

Highlights

- Message from the new president
- Children's day a big hit
- Native American population in West Virginia

The Fort Edwards **Gazette**

*The Newsletter of
The Fort Edwards
Foundation
Volume 12 • Issue 1
January, 2009*

A letter from President Bob Flanagan

New Broom Sweeps Clean

Not so! As the newly elected President of The Fort Edwards Foundation, I will use everything my predecessors have envisioned and crafted to continue and grow our worthy enterprise. I am not charting a new course.

Our new Secretary is the outgoing president, Dr. Mark Jones, who will remain deeply involved, continuing efforts in the many areas in which he worked tirelessly for the past three years. His stewardship was valued then, his continuing support now.

We were also fortunate in acquiring a highly qualified Treasurer for the Board. She is Lisa Polk, an accountant, with the business skills to help us grow. Our thanks go to Charlene Pietra, whom Lisa replaces. For three years, Charlene kept us, as fiscal novices, out of debtor's prison, and solvent.

And our thanks (sigh of relief) to Jo Ann Tooley, long-time associate, who has taken on the task of publishing *The Gazette*, our newsletter. One of Jo Ann's innovations is to include biographies of our officers, Board of Directors, and individual members.

But with all these changes, there is no new agenda. I have served on the Board for six years; I am familiar with, have been a part of the decisions now guiding our operations. I likely will ask the Board in future months to consider new ideas, perhaps re-awakened ideas, in the normal flow of things.

I am open to suggestions from any member; and guarantee each will receive serious consideration. Contact me at connemara@frontiernet.net. Phone and mail address available upon request.

I am confident in taking on this role, for I have been crafty, and even more important, lucky, in associating myself on the Board with persons of equal and surpassing passion for our mission and belief in our Foundation's future. Our Foundation enjoys a lofty reputation. Hard work and integrity has put us in the forefront of regionally oriented historical efforts. Ethical, up-front dealings with media, agencies, services, politicians, educational venues, and our "customers"—our visitors and our members—keep us there.

I will continue to ask for your support, both financial and personal. We need funds, but we seek, just as enthusiastically, participation in continuing programs. We need innovative ideas, modern vision, and occasionally, physical labor. It's not all cat-o'-nine-tails and stocks, though; we have fun, too.

I urge you, *Come and be with us*. Attend our "special events," and come to our Board meetings, second Monday evenings, monthly, 7 p.m., at the Visitor's Center in Capon Bridge. There you can inject your own views and ideas into our program.

Thank you all for being a part of The Fort Edwards Foundation. I look forward to working with you.

Reminder: Membership renewals are due now.

Board of Directors

As of the elections at our Annual meeting held on November 10, 2008, the current Board Members of the Fort Edwards Foundation are tenured through November of the year given in parenthesis.

Robert Flanagan (2010)

Mark Tooley (2010)

Mark Jones (2011)

Lisa Polk (2011)

Charles Hall (2010)

Jeanne Barb (2010)

Vera Anderson (2010)

Julia Flanagan (2009)

Charles Hall (2010)

Clyde DeWitt (2011)

Fred Berkeridge

(Appointed, town of Capon Bridge)

Jean Shoemaker

(Appointed by Hampshire County Commission)

Officers and Committees

(Officers for 2009 are as follows)

President: **Robert Flanagan**

Vice President: **Mark Tooley**

Secretary: **Mark Jones**

Treasurer: **Lisa Polk**

Recorder: **Jeanne Barb**

Standing Committees and Chairs:

Database Administrator: Vera Anderson

Grants: Mark Tooley:

Grounds: Fred Berkeridge

Hospitality: Mark Jones

Kitchen Garden: Julie Flanagan

Membership: Lisa Polk

Newsletter: Jo Ann Tooley

Research & Publication: Charles Hall

Visitors Center: Bob Flanagan

Webmaster: Charles Hall

**Be sure to visit our
website at
www.FortEdwards.org**

Children's Day at the Fort

In late June, Fort Edwards opened its 2008 season at the Visitor's Center with a celebration of children. In the past, opening day had focused on farming and farm equipment, but this time Board of Directors member Julie Flanagan had something different in mind. She wanted to use the day as an opportunity to teach children about Colonial life, and to show them how much fun they could have in the process. And if you ask the more than 100 children and their parents who showed up for the event, they will tell you that it was a rousing success.



The Potomac Highlands is filled with talented artisans, musicians, and others eager to help promote Fort Edwards. With the help of Steve Bailes and others, Julie rounded up an assortment of people who could demonstrate skills from the past, including U.S. Forest Ranger Roy Moose from the nearby Cranberry Mountain Nature Center who showed the crowd how to handle snakes. Children were lined up to touch—and be photographed with—the slippery menagerie he had in tow.

Other participants included Clyde DeWitt who demonstrated the antiquarian art of lace making, Judi DeWitt who painted children's faces Indian-style, and Mary Painter who spun wool while husband Jim Painter herded sheep. There was doll-making, horseback riding, storytelling, Indian jewelry-making, a fashion show of beautiful colonial dresses, and much more.



The Foundation is grateful for the many artisans and performers who helped launch Children's Day. The Board of Directors has approved a similar event for 2009, but help is needed to make this an exciting learning experience for the children. If you can take part in this event on Saturday, June 27, or can suggest participants or demonstrators, please contact Julie Flanagan (304) 856-3866 or Judi DeWitt (304) 874-4291.

Former soldier presides over Fort Edwards

Bob Flanagan, asked to define himself, says “A husband, father, grand-father, great-grand-father, veteran, teacher and writer.” He can now add to that list president of the Fort Edwards Foundation. He is not a historian, but since joining the Foundation has become fascinated with the history of the Colonial and French and Indian War era. Growing up in Mississippi in the 40s and 50s, where history was common place, he had a wary respect for it. But as he says, “History was taught in school as a porridge of dates, battles, and obscure political acts without any framing context. I wasn’t greatly interested.” That has changed.

Following high school, he joined the Marine Corps because “they were the best of the best.” After seven years, he changed services. He had met and married his wife, Julie, in their hometown of Jackson in 1957, and the Army offered a more conducive family life. They have four children, ten grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. Three sons served in the Army; daughter Lisa is stationed in Iraq with a government agency; and a granddaughter is in the Army Reserves.

As a soldier, Bob saw duty in seven different countries and served two “tours” in Vietnam, on military intelligence missions. Following retirement from the Army in 1976, he worked for 15 years for Raytheon Corp., living in Northern Virginia. There, at George Mason University, he finished his Bachelor’s and earned two Master’s degrees.

Bob and Julie built their home in Hampshire County in 1984 and have lived here, in a mountain-top forest at Yellow Spring, since 1986.

Bob is a voracious reader. That interest, along with experience in operating a book store, led him to develop our quality



museum shop book list. A prolific writer, he has two books in print, has written a mystery novel which seeks a publisher, and recently completed a trilogy, three contiguous novels of the Vietnam War, currently in the hands

of an agent. He also writes a weekly column for *The Hampshire Review*; and has written numerous magazine articles for various publications, the most recent a November 2008 piece for *Wonderful West Virginia Magazine*, about his in-law, Frank Buckles, the 107-year-old, last remaining American veteran of World War I.

This writing occurs in a spectacular setting: a writer’s cabin situated in the middle of hundreds of towering trees a short walk from his house.

He and Julie have worked tirelessly for more than ten years for the Fort Edwards Foundation. Among his many activities, while manning the Visitor Center, Bob has introduced more than 250 schoolchildren and innumerable adult visitors to Hampshire County’s rich Colonial and French and Indian War history.

Some books about history that he recommends are: *Crucible of War* by Fred Anderson—the best work on the French and Indian War; “The Liberation Trilogy,” three works on WWII by writer and historian Rick Atkinson; *Blooding at Great Meadows: Young George Washington and the Battle that Shaped the Man* by Alan Axelrod—George Washington’s early history up through Jumonville Glen, Fort Necessity, and the Battle of the Monongahela; and the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon.

Bob’s final word on the matter—*any* matter: Read a book!

Do You Know?

How many Indians lived in this country during Colonial times? Scholars cannot agree on the exact Indian population before European contact. The range is from 900,000 to more than 5 million. Russell Thornton, in his book *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*, states that by 1800 the Indian population was reduced to 600,000, and by 1890 had declined further to 248,000. This was due largely to epidemics of diseases such as smallpox and measles.

Today the American Indian population in the United States is over 2 million with approximately 3,000 Native Americans residing in West Virginia, including individuals from at least 80 bloodlines and tribal associations, such as the Cherokee and Shawnee.

Membership Application/Renewal

Your Name

PO Box or Street

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone and e-mail

----- Individual annual dues \$20 (dues year Jan. 1 – Dec. 31)

----- Family annual dues \$30

Names of spouses and children

----- Lifetime membership \$500

Additional contribution: _____

Make check payable to The Ford Edwards Foundation
PO Box 623, Capon Bridge, WV 26711

Fort Edwards Foundation
PO Box 623
Capon Bridge, WV 26711

