



The Bulletin

The monthly newsletter of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association

JUNE 2021

On the Web: www.w3r-us.org

Vol. 1, No. 6

Founding Cities Stimulus Proposal Gains Support in Congress

Twenty-three members of Congress – 13 Senators and 10 Representatives – have signed on to “Dear Colleague” letters that advocate increased spending on the Trail through the National Park Service. The Senate letter, led by Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, asks for the operating budget of the Trail to be doubled and advocates for \$9 million in new monies “in FY2022 to fund planning, research, education, and interpretation for the trail.” The House letter was led by Representative Jahana Hayes, also of Connecticut, who was the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, teaching history in Waterbury before running for Congress. Please click on this link to watch [this six-minute clip](#) of her appearance on *CBS This Morning* in conjunction with the honor. Please click on this link to learn more about the W3R-US stimulus proposal – <https://w3r-us.org/the-trail-that-connects-americas-founding-cities/>.

These letters will help bring attention to the needs of the Trail as the budgeting process grinds on through the summer before Fiscal Year 2022 begins Oct. 1, 2021. The Senators and House members who have joined the initiative are:

Connecticut: Sens. Richard Blumenthal, Christopher Murphy; Reps. Joe Courtney, Jahana Hayes, Jim Himes

Delaware: Sens. Thomas Carper, Christopher Coons; Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester

Maryland: Sens. Benjamin Cardin, Chris Van Hollen; Rep. John Sarbanes

New Jersey: Sens. Cory Booker, Robert Menendez; Reps. Tom Malinowski, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell, Bonnie Watson Coleman

New York: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand; Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney

Pennsylvania: Sen. Robert Casey

Rhode Island: Sens. Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse

Virginia: Sen. Tim Kaine

We did particularly well in Connecticut and Delaware. Connecticut produced our two leaders in Washington, thanks to introductions by W3R Director Ingrid Wood and Leadership Council member Bob Burns and the support and guidance of Director Bruce Donald. Delaware achieved 100 percent support from its Congressional delegation thanks to introductions by Directors Bill Conley and Peg Tigie and the guidance of Director Tina Betz and Leadership Council member David Young.

We are also gathering support from nonprofits that we will list on our Web site. We have already lined up support from the Connecticut and Delaware Historical Societies, the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey, Mount Vernon, The Museum of the American Revolution, the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition and the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum. Please help us identify other groups willing to be listed as supporters of our initiative.

– Brad Fay, W3R Leadership Council

Buck, Mills Honored by Middle Passage Organization

New Leadership Council members Elaine Buck and Beverly Mills were honored May 21 with the Solomon Northrup Family Award from the Sons & Daughters of the United States Middle Passage. The service award was presented to the New Jersey researchers and authors during the hereditary society’s annual conference.

Both honorees are founders of the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum in Montgomery Township, New Jersey, members of the Advisory Board and trustees of the Stoutsburg Cemetery Association, a historic cemetery for people of African descent located in the Sourland Mountains in Hopewell, New Jersey.



Elaine Buck, left, and Beverly Mills

The researchers have co-authored a book, *If These Stones Could Talk*, which is based on more than a decade of research on the contribution of African Americans who lived in the Sourland Mountain region and surrounding area. It was through this research that Beverly was able to trace her ancestry to African Americans who were enslaved in the Hopewell area before the Revolutionary War.

Elaine and Beverly in 2017 helped found the Sankofa Collaborative, an initiative created to ensure that material and resources that relate to African American history are accessible statewide to a broader and more diverse audience. They are also co-founders of Friday Truehart Consultants, a company that works with K-12 educators on incorporating African American history into curricula.

Seal Saluted for Work at Odell House

Susan Seal, president of the Friends of the Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters in Hartsdale, New York, was presented May 23 with the Sy Schulman Award by the Westchester County, New York, Historical Society. This award is given annually to an individual or organization that has demonstrated a strong commitment to historical research, historic preservation and/or the teaching of local history and has, as a result, elevated the public's appreciation of the history of Westchester County.

Susan, a member of W3R-US, was honored for her 20-year effort to save, restore and eventually open the historic Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters to the public. For six weeks in the summer of 1781, the Comte de Rochambeau made his headquarters in this house while his troops encamped nearby. He and General George Washington made momentous decisions there, including plans for the Yorktown campaign.

In addition to the award, Westchester County Executive George Latimer and County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky, whose district includes the Odell House, gave Susan a resolution proclaiming May 26, 2021, Susan Seal Day in Westchester County. The County Executive praised Susan and the efforts of the Historical Society to keep an awareness of local history alive and preserve special historic places.

In a related matter, the National Park Service paid for a set of archival boxes to store the Odell collection of photos and clothes found in the house.

To learn more about the Odell House and the Friends, please visit <https://www.odellrochambeau.org/>.

Like and follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/odellrochambeau>



Westchester County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky, right, presents Susan Seal with a resolution proclaiming May 26, 2021, Susan Seal Day in the county.

Membership Memo: Meet M. Denise Dennis

Meet returning W3R-US Board of Directors member M. Denise Dennis, a seventh-generation Pennsylvanian, who was elected to a new term at the Annual Meeting April 24. She is the author of three books: *Black History for Beginners*, *A Century of Greatness* and a legal mystery novel, *Becoming His Father's Son*, co-authored with attorney Gregory Miller. She is also a journalist whose articles have appeared in numerous publications including *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *UNESCO Courier*, the magazine of the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization in Paris.



M. Denise Dennis

In addition to writing, she serves as President and CEO of the Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust, which she and her great-aunt, Hope Dennis, founded in 2001. The trust is designed to preserve the 153-acre farm in Susquehanna County where their ancestors – documented free African Americans who came to Pennsylvania from Connecticut in 1793 – settled. The property, including the family cemetery where ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War are buried, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. African Americans who died on the Underground Railroad are also buried in the Perkins-Dennis Cemetery.

Denise, who is fluent in French, moved to Paris around 2000, where she wrote the manuscripts of *A Century of Greatness* and *Becoming His Father's Son*, as well as freelance articles.

Visit the Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust at <https://thedennisfarm.org/>

Watch for more to come about our members in the next edition of The Bulletin. If you have not already done so, please consider joining W3R-US along with your state organization by visiting the membership page at <https://w3r-us.org/w3r-us/membership/> And please invite a friend or a like-minded organization to join us!

– Julie Diddell, Membership Committee Chair

Correction

New Trail brochures are targeted for funding in Fiscal Year 2023, which should result in the release of a new brochure in either 2024 or 2025, in advance of the 250th Anniversary. The new brochures will meet accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities, to include the availability of braille brochures for visually impaired people. Incorrect information was published in the May edition of *The Bulletin*.



The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association

proudly presents



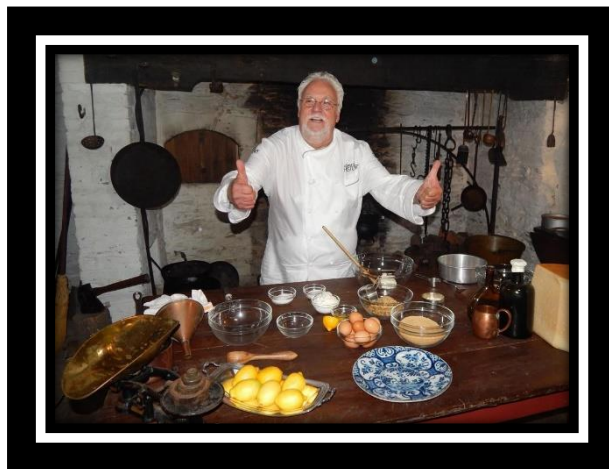
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ROCHAMBEAU !

Mark your calendar for July 1st at 5 p.m. ET on ZOOM.

W3R-US has invited the one and only **Chef Walter Staib**

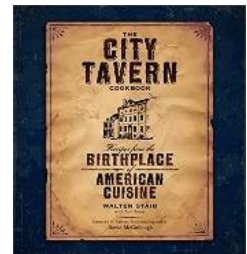
to lead us in celebrating the birthday of Comte de Rochambeau!

To register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_i464Eu-JQm6hY8I5JIUFiQ



Chef Walter Staib as seen on TV

a Taste of
HISTORY



*Chef Staib's book
is available on
Amazon Smile.
See Page 7.*

Plans Moving Ahead for Yorktown Day

Hoping that the Covid-19 infection rate remains low, the Yorktown Day Association (YDA) plans to return this Oct. 19, a Tuesday, to the regular schedule of events, including the parade, celebrating the surrender of the British to the French and American allies in 1781. This has been cleared through the State of Virginia, York County and the National Park Service, it was reported at the YDA meeting June 7.

The previous day, Monday, Oct. 18, the new statue of Rochambeau is scheduled to be unveiled at 11 a.m. on Riverwalk in Yorktown, with French officials and Rochambeau family members in attendance.

The new work will join the statues of Washington, de Grasse and Lafayette already in place. W3R-US Directors Nicole Yancey, Chair of the Franco-American Committee, and Chuck Schwam are planning the ceremony, which is open to the public.

Nicole has been serving for several years as W3R-US liaison as well as French liaison to the YDA Board.

The parade is the only ceremony in which all W3R-US members can actively participate but all ceremonies are open to the public. W3R-US will place a wreath during the ceremony at the French Memorial.

W3R-US members planning to travel to Virginia can make their reservations. W3R-VA executive board members welcome all W3R members who wish to march in the parade (about a mile). They have created a banner and will wear logo shirts. Please contact Nicole if you plan to march: ngyancey@verizon.net.

Additional information about Yorktown Day – including the Oct. 18 dinner and the Oct. 19 buffet – will be published in *The Bulletin* when it becomes available.

► In other news from the Franco-American Committee:

The “Gallery of Portraits” being developed for the W3R-US Web site will feature a wide variety of unsung French people, not just members of the military. Please contact Nicole if you have any images that may be useful: ngyancey@verizon.net.

A plaque honoring French soldiers and sailors who died at sea while sailing to America or during battles is being considered and has received support from the American Society, Le Souvenir Français. The plaque would be set, upon approval by the National Park Service, next to the French Memorial. A committee will be formed to study the feasibility of the project, which is intended to honor the memory of those who did not receive proper burial.

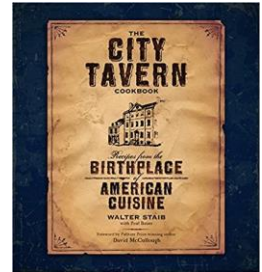
Fundraising Challenge for Bicycle/Kayak Tour

National Chair Larry Abell is challenging W3R-US members and friends to match his donation of \$500 to offset expenses of the Bicycle/Kayak Tour planned along the Trail Aug. 14-31. The tour, “Experience America’s Roads and Waterways to Independence,” is being organized by W3R-US Director Sal Lilienthal and is free and open to anyone willing to comply with the guidelines. It is sponsored by the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (WARO), W3R-US and Sal’s Bicycle Tour Company. More information will appear in the July edition of *The Bulletin*. To match Larry’s challenge, please visit www.w3r.org or send a check to W3R-US, P.O. Box 38255, Baltimore, MD 21231

Fundraising Fun: Treat Yourself to a Classic Cookbook

Treat yourself to an enjoyable read of Chef Walter Staib’s book, *The City Tavern Cookbook: Recipes from the Birthplace of American Cuisine*, and support W3R-US at the same time by purchasing the book on Amazon Smile!

When you select W3R-US as the charity of your choice to support, a portion of the purchase comes right back to W3R-US.



https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B001RNPCG6/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i1

– Julie Diddell, Fundraising Committee Chair

News Nuggets

Online store: Treasurer Dave Meredith and Director Sam Meredith report that our Association’s new online store is “extremely close” to being completed.

Need a sign? Trail sites seeking new signs should contact Trail Administrator Johnny Carawan at johnny_carawan@nps.gov

Travel App: Trail Historian Dr. Robert Selig is scheduled to begin research shortly for the new Travel App.

Flyover: National Chair Larry Abell is scheduled to lay a wreath at the French Memorial in Yorktown during a July 8 ceremony, which will include a flyover by the French Air Force.

Visual library: Plans are in the works to upgrade the visual library on the W3R-US Web site.

Annual Meeting: The Executive Committee agreed during a critique that the April 24 meeting was most informative but, at 2 hours and 39 minutes, was too long. Suggestions included breaking the 2022 Annual Meeting into two sessions.

Preservation: Please send information and photos to Executive Director Ellen von Karajan about Trail historic sites that are being preserved or are endangered and/or in need of preservation so W3R-US can share this information via our Association's Web site and social media. evonkarajan@gmail.com

Volunteers sought

National Chair Larry Abell is seeking volunteers to serve on four broad-based committees:

- Planning W3R-US activities at the 240th anniversary of the victory at Yorktown (October 2021)
- Update and review W3R-US' Statement of Inclusion
- Develop a draft W3R-US Community Assumptions and Agreement for Meetings
- Develop a draft Statement of Values for W3R-US

Tracking Volunteer Service

Director Sam Meredith, who compiles the volunteer hours worked by W3R-US members, encourages state and committee chairs, as well as individuals, to report monthly. Hours include meetings, phone calls, advocacy, research, planning, events and travel, among other items, both national and state/local. Sam's template includes space for donations in kind (office space and computer use, for example, even if not reported on your tax returns). Please email your monthly reports to Sam at memogroup1127@gmail.com by the fifth of the following month.

From the Editor

I hope you continue to enjoy *The Bulletin* and find it helpful in keeping abreast of the activities of The National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association on numerous fronts. Thank you for your favorable comments and other kind words. To keep up with all news of our Association, please check our Web site regularly: www.w3r-us.org

State leaders are invited to provide information (by the end of each month for the following month's edition) about their activities, which will be presented in a separate section of *The Bulletin*. (Please see the reports from New York and Delaware, below.)

Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome. Please email me at

historicaljeff@aol.com

– Jeff Canning, National Recording Secretary

State Report

New York: The overarching goal of W3R-NY is to support the Odell House Rochambeau Headquarters and America 250 via the Daughters of the American Revolution, Friends of the Odell House and Revolutionary Westchester 250, plus Revolutionary War sites in Rockland and

Westchester Counties such as St. Paul's Church in Mount Vernon, Old Saint Peter's Church in Van Cortlandtville, Verplanck Point/Kings Ferry, Stony Point Battlefield, West Point history, DeWint House Washington Headquarters in Tappan, The Old '76 House in Tappan and the encampment in Suffern (August 1781) for respite after crossing the Hudson on the way to Yorktown.

– *Janet Lee Burnet, State Chair*

► The Van Cortlandtville Historical Society's annual memorial service honoring the eight French soldiers who died in Van Cortlandtville, New York, during the Revolutionary War will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, July 4, 2021, at Old Saint Peter's Church. French forces used the church as a military hospital in 1781 and 1782, before and after the victory in Yorktown. Jeff Canning, a past president of the Historical Society, will lead the 30-minute service, continuing a tradition started in 2001.

Delaware: State Chair Bill Conley gave the Memorial Day speech at the 300th anniversary of the formation of the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church. He focused on the Revolutionary War events around the Newark church in 1777 at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge and in 1781 when the French and American armies marched through the area. He also mentioned Allan McLane, a cavalry officer in Washington's army who lived in both Wilmington and Duck Creek (now called Smyrna). He erected two Presbyterian churches, one in Wilmington and one in Duck Creek, and helped form the first Abolitionist society in Delaware, around 1800. "I wanted the Presbyterian congregation to hear of this unsung hero from their faith," Bill said.

Bill met with Vince Watchorn, the new President of the Friends of Cooch's Home, focusing on how W3R and the new Friends group can work together to share both stories. Vince offered to allow W3R a kiosk inside the Colonial Home, which sits along the Trail.

Vice Chair Peg Tigie continued her series of meetings with Wilmington officials on ways to spread the W3R message in the city. City Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver has joined W3R in the effort to share the diverse Revolutionary War story with the city's youth.

– *Bill Conley, State Chair* ■