

Highlights

- Lending a Hand
- Profile of Charles Hall
- Check Out the Herb Garden

The Fort Edwards **Gazette**

*The Newsletter of
The Fort Edwards
Foundation
Volume 13 • Issue 3
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A letter from President Bob Flanagan

Calendar of Fort Edwards Foundation Events for 2009

The Visitors Center is open weekends until October 4

Saturdays: 10 a.m. to
5 p.m. Sundays: 1 to
5 p.m.

October 18 & 19 Capon Bridge Founder's Day

The Fort Edwards Visitor
Center will be open and
staffed for those
attending the festivities.

November 9 at 7 p.m. Annual membership meeting

Capon Bridge Library.
There will be a brief
business meeting
election of officers and
a speaker.

Fort Edwards Needs YOU

In April, we had a memorable Colonial Feast, in May an outstanding wine and cheese affair, and in June a hugely successful Children's History Day.

These events require extraordinary efforts and we have learned that it takes more than serendipitous good fortune to make them happen. Yet that is precisely what we've been relying on. As an event gets close, we find ourselves unsure if everything's been taken care of, such as requisite purchases, advertising, and arranging for artisans and food. Recently, the Board addressed this pervasive problem by establishing an Events Committee.

The committee will have overall responsibility for the annual events that Fort Edwards sponsors. Past president Mark Jones has volunteered to chair the committee, but we need individuals to oversee each of the major events of our season. We need someone to be responsible for the Colonial Feast (usually in April); the Children's History Day (the opening day of the Visitor Center the last weekend in June); Heritage Days (a full weekend in September, when the event does occur). Capon Bridge Founder's Day (October) is not a Fort Edwards project, but we open our doors for visitors that day. There is little special planning but we need someone who is aware of our role and who will attend monthly planning meetings. The wine and cheese party has its own coterie of specialists and doesn't need a coordinator.

Volunteers for these four major functions will receive all the help they need from Mark Jones and other Board members, many of whom have experience planning these events. Mark will oversee the coordination of all special events and will help direct individual facilitators who will work from already existing lists to contact speakers, arrange for artisans to demonstrate their skills, or chefs who can prepare food. It's the facilitator's job to pull together dates, times, people and events.

These special events are critical to our continued success, both as sources of funding and to enforce our role in the community. If you can offer your services for any one of **(continued on page 2)**

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 (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:

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
New material!**

President's Letter continued...

these events, please contact Mark Jones, 304-496-8845 markjones@frontiernet.net or myself, 304-856-3866 connemara@frontiernet.net. The Board and membership will support you in every way and be grateful for your service.

Having already appealed for help in putting on our special events, I'd like to push my luck and enlist a few other good Samaritans. Additionally, we need a volunteer or two as "Implementers," persons of grit and determination, to Get Things Done. This is best explained by an example.

We spend little on upkeep and maintenance of our facilities, but the Visitor Center had reached the point where two concerns needed to be met.

1) The carpet needed to be steam cleaned and spots removed. I assigned the implementer role to myself. We awaited results from the Wine & Cheese affair to learn if we had the funds necessary. We did. It was done and looks great.

2) The exterior of the Visitor Center, which was stained at its creation in 2000, has had only a power washing since. That needs doing again, and then the building needs to be stained once more. Mold, especially on the north side which never sees sun, is gaining a secure foothold and must be dealt with. The Implementer will find a contractor, set up the work, be there to supervise; or, if possible, enlist volunteers to do the work, rent the equipment, and follow it to completion.

Another job that would benefit from an Implementer (a different one, perhaps) is to carry forward the work on the replica stockade. This would involve identifying sources of materials (primarily locust logs), arrange for purchase and delivery; organize volunteer work crews to cut, trim, and erect the logs; dig out the footers; and rent, or locate for borrowing, the necessary equipment.

Anyone who steps up to any of these tasks will ensure our undying gratitude, and will find themselves enshrined in the Fort Edwards roll of journeymen saints. Friends, this stockade has "hung fire" for way too long. And the mold begins to look a familiar part of our decor.

Bob



A Man of History

As one of the founders of The Fort Edwards Foundation, Charles Hall has helped Hampshire County learn about its illustrious past.

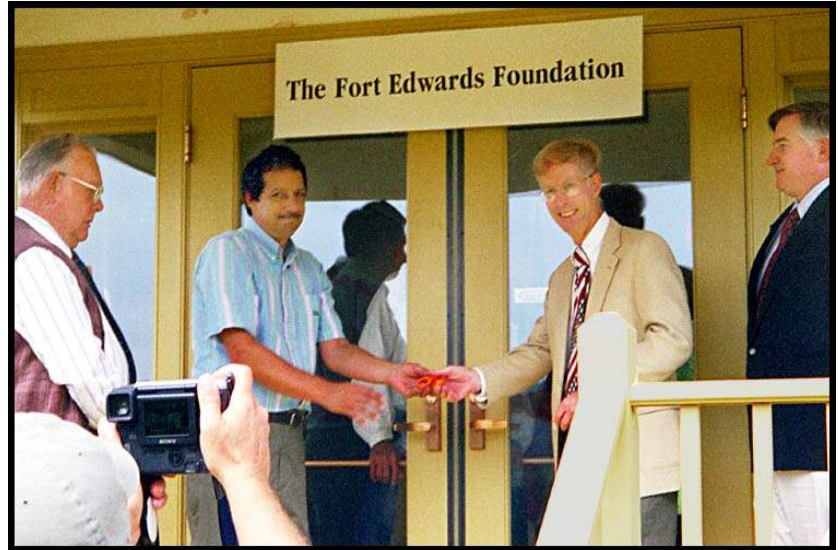
Charles Hall grew up in Washington, D.C., but decided as a young man that he'd prefer living in the country. Fortunately for the residents of Hampshire County, he settled on a beautiful piece of land near North River Mill, and the rest is history. Literally. As the creator of historicHampshire.org—a website that chronicles the history of West

Virginia's oldest county—he serves as Hampshire's unofficial historian. He helped start The Fort Edwards Foundation and the Colonel Washington's Frontier Forts Association and is involved in a project to establish the George Washington Frontier National Heritage Area.

Where he may have made his greatest contribution is with Hampshire County's schoolchildren. Thanks to the creation of The Fort Edwards and the vast amount of research Hall has conducted on the area's rich colonial history, more than 500 children passing through the foundation's Visitor Center have learned about the first white settlers who began crossing the Cacapon River in the 1730s and settling in what was then the Western frontier of Virginia. The French and Indian War may be known by historians as a forgotten war, but in Hampshire County it is well remembered.

Charles Hall comes by his historical

bent naturally. He says as a child his father dragged him to every Civil War site in Virginia. His first historical project,



Opening day of Fort Edwards Visitors Center
Then state delegate Jerry Mezzatesta shaking hands with then president Charles Hall.

which he began as a young adult, was finding out about his own family. He learned his ancestors dated back to colonial times, with four arriving on the Mayflower. He discovered, too, that Lord Baltimore has a place on his family tree.

Although he made many trips to Williamsburg growing up, he didn't know much about local colonial history until moving to his 110-acre farm off Cold Stream Road in 1974. In the 1750s, the land where Hall now lives was the home of James Gibbons whose family was attacked by Indians who carried Gibbons' daughter, Sarah, away with them. She returned

years later with an Indian child. The first land grant for Hall's property was awarded to James Craik in the 1780s by Lord Fairfax. Craik served as a surgeon for the Virginia Regiment which was led by George Washington during the French and Indian War. Craik became Washington's personal physician and was at Mount Vernon when the nation's first president died in 1799.

It was this connection that made Charles Hall want to know more about the Virginia Regiment. He began researching local forts in existence during that era, including Fort Pearsall in Romney. Dave Pancake, then Executive Director of the county's Development Commission, mentioned to Hall that the property where Fort Edwards once stood might be available for purchase. The property was owned by a developer who wanted to build townhouses but couldn't get the necessary permits. Joining with Pancake and Ken Edmonds, another prominent local resident, they convinced a conservancy group, whose mission was to save archeological sites, to buy the land the fort had stood on.

Later, The Fort Edwards Foundation won grants that enabled them to purchase the property from the Archeological Conservancy. Two others who were instrumental in securing grants are current Fort Edwards Board Member Fred Berkeridge, then mayor of Capon Bridge, and then state representative Jerry Mezzatesta. "From the beginning, Charlie had the vision to make Fort Edwards a historical showpiece for Hampshire County," says Berkeridge.

The Fort Edwards Foundation was incorporated in 1995, and one of its first acts was to hold a Colonial Feast. Nearly 100 people showed up, and there was great excitement about the new organization. The mission of Fort Edwards from the start was to build a visitor center where the county's history could be told. The Visitor

Center opened its doors in 2001.

Charles Hall has worked tirelessly for the Foundation in the succeeding years. He has continued his research, given lectures, written grant proposals, built museum-quality exhibits, and created programs based on what he's learned. He's produced original maps, including

“From the beginning, Charlie had the vision to make Fort Edwards a historical showpiece for Hampshire County,” says Fred Berkeridge, former mayor of Capon Bridge.

two available at the Visitor Center: a map of the central British colonies, which covers southern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia fort sites; and one of the entire theater of the French and Indian War in North America.

The historian/educator leads a busy life but makes time every day to walk the trails on his property with his dog, Grace. It's on this land within sight of Ice Mountain where so many important events took place, events that inspired him to learn more about his adopted home.

The Year So Far

Colonial Feast: This year's feast held in April set a new standard for excellence. Thanks to local resident Gini LaMaster who has Colonial-era food experience, the food was superb. Gini, along with Evan Oates and other members of the Capon Bridge fire hall, worked well into the night preparing the food, and diners responded by giving the crew rave reviews. Highlights of the evening included a presentation by Brian LaMaster, an expert on 18th Century weaponry.

And although the Colonial Feast has never been strictly a fund raiser, the foundation this year made a slight profit. The feast is mainly an effort to involve the community and members-at-large who want to participate in unique, period festivities.

Wine & Cheese Party:

This elegant event at the Asa Cline House Bed & Breakfast in Yellow Spring in late May was also a rousing success. This is an annual party whose proceeds go to Fort Edwards. We had a strong turnout and the money donated to the Foundation totaled some \$2,000, which included ticket sales and proceeds from a silent auction. We would like to thank event organizers Julie Flanagan, Judy DeWitt, and Merrie Hammond—who along with husband John—are owners of the B&B. Thanks to the Hammonds for allowing us to hold the party at their beautiful old farmhouse and the artisans who contributed their wares for the auction.



Children's History Day:

On the last Saturday in June, the Fort Edwards Visitor Center opened its doors for the 2009 season. Thanks to the artisans and friends of Fort Edwards, opening day gave children a glimpse of their forebearers' lives. Those artisans included Gary VanMeter who brought his Conestoga wagon, Clyde DeWitt who demonstrated lace making and Judi DeWitt who showed the kids how to make clay items. Dorry Hummer showed them how to write with hand-crafted quill pens; Brian LaMaster talked about colonial weaponry; the Maryland Forces Regimental troops cooked over an open fire. Robin Pancake demonstrated how colonialists made dolls from corn husks; Lydia Moreland and 8 of her children displayed lavender bouquets; Amy LaFollette handed out bags of in-shell roasted peanuts and Gary Drake offered copies of his artistic print, "Caudy's Castle," and scrimshaw items. Bryan LaFollette played the bagpipes and other music was provided by Steve Bailes and Rich Cogswell. Barbara Wilfong and Julie Flanagan served snacks. The children particularly enjoyed non-human presenter, Darcy the sheep, who was brought to the event by Mary and Jim Painter.



Hampshire, History and Herbs

Herbs played an important part in Colonial life in America for both culinary and medical reasons. When preparing savory colonial pies, the cook had only to step outside her kitchen to gather rosemary, marjoram, thyme, and chives. Many medicines grew in the kitchen garden as well, including Chamomile for stomach ailments and Horehound for coughs and colds.

The herb garden at Fort Edwards contains the plants in use in our region in the 1700s during the time that Joseph Edwards, one of the earliest white settlers in Hampshire County, made his home here. The garden is divided into four raised beds, one with culinary herbs; another with medicinal herbs. The third raised bed contains dyeing and drying plants, such as marigolds, and the fourth is a vegetable bed. Some of the same plants are in more than one bed, as they were used in more than one capacity. In addition, vine plants, including pumpkins and gourds, grow in borders along the fence.



Avid gardeners, Board Member Julie Flanagan and former Board member Roberta Munske, created the garden in 2004. They came up with the idea, conducted a lot of research and—along with Springfield resident Sherri Robin Boland, who is said to have more than 200 herbs in her own garden—donated the plants.

Volunteers have been a great help, including local children who placed small rocks between the fence slats to block rabbits from entering the garden. Rabbits may not be welcome but you certainly are. Stop by and check out the garden. Wander the paths and look at the plants used by our ancestors that remain popular today.

Ford Edwards Foundation
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