

2011 Annual Meeting Minutes

Harpers Ferry Historical Association

June 5, 2011

Interpretive Design Center patio, Camp Hill, Harpers Ferry

President's Introduction

Board President Jim Silvia kicked off the meeting by introducing the board members present: Ann Long, Carol Gallant, Jim and Suzanne Silvia, George Rutherford, and Dave Gilbert.

Minutes from 2010 Annual Meeting

Executive Director Deborah Piscitelli thanked board members and guests for their tremendous support over the past several years. Debbie then read the minutes from the 2010 annual meeting.

2010 Financial Report

Debbie gave a summary of the association's 2010 financial operations. Sales revenue of interpretive products totaled \$383,493, a decrease of \$81,337 over the previous year, resulting in the third worst year for sales in the past 16 years. One reason was 5,000 less school students visiting the park. Another reason was a 12-13 percent decline in park visitation in July and August, which are typically the bookshop's busiest months.

The association provided \$71,776 in aid to the park, mostly for the park's education program. Over the past 40 years, the association has provided \$2,287,167 (\$2.3 million) in cumulative aid to the park.

Debbie noted that through April 2011, the park has experienced a 16% decline in visitation, but sales were up \$7,700 over last year, and membership revenue is up \$1,060.

Executive Director's Report

Recent and current projects the association is working on include:

- Civil War sesquicentennial events.
- Planning for the Battle of Bolivar Heights event in Fall 2011.
- Association staff traveled to Chantilly, Virginia to participate in the Conference of the Civil War Trust.
- Membership and Publications Manager Cathy Baldau is working to convert Dennis Frye's park research manuscript on the Civil War into a sales publication titled "Harpers Ferry Under Fire: A Border Town in the Civil War." This publication will include photos, maps, and original quotes that will provide a valuable addition to our bookshop offerings.
- The association is also working on an anthology of Civil War stories as told by park rangers and volunteers, which will be dedicated to the memory of David Larsen.
- Cathy is assisting Peggy Russo of Penn State Mont Alto on publication of the proceedings of the John Brown 150 Symposium.
- Mather Training Center manager Dave Dahlen asked the association to administer the David L. Larsen Memorial Fund. To date, \$2,600 has been donated to the fund.

The Board approved changes to the association's bylaws to help improve continuity of board by making term lengths and number of members more flexible.

Debbie thanked several people by name for their contributions and support toward the 40th Anniversary celebration, including park staff, board members, and volunteers. She gave special thanks to the Association staff, for whom this is “not just a job, but a deep commitment”.

Debbie pointed out that both the park and association will face many challenges and changes as we move forward to our 50th anniversary. She looks forward to working with all of us to help the association grow and evolve to meet these challenges.

Report from the Park

Chief of Interpretation Dennis Frye recognized and thanked the Association for the \$2.3 million they've contributed to the park over the past 40 years.

Dennis discussed challenges looking forward, particularly in the current environment of budget uncertainty, that will continue to make planning very difficult. He emphasized the importance of the Association as a park partner. He hopes to see the Association continue to grow in order to help the park meet these challenges.

The park just finished a 20-year General Management Plan, which addresses such issues as the park's transportation system, how to interpret and make accessible the entire Potomac Shoreline from Dam No. 3 to The Point, and the potential for a new visitor center which will require a creative approach to find funding for.

Membership Report

Cathy Baldau recognized the support of Association members, including Kim and Frank Edwards, Ann Long, Mike Watson, Paula Degen, Dave Gilbert, Mark and Judy Elron, Dennis Frye, Jim and Suzanne Silvia. She also recognized donations by several groups.

Election of Board Members

Jim Silvia introduced current board members up for re-election: Kirk Davis, Carol Gallant, and Dave Gilbert. The three candidates were elected by voice vote. Jim also introduced new candidates, giving an introduction for Carol Polkinghorn. Dave Gilbert then introduced candidates Jim Jenkins and David Guiney. The three new candidates were also elected by voice vote.

The meeting concluded with the recognition of Executive Director Deborah Piscitelli for her considerable service to the Association, followed by the annual picnic, which was enjoyed by all!

Submitted by David T. Gilbert, 6/7/2011