A letter from President Clyde H. DeWitt, Jr.

It’s really hard to believe I am in my last year as your President; I have to tell everyone it has been a genuine pleasure to serve you. Things are going well with planning and preparation for the coming season. As we may have said earlier, we are getting new display cabinets that will allow us to display more artifacts, with the hope of generating renewed interest, thus increasing visitation and membership. As you will read later in the letter, the Colonial Feast is coming up on April 19th at the Ruritan Community Center (Senior Center) in Capon Bridge. As always the real cost of admission is one or more dishes that might have been served during the Colonial period, and was both a culinary delight as well as being necessary for survival. There will also be a nominal fee to defer the costs of plastic ware, plates and cups, as well as the cost of drinks.

We have recently had some interest by the Boy Scouts in doing a troop conservation project to help the fort. In addition, we have another Eagle Scout candidate who wants to help by committing his Eagle project to some element of Fort Edwards. I am telling you this in the hope that some of you might know or work with a scouting group (boys or girls) who would like to help with some of the numerous tasks we have to accomplish around the fort. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Some time back I wrote about the mission of The Fort Edwards Foundation, which in part reads "… to educate the public about the importance of this site in the early history of Hampshire County, and the area's relationship to Colonial Virginia frontier life and to the 18th Century development of our country." I only mention this as a reminder of what we on the Board of Directors regard as the importance of our mission and place in the county.

A note about a new program we began last year: workshops! We plan at least three, likely four workshops for This Open Season but the scheduling has not been finalized. Watch for a schedule in the 2nd Quarter Gazette.

A word or two about membership. I appeal to you to go out and solicit new members, specifically young ones (you know, below the age of sixty), as most of us on the Board are getting a little "long in the tooth" and it becomes more challenging for us to accomplish the manual tasks. Seriously, we would like to have some younger members to keep the interest of new generations in our site and our mission. But we want to attract new members regardless of age, education, experience—our primary desire is for interest.

Finally, I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all who have supported us, especially during the recent fund-raising and membership drive. Your generosity and support over the years is very moving, encouraging, and greatly appreciated. I hope to see you at all of our events this year.

Clyde H. DeWitt, Jr., President
Board of Directors
The current Board of Directors of the Fort Edwards Foundation are tenured through November of the year shown in parenthesis.

Clyde H. DeWitt, Jr. (2014) *
Judith DeWitt (2014)
Mark Jones (2014) *
Abby Chapple (2015)
John Lister (2016) *
Jeanne Barb (2016)
Julia Flanagan (2016)
Robert Flanagan (2016) *
David Pancake (Tenure open. *
   Appointed by Hampshire County Commission)
Maggie Dillsworth (Tenure open.
   Appointed by the Town of Capon Bridge)
Charles Hall (Board Member Emeritus)
[* Executive Committee]

Officers for 2014
President: Clyde H. DeWitt, Jr.
Vice President: David Pancake
Secretary: Mark Jones
Treasurer: John Lister

Committee Chairs
Grants/Funding: Mark Tooley
Grounds: (chair open)
Hospitality: Mark Jones
Kitchen Garden:
   Julia Flanagan
Membership/Database:
   John Lister
Newsletter: Robert Flanagan
Research/Pubs: Charles Hall
Visitor Center:
   Robert Flanagan
Webmaster: Charles Hall

visit our website
www.fortedwards.org

Some Points of Interest

♦ Fort Edwards’s 2014 annual Colonial Feast is planned for the 19th of April at the Ruritan Community Center, Capon Bridge, W.Va. (Rt. 50 at Cold Stream Rd.) Doors open at 5:30 pm for preparation and set-up; dinner 6:30─8:00 pm. Nominal fee of $5.00 per family, and bring one or more Colonial dishes to feed four. Dishes: meat (incl game, stew, chowder, etc.), vegetables, desserts and/or breads. Coffee, water, cider, utensils, plates and cups provided. Local historian/author Norman Baker will be a guest, selling/signing his new book, Braddock’s Road, and will offer his previous work, Fort Loudoun. The Museum Shop will offer books/maps/music CDs for sale. A "half-and-half" will be held during the event, the drawing at evening's end; tickets, $1.00 ea., no limit. Also, a Silent Auction will proceed during the evening, bids reconciled and items claimed at evening’s end. Please contact Julia or Robert Flanagan to arrange to donate items for the auction if you cannot attend: (304) 856-3866. Colonial period dress is encouraged, though not required.

♦ Foundation member Chris Duckworth is working with our VP Dave Pancake planning and scheduling a Colonial encampment beginning the Friday (27th) before Hampshire Family Frontier Day (season opening) on Saturday the 28th, running through Sunday. Bivouac will be held in the field just north of, and adjacent to, the main Fort Edwards grounds. There is a $10.00 fee for the entire event. The Visitor Center will provide access for fresh water and toilet facilities; a stock of firewood will be provided. For more information about the activity, or to obtain a flyer with more complete details, please make contact with Chris at (304) 856-2483, e-mail prchrman@aol.com, or Dave at (304) 822-4206, e-mail dwpancake@yahoo.com.

♦ In the last issue of The Gazette, we mentioned a new item in our Museum Shop for sale, beginning with opening day. This is a collection of cast metal miniatures 40 mm high (approx. 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches). These figures have been individually hand painted and given a protective, clear coating to ensure preservation of colors and paint integrity (won't rub off in handling). Figures represent the British 44th and 48th Foot (Infantry) Regiments, the two units under Braddock's command at the Fort Duquesne disaster (Battle of the Monongahela; July 1755); militia troops in varied uniforms; British Light Infantry elements; Rangers; Indians; and French military of various units. The artwork is magnificent. We anticipate the cost will be $12.00 per regular figure. Some group or specialty items may be priced higher.
Our own Commander-in-Chief

Clyde H. DeWitt, Jr. President of The Fort Edwards Foundation, was born in Carbondale, Ill. growing up and attending one of the premier public high schools in the country, noted for breadth of curriculum and advanced learning opportunities; all teachers possessed PhD or DEd degrees. He was a better-than-fair student interested in math, a member of the swim team, active in scouting. Graduating in 1959, he stayed home to work his way through school at Southern Illinois Univ. (SIU), Carbondale, continuing active in scouting until Dec. 1961.

The following April he joined the US Army; basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., AIT (Infantry) at Fort Polk, La., then migrated to Fort Riley, Kan., to the First Infantry Div. with whom he made his first overseas deployment. With "the Big Red One" he took part in Operation LONG THRUST, six months augmentation of US infantry forces in Wildflecken and Berlin, Germany. Ordered to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., he graduated in April 1965 as The Distinguished Graduate. "Jump school" (parachute training) followed; then assignment to 2nd Infantry Div. which soon, merging with 1th Air Assault Div., was designated the First Cavalry Div. (Airmobile). The "First Air Cav" was a premier fighting unit in Vietnam.

Second Lieutenant DeWitt was soon there, deploying with the division by ship from Savannah, Ga., through the Caribbean, the Panama Canal, and the Pacific to Long Beach, Calif., for fresh stores: then to Qui Nhon, South Vietnam and up into the mountains of II Corps to An Khe base camp. Soon after arrival, the First Air Cav hosted the premiere major engagement of US forces with Viet Cong and North Vietnamese main forces in the Battles of the Ia Drang Valley and the Bong Son Plain. In operations CRAZY HORSE and WHITEWING MASHER, his unit was in continuous contact with the enemy over extended periods, a series of battles and actions depicted in the best-selling book (and movie), We were soldiers then … and young. A soldier then, and young, Lieutenant DeWitt was wounded in the Ia Drang battle: gunshot, upper arm and shoulder, shrapnel in the face. Following recovery, he finished that first tour in Nha Trang, a beautiful city on the South China Sea.

Thinking career by this time, Clyde was assigned for a three-year tour as a training officer in infantry training at Fort Ord, Calif., but after 16 months his tour was cut short and, common in the times, it was back to Vietnam. Now a captain, he served as a platoon- and company-level district adviser to relocated Montagnard and South Vietnamese troops in 1068-69. He returned to the US, attended the Officers Advanced Course, followed by an assignment to finish his college degree. Ideally, he matriculated at hometown SIU, earning dual degrees in Geography and Anthropology, with a minor in Math. Following completion of school, he drew one of the most interesting and demanding assignments of his Army career.

A senior captain, Clyde was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Regiment ("The Old Guard") at Fort Myer, Va., the unit responsible for ceremonies, burials, and other celebratory rituals at Arlington National Cemetery. The time was brilliant with bicentennial events; the Army, not to be left out; created the "Commander-in-Chief's Guard," an historical representational unit which was ostensibly bodyguard to President George Washington. Resplendent in Colonial-period military uniforms, the CCG performed for many ceremonial affairs during the bicentennial period; when not so engaged, various units (one of which, Co. A, commanded by Captain DeWitt) formed firing parties, escorted funeral corteges, parades and otherwise honored US military dead.
The Old Guard was followed by a move to Quantico, Va., where he attended the Marine Command & Staff College before Major DeWitt was assigned as Asst. G-4 (logistics) for the Berlin (Germany) Brigade and Command, and served as Executive Officer, 4th Bn., 6th Inf. Regt. and as Inspector General for USCOM (occupation forces). Promoted in Berlin to lieutenant colonel, he was sent to Langley AFB, Va., joining the elite airborne command post team of US Navy Forces-Atlantic. He flew on KC-135 aircraft for four years, long, secretive missions to ensure continuation of US government operations in the event of enemy nuclear attack, and during execution of operations by US strategic forces. His last military assignment was at the Pentagon, a desk officer for the National Military Command Center, with regional/world area responsibilities. LTC DeWitt, US Army, with 26 years service, retired April 1988. Decorations: Bronze Star with "V" (valor) & 2 oak leaf clusters (2d/3d awards); Army Meritorious Service Medal with OLC, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, Parachutist Badge, service/theater medals.

Following retirement and still in the northern Virginia area, Clyde went back to school and earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Strayer University, planning to work as a defense contractor in the Washington, DC, area (a job known disdainfully as "a beltway bandit"). Quickly tiring of that role, he taught public high school as a substitute teacher and became interested in special education—teaching students with special needs—and worked with them while taking evening classes in Special Education at George Mason Univ. (1992). Working at the PACE special school in Gainesville, Va., in 2002, he met Judith Daley, a PACE employee. Soon after recognizing mutual attraction, they saw a small ad in a trade paper for "...40 acres of mountain land with 50-mile view of the Shenandoah Valley..." They bought the property on their first visit but continued living in Manassas, working at PACE until 2004, when they built an expansive home on their Baker Mountain property. The rambling home at some 2,000 feet elevation is flanked by a swimming pool, a phalanx of solar panels and two windmills. They work hard to make and keep their home energy efficient, normally "selling back" electricity to Potomac-Edison.

Clyde and Judi joined The Fort Edwards Foundation in 2009 where both were soon elected to the Board of Directors. In November 2011, Clyde was elected President of the foundation, and Judi, with a background in Accounting, became Treasurer. Both DeWitts have children from prior marriages: Clyde, two daughters, two grandchildren and one great-grand; Judi has three sons, one grandchild, and one expected. The DeWitts spend much of their leisure time in Colonial lace-making, a fiber art in which they were trained for five years by a recognized expert who studied in England and Belgium. They also spent an instructive period in Ipswich, Mass., capital of the lace-making industry in British Colonial America. Clyde and Judi have demonstrated this art at Fort Edwards events, and in 2013 gave a workshop, which was enthusiastically attended. Judi, also a brush artist in several media, works at her art and other fiber arts: rug-hooking, rug-braiding, and knitting. Both DeWitts garden, sharing their produce with deer and other critters; bear sightings are common on their mountain, and coyotes are becoming more audacious. Clyde reads a lot to distract him from this piracy.

Clyde is especially interested in, and has been effective in, creating new energy to support new ideas and directions to be taken by our foundation. Under his leadership and guidance we've made great gains. Fortunate were we to find our own Commander-in-Chief.
A timeline of some events critical to Fort Edwards

- April 26, 1607: First British landing to establish settlement at Jamestown (Va.)
- 1716: Virginia Colony Governor Spotswood and the Order of the Golden Horseshoe cross Blue Ridge Mtns.
- 1729: First settlers enter the South Branch River Valley.
- March, 1748: George Washington begins surveying (in what was to become Hampshire Co.) for Lord Fairfax.
- May 26, 1748: Joseph Edwards obtains a land grant for 400 acres on the Great Cacapehon River.
- 1749: French Capt. Céleron sets lead plates and claims Ohio River for France as far as the Kanawah.
- February 7, 1751: Christopher Gist sets a marker on lands of the Ohio Company.
- July 9, 1755: Gen. Braddock's army defeated at the Monongahela; Washington (an Aide) and The Virginians cover regular British forces' retreat; Virginia frontier now undefended, open to French and Indian attack.
- Sept. 1755: Gov. Dinwiddie reorganizes The Virginia Regiment, names Geo. Washington Col./Commanding.
- 1755: Joseph Edwards, his sons and neighbors, build stockade about their homestead; named Edwards's Fort.
- April 18, 1756: Battle of the Great Cacapehon, 1 mile north of Ft. Edwards; 17 Virginia Regt. soldiers killed.
- April 22, 1756: Col. Washington writes of Mr. Paris engaging Indians on North River, killing French officer carrying orders for French and Indians to harass frontier; Washington sends men to reinforce Fort Edwards.
- 1759-60: British Gen. Wolfe defeats French Gen. Montcalm on The Plains of Abraham, outside the city of Quebec, ending the French & Indian War. Both generals perish in the final days of combat.

[NOTE: The Seven Year War, 1756-1763—pitting Great Britain, France and allies against each other, the first First World War, spreading across Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Atlantic and Pacific—is NOT the F&I War.]
A Calendar of Sorts

- **Colonial Feast**: April 19, 2014, 5:30–8:00 pm at the Community Center, Capon Bridge, W.Va.

- **Wine and Cheese Fundraising Affair**: May 17, 2014, at the home of Rolf and Lee Anna Mielzarek, 3822 Carper's Pike (Rt. 259), Yellow Spring-High View area, W.Va. If you've not been formally invited to this fun event in the past, please contact Bob Flanagan (304) 856-3866, e-mail connemara@frontiernet.net, to receive an invitation. Wine, cheese, snacks; a Silent Auction for some remarkable items.

- **Docent training**: June 14, 2014, 10:00 am, at the Fort Edwards Visitor Center. For Board members who serve in a docent role; and for other members who would join in this invigorating and educational pursuit.

- **Fort Edwards Clean-Up**: June 21, 2014, 9:30 am — (whatever time you can give). If you can contribute an hour-or-so to general upkeep, come to the Visitor Center and bring yard rake, shovel or other utensils/tools.

- **Hampshire Family Frontier Day (season opener)**: Saturday, June 28, 2014, 10:00 am–3:00 pm. Reenactors displays, music, food, vendors of craftworks, artisans, storytellers … (an encampment will be in effect). Come join this annual fête; embrace the flavor of Colonial times by the wear of period costume, if you will.

The Fort Edwards Foundation, Inc.
Post Office Box 623
350 Cold Stream Road
Capon Bridge, WV 26711-0623