



The St. Petersburg Chapter
Florida Society
Sons of the American Revolution
CHARTERED 1928

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February 2019

CHAPTER WEBSITES

www.stpetesar.org

2019 UPDATED CHAPTER MEETING & EVENT CALENDAR

Please mark your calendars

March 16 - St. Petersburg Yacht Club, 11AM

THIS MONTH IN REVOLUTIONARY WAR HISTORY

1778 – Treaty of Alliance with France

1780 – British forces deployed from New York to Charleston, SC

1782 – British House of Commons votes against further war, recognizing American independence



President's Message



Dear Compatriots:

Our Presidents Day meeting featured a talk by Dr. Michael Grego, Superintendent of the Pinellas County Schools. Dr. Grego was awarded the SAR Silver Medal of Good Citizenship for outstanding public service. See Charles Butler's article below for amplification.

Our chapter's education intuitive, Governor DeSantis's emphasis on civics and American history, and our National SAR's initiative on this subject are coalescing into major progress toward an enriched high-school curriculum which will lead to a far better understanding of our heritage, our Constitution and of the brave people who fought for and gained our freedom against the mightiest military force of the 18th century.

Professor Philip Leto was our keynote speaker for our Presidents Day celebration. His talk was a rousing discussion of the contributions of our past presidents by highlighting their accomplishments at critical moments in response to complex issues that could have ended our experiment with a constitutional republic.

Our April meeting will feature a presentation by Lori Coffey, a member of the Mayflower Society and the DAR. Lori will be discussing the role of women during period from the Mayflower to the American Revolution. I hope you will be able to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Rogers



Board Chairman's Message



Dear Compatriots:

Now, for just a moment, let's go back in time to 1787:

"Well, Doctor Franklin, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?"

"A Republic... if you can keep it..."

These were the prophetic words of Benjamin Franklin as he departed from the Constitutional Convention.

As you know, the Sons of the American Revolution is a unique organization in America. Our founding document is enshrined in Federal Law by a Congressional Charter. It directs us, as male descendants of General Washington's Continental Army to implement programs to educate the people of America about our Founding Principles, our Declaration of Independence, Our Constitution, and our system of government.

Put in today's management terms, *our Organizational Purpose* is **Patriotic**; our *Vision* is to **Inspire**; our *Mission* is to **Educate**; and our *Goals* are to **Motivate** and **Activate**. America's Founding Fathers knew our participatory form of government requires an informed, educated electorate.

Accordingly, our Society's charter directs us to ensure the history, philosophy and documents of America's origins... the *essence* of our nation's being... the DNA of this Republic are understood, honored and perpetuated by future generations.

This is accomplished through the process of education, in all its forms, especially the skills associated with logic and critical thinking. Education defines our purpose and *who we are* as a Society and a Chapter. Everything we *do* as an SAR chapter has an underlying educational purpose that is rooted in the **National Society's Strategic Plan 2025**, (Adopted by Trustees March 1, 2014, and updated in 2015 and 2016.)



As some of you already know, in addition to serving on the Florida Society's Strategic Planning Committee, I have just been appointed to serve on the National Society's Strategic Planning Committee. I have been asked to serve on two priority task forces: **Internal Operations**, and **Education**.

Here is a brief summary of these two imperatives:

Strategic Priority I:

Educational Program Purpose:

Educate all Americans, achieving an accurate understanding of our Nation's founding and history.

Key Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop outreach education programs/modules focused on the American Revolutionary period that can be offered to curricula
2. *Evaluate and disseminate participation expectations for SAR Youth Contests* and increase awards and endowment funds for SAR Youth Academic Contests

Strategic Priority II.

Internal Operations:

Provide the necessary resources, organizational structure, internal operating systems and procedures to effectively support accomplishing our (education) mission.

I am pleased to report that over the coming years, our chapter will be collaborating with the Tampa Chapter SAR in a unique "Tampa Bay Education Initiative" to support the leadership of both school systems in their efforts to provide the best education possible to our students.

I would like to convey our Society's congratulations to Dr. Grego for his outstanding achievements as our School System Superintendent and offer our heartfelt commendation to you for having been selected **as Florida Superintendent of the Year for 2018**. We are pleased and honored to have you with us today, and we would like to assure you of our support, cooperation, service and collaboration over the coming years.

Dr. Michael A. Grego began his career as a classroom teacher with the Hillsborough County School system. He became a department head and then advanced to become Assistant Superintendent for Technical, Career and Adult Education.



After serving 28 years with Hillsborough County Schools, he was selected as Superintendent of the Osceola County school district. Among his achievements was a dramatic academic improvement among all students, especially minorities. He then served as Florida's Interim Chancellor of K-12 Education. He was an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Central Florida, before becoming Superintendent of Pinellas County Schools. Dr. Grego has worked intensively to eliminate achievement gaps in Pinellas County Schools and initiated numerous innovative programs to enhance student academic performance.

Here are just a few highlights of his accomplishments:

- Pinellas County was recently named one of the top 10 school districts in the nation for digital curriculum
- Pinellas County Schools were designated a Ford Next Generation Learning Model Community in 2015-16
- In 2017, the Brookings Institution ranked Pinellas County Schools as the top in Florida and 10th in the nation *offering best choices for parents*. Our district was the best in Florida for two years in a row.
- In 2017 Pinellas County School System was named one of the “Great Districts for Great Teachers” by the National Council for Teacher Quality.
- Most recently, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents honored Dr. Grego's outstanding accomplishments by designating him **Florida's Superintendent of the Year for 2018.**

The St. Petersburg chapter SAR was chartered in 1928, and since that time it has made numerous awards and recognitions to outstanding and accomplished individuals. I recently reviewed our records, and it appears that the **SAR Silver Medal of Good Citizenship** has only been awarded one other time, to Army Brigadier General David MacEwen.

The Silver Medal recognition was created by the National Society in 1939, and it is the most distinguished that can be awarded through a State Society or Chapter. It requires the approval of a special committee of Florida State Society Sons of the American Revolution and is considered only upon recommendation by the Chapter's Board of Governors.





Vision:
100% Student Success

Mission:
"Educate and prepare each student for college, career, and life."

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February 19, 2019

Mr. Charles Butler
Sons of the American Revolution, St. Petersburg Chapter
Chairman, Board of Governors

Dear Mr. Butler,

Thank you for the incredible honor bestowed upon me during your February chapter meeting. I am humbled to receive only the second distinguished Silver Medal of Good Citizenship presented by the Sons of the American Revolution, St. Petersburg Chapter and am grateful for your support of public education.

I appreciate the opportunity to share the story of Pinellas County Schools with your esteemed group. We have so many positive things happening in our schools! I welcome the chance to share just a portion of them with engaged members of the community and was pleased to answer the thoughtful questions posed by your members.

I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and getting to know more about your organization. Thank you again for this tremendous honor and for your steadfast support of our students and Pinellas County Schools.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Grego, Ed.D.
Superintendent

c: School Board Members

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, prohibits any and all forms of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation or disability in any of its programs, services or activities.

Education for a Changing World www.pcsb.org





**Sons of the American Revolution
St Petersburg Chapter
February 16, 2019**

Call to Order: The monthly meeting held at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club was called to order at 11:35 AM by President Bob Rogers and the invocation was given by John Stewart.

A moment of silence honored the memory of Vice President & Chaplain David Chestnut, who recently passed away.

Guests: Pinellas County School Superintendent Michael Grego, Professor Phillip Leto, and several friends of compatriots.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 19 meeting were approved as submitted.

Officer Reports & Presentations

Essay committee chairman John Stewart reported that the 2018 annual George and Stella Knight Essay Contest produced 14 participants. All except one came from Admiral Farragut Academy, and none came from the public schools.

This year's winner, selected by the Chapter Essay Committee, was William Hess of Shorecrest Prep. He won with his essay on the Prison Ships employed by England. Ashton Rayner took second place with an essay on Benjamin Franklin. Lamarcus Moise, also of AFA, won third place honors with his essay on the Boston Tea Party. Congratulations to all three of our winners!

Mark Foster was presented with state and national veteran's award certificates by President Rogers.

Superintendent Grego was presented with the Silver Good Citizenship medal by Chairman Butler.

Guest Speakers

Dr. Grego began his career as a teacher in Hillsborough County, and was the superintendent for Osceola County before reaching his current position. He appreciates and encourages our involvement in the support of teaching history



in our high schools. He cited numerous examples of the progress being made in our schools:

- Graduation rates are up significantly in recent years, including for minorities.
- The IB program at St. Petersburg High School was the first in the southeast, and had a 100% diploma rate last year.
- School safety programs have increased.
- Over the past five years the number of AP exams taken grew by 57%, with 51% achieving a qualifying score of 3 or higher
- College credits earned yield over \$12 million in annual savings for parents.
- Career and technical programs have produced over 13 thousand certifications, with a 96% graduation rate.

Professor Leto gave a lively presentation on the presidents, the Constitution, and the growth of the country. After the ratification in 1789, 12 amendments were proposed in 1791, but two did not pass. The founders wisely required amendments to pass with a 2/3 majority in each house of Congress, and then to be approved by 75% of the state legislatures. One of the failed amendments involved reapportionment, and the second would allow Congress to increase their own salaries. The latter was not approved until 1992.

Benediction & Recessional

John Stewart gave the benediction, and President Rogers adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Ford, Secretary



News from Chapter Compatriots

I wanted to let everyone know about something that is near and dear to my heart-battlefield preservation. The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving the battlefields of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the War Between the States. It is the largest and most effective organization in that arena. They are a very efficient organization, with 85% of their funds going to purchase land. They have the highest rating from Charity Navigator and all donations are tax deductible.

They are running a membership special now until March 2, and you can join for only \$25. For your annual membership, you will receive an excellent magazine four times per year and be apprised of the latest developments, successes, and challenges as they unfold. I hope you will consider joining. There is strength in numbers and our ancestors deserve to be honored by preserving the land over which they fought, bled and died. I've included a link to the website:

<https://www.battlefields.org/>

Very sincerely yours,

Jerry Halstead

Compatriot David Soderlund is sharing a link to an interactive battlefield map of the Revolutionary War, created by the American Battlefield Trust.

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/maps/revolutionary-war-animated-map>

Compatriot Mike Hamilton is donating his time in the name of our chapter to build a custom wheelchair for a man who lost both legs as a child.





Compatriot David Chestnut passed away earlier this month. He served as the chapter's chaplain and vice president. He was also the guiding hand behind the establishment of our chapter's color guard.

Several officers attended a memorial service for David, and Chairman Butler offered the SAR benediction at the interment ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell on February 19.





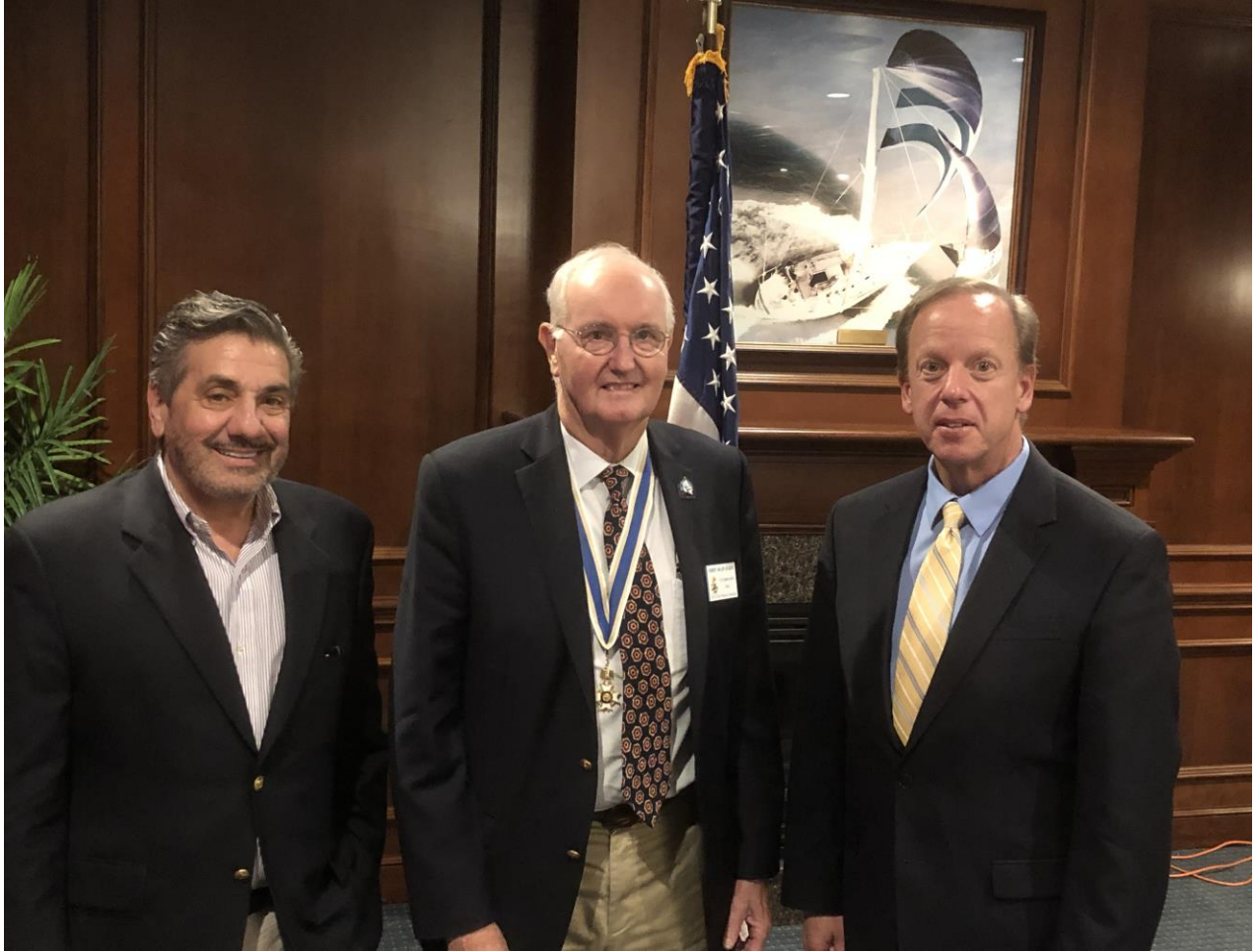
Compatriot Mark Foster receives military service certificates from President Rogers





Pinellas County School Superintendent Michael Grego receives the Silver Good Citizenship award from Chairman Butler





Professor Phillip Leto, President Rogers, and Superintendent Grego

