. A card was sent around for all to sign.

Americanism: Bro. Harry Sanders spoke encouraging all to attend the National Convention this year (June 12-16) in Williamsburg. Bro. Harry also encouraged all to visit the National web-site for a world of information. Bro. Harry announced we have four scholarships for *Freedoms Foundation* and that we need to find four students in the 10th and 11th grades in schools, Boy Scouts, Masonic organizations, etc. If you have someone please contact Bro. Harry.

Bro. Bill Turner announced he too would like to see everyone attend the National Convention as he has decided to run for 3rd National VP and he needs our support. There will be a degree on June 13, 2007 and Bro. Bill is doing the casting. The "Rekrut" is the Grand Master, MWor G.B. Dungan, Jr. Bro. Bill is looking for members to participate. Bro. Bill further announced two Americanism events; A Folding of the Flag will be presented on 3/10/07 at Alexandria Scottish Rite where the Grand Master will be received by Dist. 1-A, 1-B, and 54. The other event is a request for a Color Guard from the *National Silver Haired Congress* who is celebrating their 10th Anniversary. Bro. Bill also announced the new Federal Area Rep, Bro. Dave Silver, who was recently made a Hero and is a member of Arlington Chapter No. 440.

Bro. Bob Klementz announced that Bro. Jerry Kunkle and his wife Judie are now on the job at Collingwood replacing Bro. Warren Baker and his wife Barbara. Bro. Jerry is Manager of Facilities, and Lady Judie is Manager of Events.

ROTC: Bro. Ralph Smith indicated he would remain Chairman through the spring to avoid introducing a new party at this time and then turn it over to Bro. Ray Whitney. He also asked that the Chapter give him permission to fly flags over Fort McHenry rather than the Capital as he feels it would be more appropriate. There was no objection and so ordered.

Minutes of the Meeting, February 21, 2007 (continued)

Heroes: Bro. Dan Levin announced a Bivouac scheduled for 3/29/07 with a "Rekrut." A wreath laying is scheduled for 3/25/07 at Mt. Vernon weather permitting. Pres. Sanner had distributed formal announcements to all regarding the event.

New Business: Pres. Sanner asked Bro. Joe Geer (see photo) and his wife Marlene to come forward and on behalf of the Chapter thanked Bro. Joe for his continued involvement in the Chapter and presented Joe with a Certificate of Appreciation. Bro. Joe became a Multiple MIP and Hero while here. He is now returning to Calif. (his parent Chapter is Santa Ana/El Toro No. 250) as a civilian once again after having been recalled into the Army to work here in Casualty Operations. Bro. Joe related he was most honored to be part of the duty he performed for the country, and to be initiated by LHHL (courtesy) into the Heroes of 76 at Collingwood. Bro. Joe said his job in Casualty has been a tough assignment, but that it wasn't as tough as what those people face in the desert every day. Bro. Joe thanked his wife, Marlene, for sticking with him through it all for 20 years. A resounding applause was given by all.

Pres. Sanner then presented Bro. Bob Klementz with a check for \$300 for the CLMA operating fund, and a check for \$500 for the new American Legacy Center from the Chapter. Bro. Klementz said the money was really needed and appreciated it coming from his home Chapter.

Program: Pres Sanner introduced Mrs. Dawn Meade from the Maryland Order of Eastern Star who has made numerous speeches concerning the Masonic family. Mrs. Meade relayed how in times past the Masonic Family was truly at the Lodge every night with various things going on in all affiliations. Unfortunately, as the "baby boom" came of age more people became less likely to join social organizations and clubs due to jobs and stress. The nation began to change and we no longer cared that much about the guy next door. Mrs. Meade does not believe this means an end to Masonry and our family. She thinks we could revive the Masonic fraternity by using modern society to our advantage by integrating the old and the new to appeal to potential members, and yet maintain our time-honored rituals etc. We should not be afraid to advertise...and especially the charitable work done by members. The internet is an indispensable part of society for young adults. "An internet presence is vital to the continued growth and success to any organization, most especially the Masonic family, we should target fraternities of all types to get the young people interested." Mrs. Meade received a resounding applause and was presented a certificate of appreciation by Pres. Sanner.

Pres. Sanner then announced that the new price for dinner is \$17.00 per person (to the Legion) and he proposed we stay where we are. The total price per person will remain at \$20.00. Next year there may be a recommendation to raise the price if necessary and even move to another location, but to move back to Gadsby's means paying \$150.00 rent again, plus high parking fees, and steps. There was no objection.

Closing: There being no further business the gavel was passed. Bro. John Mayers announced a new program where you may buy a brick for \$200.00 in memorial (3 lines 18 characters) for whatever you choose for the sidewalk from the parking lot to the new American Legacy at Collingwood. Those interested may contact Bro. Johnny Mayers or Bro. Bob Klementz. Bro. Johnny recommended that OD 364 and LHHL subscribe to a brick.

Chaplain Bro. Dan Clark presented the closing Prayer and closed the Bible. The Chapter was officially closed at 2110 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronald A. Dooley

**NATIONAL SOJOURNERS, INC.
OLD DOMINION CHAPTER #364**

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A FOND FAREWELL

1st Sgt. Brother Thomas Joseph Geer was honored along with his wife Marlene at the OD No. 364 February meeting. Bro. Joe joined the National Sojourners in March 1998 at Santa Ana/El Toro Chapter No. 250. He was recalled into the Army to work in Casualty Operations and was transferred to the Alexandria, VA. Area. He visited OD 364 and eventually became a Multiple MIP in June 2006. Bro. Joe also crossed the "D" in March 2006 in a courtesy initiation for his Chapter/Camp COL William Biehl, Jr. Bro. Joe was Assistant Marshal in our Chapter and complied with anything asked of him while here. We wish him and his lovely Lady Marlene good fortune on their return once again to civilian life in California. They will be missed.