

Sons of the American Revolution



The Illinois Society
Bruce R. Talbot, president
222 Sunshine Drive
Bolingbrook, IL 60490
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MEMBERSHIP and FINANCES—

As of September, the Illinois Society membership stands at 956, (with an additional 21 waiting national society approval) according to our society secretary Jim DeGroff. Our budget for programs and projects for 2013 is \$33,000.00 according to our Budget and Finance Chairman Joe Costello. The Illinois Society holds net assets of \$285,506.32 which includes earmarked endowment funds. The Budget and Finance Committee reports that the Illinois Society endowment funds have earned \$15,576 through investments (43.5% in fixed income securities and 56.5% in equities). On August 8, 2013 the Illinois Society engaged the accounting firm of Sulaski & Webb of Bloomington, Illinois, to conduct limited audit and examination of the societies accounting procedures. They confirmed the account balances and made several suggestions to better record the society's income and expenses.

SOCIETY PROJECTS and SPECIAL EVENTS—

The Illinois Society made a special presentation to the Counsel General of France to Chicago, Graham Paul, on February 6, 2013 to mark the 235th anniversary of the Treaty of Alliance between the United States and France.



Color Guard and chapter presidents joined the state society president in celebrating the Treaty of Alliance with France at the French Counsel's Office in Chicago February 6, 2013.

The State Society Color Guard marched in the annual Chicago Memorial Day Parade and was featured on ABC television. This is the largest Memorial Day parade in America so our participation helps promote awareness of the Sons of the American Revolution.



The Chicago Memorial Day Parade is the largest in America and is broadcast over ABC TV. Over 10,000 people attended the parade in 2013. The ILSSAR Color Guard was unit 29 in the parade for 2013.



The State Society Color Guard was also featured on the front page of the Daily Herald newspaper marching in the 4th of July Parade. The colorful uniforms are always a media and crowd favorite!

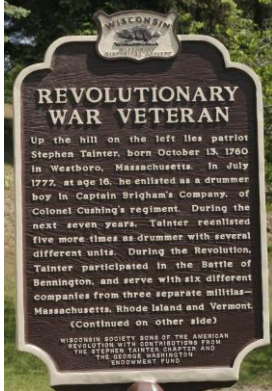
Many local Illinois chapters participated in memorial services, grave markings, police and fire awards presentations and ROTC medal presentations.



Chicago Fire Commissioner Jose Santiago was presented a framed antique fire nozzle to commemorate the brave men and women of the fire service. The framed gift will be on permanent display at the Chicago Fire Academy. The gift was presented August 1, 2013.

FUTURE PROJECT—

The Illinois Society will be proposing at the November Board of Managers meeting to adopt the Wisconsin Society patriot cemetery marking program for Illinois patriot grave sites. We will establish an endowment fund and solicit contributions to purchase the Wisconsin Society style markers without using any society funds.



We hope to have matching funding from the Washington Fund as Wisconsin did and will be offering special lapel pins and medals for major contributors. The project will be headed up by past society President Franz Herder and current historical sites committee chairman and society chaplain Dave Ashbrook. We would like to work with the Wisconsin Society to learn the best way to approach this project. Given the large number of patriots buried in Illinois, we view this as a multi-year program.

STATE SOCIETY CHALLENGE—

As was announced at the last Great Lakes District meeting in Lisle, Illinois, the Illinois Society is experiencing a decline in chapter activities. The Stephen Decatur Chapter was dissolved in May of 2012, and the Lake Defiance Chapter will be dissolved at the November 2013 Illinois Society Board of Managers Meeting. Many other chapters are “on life support” and may need to be dissolved in the near future.

An Indiana University study found membership in organizations such as veterans groups and other fraternal and civic groups have seen declines in membership and participation. Almost half (47 percent) of these groups reported a decrease in membership in the past few years. This has caused several VFW posts to close across the country as membership drops.

To address the drop in compatriot membership in local chapters, the Illinois Society has adopted a multi-point program:

- 1). A complete re-write of the state society handbook. The prior handbook was thirty years old and of no value to chapters. Compatriot Dale Bottom undertook the task and the new handbook has been approved by the Illinois Society Board of Managers at the May 2013 meeting. The new handbook has been digitalized and is available for download on the Illinois Society website.
- 2). Chapter health will be measured using the President General’s Americanism Award application. Research shows one of the causes of fraternal organizational membership decline is a lack of relevancy to members. As an example, one VFW dropout said, “It’s just a bunch of old guys drinking—they don’t do anything.”
- 3). The society president will visit each chapter to initiate the new program using the rewritten handbook and the Americanism Award as a template for chapter activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce R. Talbot