

M I N N E S O T A

SAR Salute



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Annual Constitution Day Luncheon

Minneapolis, MN – Thirty-nine members of the Minnesota Society, along with spouses, guests, and members of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Minnesota, gathered for the Annual Constitution Day Luncheon. The total attendance was 59. Jax Café had prepared their marvelous Encrusted Walleye Pike, with a Squash Ravioli as the vegetarian alternative. Macadamia-topped white chocolate mousse topped off the meal.

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 American Eagle

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JOIN OR DIE: POLITICAL CARTOONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR ERA



Marguerite Ragnow Ph.D., curator of the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota presented a very interesting program entitled “Join or Die” – *Political Cartoons of the Revolutionary War Era*”.

Ragnow showed slides of political cartoons that are a part of the James Ford Bell Library and explained the historical significance of them. The sizes of the political cartoons varied. Many were published as broadsides and others were the size of modern post cards, depending on the publication that printed them. Often times other publications would reproduce them in their newspapers or handbills. The illustrations

were complicated and symbolic of their historical significance. The illustrations could be understood by illiterate readers but also usually contained editorial text.

The first American political cartoon was drawn by Benjamin Franklin and was first published in his *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1754. The cartoon appeared along with Franklin’s editorial about the “disunited state” of the colonies, and helped make his point about the importance of colonial unity. This cartoon was used in the French and Indian War to symbolize that the colonies needed to join together with the Kingdom of Great Britain to defeat the French and Indians.

“The Colonies Reduced” was published in 1767 by Benjamin Franklin as a warning of the consequences of the newly imposed Stamp Act. The Stamp Act of 1765 established a tax on all printed documents. This was the first time Parliament implemented an internal tax on the colonists and it passed

without the colonist’s consent. The woman represents Britain and her dismembered body parts are different colonies (Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and New England). This cartoon was used to explain Franklin’s concern that the Stamp Act would sever the connections between the colonies and the “mother land” if it was not repealed. Britannia’s torso is leaning against a globe which, according to Franklin, portrayed the “placement that depicted her inability to dominate world politics should she dismember herself” from her colonies.

Ragnow shared a french cartoon published around the time the second Continental Congress took place. The cartoon shows America, represented by a man with feathered cap, cutting the horns off a cow, representing British commerce, which is being milked by a Dutchman. Two men, representing France and Spain, are standing toward the rear of the cow holding bowls of milk. In the foreground, on

the right, lies the British lion asleep, a small dog is standing on the lion’s back urinating. A distraught Englishman is standing to the left of the lion. In the background, across an expanse of water, is a city labeled “Philadelphia,” to the left of the city is a ship, the *Eagle*, laid-up in dry dock, Admiral Howe is sitting at a table, out of sight of his flag ship, with his brother General Howe, a keg is on the ground to the left and wine bottles on the ground to the right of the table.

Ragnow shared and explained many other cartoons of the eighteenth century.

The “Join or Die” cartoon was resurrected during the Stamp Act Congress. On July 7, 1774 Paul Revere altered the cartoon to fit the masthead of the *Massachusetts Spy*. It was even re-purposed by both the Union and Confederate armies during the U.S. Civil War. University of Minnesota students also used it for their publications. Ragnow stated that Benjamin Franklin would be proud.



Join or Die



Her Colonies Reduced



Cow Commerce Cartoon



AWARDS FROM NSSAR

John Hallberg Jones for the Liberty Medal Cluster and John Sassaman for the Liberty Medal with two Clusters. The Liberty Medal is awarded for being a top-line signer on new member applications. Other awards presented to the MNSAR were:

- Furlong Award for participation in flag presentations.
- King Eagle Scout Award for participation in the Eagle Scout program with an entry.
- The Houston Chapter Award for the highest percentage of new members that were transfers from C.A.R.
- Partners in Patriotism Award in support of veterans groups.

Both the Minneapolis Chapter and St. Paul Chapter also received the Partners in Patriotism Award.

MNSAR Minuteman Medal Recipients Over the Years

The NSSAR's Highest Award

- 1954 Stanley Sloane Gilliam
- 1954 COL James Burdick Ladd
- 1958 Rev. Mott Randolph Sawyer
- 1959 John Gilman Ballord
- 1973 Rev. Joseph Benjamin Head
- 1985 John Hallberg Jones
- 1991 Duane LeRoy Charles Mealman Galles

MNSAR MEMBERSHIP REPORT



New Members were welcomed during the Constitution Day Luncheon: Nicholas Petersen, Jacob Waters, Robert Oliver Neese, David Dunton Hawley, and David Leslie Treadway. Each was presented their certificate of membership and a lapel rosette. Membership certificates will be mailed to those new members not in attendance: Brian Lee Moore, Thor James Erickson, Harold James Malcolm, and Richard Eugene Smith. Four Supplemental Application Certificates were presented to David Foster for approved supplemental applications. Secretary-Treasurer John Hallberg Jones presented Life Member pins to Charles Boyles and David Foster. Life Member Pins will also be mailed to James Mellinger and Douglas Mellinger.

NEW MEMBERS:

Name	Patriot
Nicholas John Petersen.....	James Denison
Jacob Waters	Philemon Warfield
Brian Lee Moore.....	William Gragg, Jr.
Robert Oliver Neese	Joshua Anderson
Thor James Erickson	Geoge Doty
David Dunton Hawley	Joseph Hawley
David Leslie Treadway.....	Jonathan Treadway
Harold James Malcolm.....	James Loveland
Richard Eugene Smith.....	Timothy Smith

SUPPLEMENTAL PATRIOTS APPROVED:

David Adriance Foster.....	John Lansing
	Isaac Foster, Sr.
	Gregorius Storm
	Christopher Yates

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The episode showed that, whatever Washington's demerits as a military man, he was a consummate political infighter. With command of his tongue and temper, he had the supreme temperament for leadership compared to his scheming rivals. It was perhaps less his military skills than his character that eclipsed all competitors. Washington was dignified, circumspect, and upright, whereas his enemies seemed petty and skulking.

Sources:

Valiant Ambition
by Nathaniel Philbrick,
Viking, 2016

Washington,
by Ron Chernow,
The Penguin Press, 2010

George Washington's War
by Robert Leckie,
Harper Perennial, 1993

2017 MNSAR Meeting Schedule

Upcoming meetings will be held on the following dates:

- Saturday, January 14, 2017 – SAR Annual Meeting – Members only.
- Saturday, February 18, 2017 – SAR Washington Day Luncheon. COL Ronald McRoberts will speak about the Battle of Saratoga.

Both of the meetings will be held at Jax Cafe.

AMERICAN EAGLE



News of Yesterday Reported Today

Wednesday, February 25, 1778

WASHINGTON EXPOSES PLOT AGAINST HIS LEADERSHIP

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania – Probably the most humiliating and infuriating ordeal that General Washington had to endure as commander in chief of the American War for Independence was the so-called Conway Cabal, a loose coalition – or rather, coalescing – of disaffected generals and discontented members of Congress who were at first united in their determination to dismiss Washington and then, later, in their hopes of replacing him with General Horatio Gates.

The juxtaposition of Gates's victory at Saratoga and Washington's defeats at Brandywine and Germantown crystallized in congressional discontent with the latter's leadership. The discontent crested in October when Washington got wind of the rumored promotion to major general of Brigadier Thomas Conway.

Washington was incensed to learn about Conway's impending promotion, especially since he would be jumped over twenty more senior brigadiers. On October 20 Richard Henry Lee assured Washington that Conway would never be bumped up to major general, but Lee, a secret critic of Washington himself, disclosed something else disturbing: Congress intended to overhaul the Board of War, switching it from a legislative committee to an executive agency, staffed by general officers who would supervise the military. This news came as a revelation to Washington, who could only regard it as a

powerful rebuke. On December 13, Congress made Thomas Conway Washington's inspector general with the rank of major general.

Amid an atmosphere of rampant suspicion, Washington received fresh proof that enemies in high places conspired against him. General Gates had assigned his aide James Wilkinson to carry the news of Saratoga to Congress. En route to Congress, this indiscreet young man paused in Reading, Pennsylvania, where he met with an aide to Lord Sterling and regaled him with stories of Gates's savage comments about Washington's actions at Brandywine Creek. He also showed him an inflammatory line that General Conway had written to General Gates, indicting Washington's leadership. "Heaven has been determined to save your country," Conway wrote, "or a weak general and bad counselors would have ruined it." Lord Stirling, loyal to Washington, passed along this offensive comment to him remarking that "such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect." Washington was stunned to see the remark, which suggested blatant collusion between the two generals to blacken his name.

By the time Washington received Stirling's letter, he was already familiar with what he described as Conway's "intriguing disposition." In meeting the threat Washington decided to respond quickly to Stirling's revelation. He had

received Stirling's letter on the evening of November 4. By the following morning Washington had penned Conway this note:

A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph: "In a letter from General Conway to General Gates he says – 'Heaven has determined to save your country; or a weak general and bad counselors would have ruined it.'" I am, sir, your humble servant, George Washington.

Forceful yet understated, the note gave no indication as to who was Washington's source. Given the purposeful ambiguity of the language, it was easy to jump to the conclusion that he possessed an actual copy of Conway's letter. Washington had put the Conway Cabal on notice that he knew exactly what they were up to.

There was no immediate reply, but when Conway did come to Valley Forge, Washington made plain his detestation of him, receiving him, coldly but correctly, with proper respect for his rank and duties. There after Conway's letters to Washington were characterized by a singular insolence and mendacity, all of which the commander in chief received with contemptuous silence.

But the false step for which Washington had been patiently waiting had been made: Wilkinson's babbling at Reading, Pennsylvania had set the flimsy stage on which the timid

Gates would venture on tiptoe, finger to his lips, and thus bring the entire conspiracy crashing down. Conway, to his credit, was a bold conniver, if not an admirable one. His eventual reply to Washington's damning note was an attempt to bluff his way through. "Why, my dear general," he protested in his haughty, superior style, "there is not a subaltern in Europe who would not fill his letters with complaints about his chief, without exciting the least suspicion. Must such an odious and tyrannical inquisition begin in this country?" Washington gave no answer, for his fish and already been hooked.

On February 19 Gates raised the white flag, solemnly proclaiming in a letter to Washington "that I am of no faction" and pleading with him not to "spend another moment upon this subject." By that point a virtual squadron of Washington loyalists were making it known to anyone they suspected of infidelity to His Excellency that treachery would not be tolerated.

It had been a difficult and trying four months, but Washington was now confident that "the machinations of this junto will recoil upon their own heads." Five days after receiving Gate's plea to end the controversy, he replied that he was willing to bury their past differences "in silence, and as far as future events will permit, oblivion."

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