



**Benjamin Franklin Chapter
The Ohio Society
Sons of the American Revolution**
Chartered 1889

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ANNUAL REPORT 2015

2015 was a very good year for the Benjamin Franklin Chapter on many fronts--membership growth and involvement, meeting programs, and chapter participation in State and National SAR events.

Membership

Much of this year's growth was in membership. At the end of 2014, the membership was 97. However, 2015 began with 129 members as the result of a robust effort at contacting members with e-mails; phone calls; and stamped, self-addressed return envelopes.

During 2015, our Chapter welcomed 15 new members. They are **Robert Carnell, Gregory Robison, Grant Robison, Michael Shough, Richard Buell, Eva Buell, Matthew Smith, James Hopper, Kenneth Simpson, Kenji Prince, William Stevenson, Jeff Grever, Michael Grever, Robert Mains, and Geoffrey Layman.**

Growth also took place in meeting attendance. This improvement is largely due to the initiative of having scheduled three meetings at times when members with day jobs can attend. The April meeting was on a Saturday noon at the Kingsdale MCL. The June meeting was on a Thursday night at The Florentine and the October meeting was at noon on a Saturday at the Kingsdale MCL. All three of these meetings included many members for whom it was their first opportunity to attend.

It should be noted that some of this year's meetings were attended by members of other Chapters, including Hocking, Marietta, and Cincinnati. State Society President Jim Schaffer attended the March meeting.

Excellent programs

Member feedback regarding our meeting programs has been very positive--both in the range of topics and the quality of the presentations.

The year began with **David Birthelmer's** program on the Washington Monument, which included its bumpy history and the damage from the 2011 earthquake and repairs. The March meeting was our traditional presentation of Law Enforcement, Fire Safety, and Heroism Awards. At the April program, **Chuck Finley** revealed how Benedict Arnold could be the best and bravest General in Washington's army and still turn coat and betray the cause.

The May and June programs introduced our first two-part series which was on the Revolutionary War's Southern Campaign. In May, **Don Miller** presented the early portion of the campaign which included the British capture of Savannah and Charleston, the guerrilla war of Francis (Swamp Fox) Marion, and the Battles of Camden and Kings Mountain. The June program continued the story as **Kevin Teaford** traced the successes of Generals Greene and Morgan in the Race to the Dan River, as well as the Battles of Cowpens and Guilford Court House.

September observed Constitution Month with Judge Amy Salerno's program on the legal protections of citizens provided by our Constitution and then took questions from the members. At the October meeting, Retired USN Commander Jim Cowardin presented a PowerPoint

Victory at the Battle of Lake Erie. The year was closed out with **Mark Mahan's** November program on the 34 Ohio counties named after Revolutionary War heroes.

It should be noted that 2015 began the successful initiative of having most programs presented by your fellow compatriots. Benefits include more quality control over the programs, increased opportunities for members to assume leadership, and reduced Chapter expense because outside speakers have cost as much as \$150.

In addition, attendance at the Feb. 20 **George Washington's Birthday Dinner** exceeded the previous year's attendance by 25%.

American Flag awards

A tradition of the Benjamin Franklin Chapter is to recognize an organization or business that displays the American flag in an exemplary manner. This year's recipient, Friendship Village of Columbus, was nominated by **David Birthelmer**.

ROTC and JROTC awards

Still another tradition that was continued in 2015 is recognizing an outstanding member of local ROTC and JROTC programs. The ROTC programs include the Army, Navy, and Air Force units at Ohio State University and the Army unit at Capital University. The JROTC units are in nine area high schools. This program is administered by **David Birthelmer**.

Increased Chapter involvement in State programs

For the first time in decades, the Benjamin Franklin Chapter participated in the Ohio Society's wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of the unknown soldier at Fort Laurens. Chapter Historian **Bill Finley** represented our Chapter by laying the wreath that the Chapter purchased.

Three applications for the SAR Eagle Scout Scholarship were received this month by the Benjamin Franklin Chapter, and a first-place winner was chosen by judges **Rich Rastetter** and **Ed Hamblin** to be forwarded on to the Ohio Society for judging at that level.

New this year for our chapter is getting word out to area schools regarding the SAR poster contest for elementary school students and middle-school students for the SAR poster and brochure Americanism contests, respectively.

Chapter attendance at State Board of Management Meetings

For the first time in many years, the Benjamin Franklin Chapter was represented at all four meetings of the Ohio Society Board of Management. The winter meeting at Stow and the spring meeting at Dayton were attended by Chapter President **Chuck Finley**, and the Summer and Fall meetings were attended by Chapter Historian **Bill Finley** and Chapter Registrar **Kevin Teaford**, respectively.

Chapter website

The long-awaited Benjamin Franklin website went live in January, and response by Chapter members and Ohio Society officers was very positive. Of course, maintaining a website and keeping it current requires a significant amount of effort. Fortunately, recently inducted member **Jeff Grever** has volunteered his time and considerable expertise to becoming our webmaster.

The coming year

Our Chapter accomplished more than it did the previous year because of greater member participation. Obviously, being part of the Benjamin Franklin Chapter becomes a more interesting experience as more members contribute their time and skills.

Right now, we are looking for members to offer ideas for 2016 meeting programs. Other opportunities to help include helping with the SAR poster and brochure contests by being a liaison with area schools. Also, we are close to having enough interested members to form a Chapter Color Guard. Interested members are asked to contact me at (614) 736-0256.

Patriotically yours,

Chuck Finley

Chapter President

