



# The Massachusetts Lafayette Society Newsletter

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## President's Letter – February 2013



Alan R. Hoffman

Dear Friend of Lafayette:

In this letter, I will review the past year's activities of the Society and then give you a preview of the events we have planned for the spring of this year. Finally, I will inform you of some of the projects that our affiliated organizations are involved in.

2012 was a busy and productive year for the Massachusetts Lafayette

Society highlighted by our Massachusetts Lafayette Day ceremonies, a Lafayette birthday celebration in Salem, a tour of the Longfellow House in Cambridge, and a Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route [W3R] celebration at Bunker Hill.

The kick-off to the State House ceremonies was our annual cocktail reception on Thursday, May 17, 2012 at the Ritz off Tremont Street. Ben **Goldman**, a 27 year old re-enactor who now resides in the District of Columbia was a charming **Lafayette** regaling us with stories of his 1784 visit to Boston (at age 27). When he was told **Lafayette** visited Boston again 40 years later, he remarked: "That's great news; I didn't know I would live that long." Entertainment was provided by Phil **Myers**, a member of the Society with his wife Anne **Hoffman** (yes, a relation) on the keyboard and his friend, Dane **Bedward**, on the guitar. The food was, again, excellent and a good time was had by all in a great setting.

Because the 20<sup>th</sup> was a Sunday, Lafayette Day ceremonies were held on Friday, May 18, 2012 in the Gardner Auditorium in the

State House. Consul Général Christophe **Guilhou**, in his swan song as a co-host of Lafayette Day, joined us. The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts presented the Colors; and the Boston International School chorus charmed us with the singing of the French and American National Anthems. Several French regiments joined us under the command of member Matthew **Meese**. Also, present was

our new young **Lafayette** who performed with aplomb. The highlight of the ceremonies – and the principal reason we had a crowd of over 100 – was the award of Legion of Honor Medals to five WWII veterans who had fought for France. (A sixth

was unable to attend due to illness and died on May 19, 2012.) What a moving sight to have Consul Général **Guilhou** call each one to the podium, describe his war service and decorate him with the medal. That generation is passing, and, unfortunately, we





do not have too many of these award ceremonies in our future.



After the ceremonies, we proceeded to the Lafayette Monument on Tremont Street where Normand **Ouellette** and the

Consul Général placed the wreath, and the French regiments entertained us with a series of musket blasts.

Many of us repaired to the Union Club for our traditional luncheon where, with the help of the Consulate, we had obtained a grant to fund dinner for each of the honored veterans and a family member. Our friend, Ryan **Woods**, of the New England Historical Genealogical Society, was the keynote speaker and he instructed us on the early history of the Society of the Cincinnati, the oldest hereditary organization in the country which had as original members **Washington, Lafayette, Rochambeau** and **Hamilton**.

On Friday, September 7, 2012, at Hamilton Hall where **Lafayette** was feted on August 31, 1824, approximately 200 people celebrated his birthday (actually September 6). This event was spearheaded by Becky **Putnam**, a new member of the Society and the Bowditch Foundation, with a big assist from MLS board member Myriam **Zuber** who recently formed a new organization to foster Franco-American friendship called FAIRE.

Again, we had a contingent of French Regimental soldiers; and a wonderful spread of hors d'oeuvres and wine was available highlighted by the crepe station on the third

floor. The new Consul Général, Fabien **Fieschi**, made his maiden appearance as a speaker and was followed by my “Why do we celebrate Lafayette” talk with a time-limit of 10 minutes, which I am informed I exceeded, again. The keynote speaker was historian, François **Furstenberg**, who talked about Frenchmen in America in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Congratulations Becky and Myriam – it was quite a party.

On Sunday, October 21, 2012, an MLS group repaired to the Longfellow House where the National Park Service ranger, Garrett **Cloer**, gave us a tour of the House, after a reception and a slide talk in the Carriage House by an NPS volunteer. The House tour was really two for the price of one: first, we learned about the house when it served as **Washington**'s Headquarters in 1775-1776; then, we were shown the House as currently configured filled with Henry Wadsworth **Longfellow**'s things, including his furniture, prints and other artworks and books. What a place for a history buff! I want to extend my thanks to Board Member Bill **Dunham** for organizing the event and to Board Member Deb **Bouras** for provisioning and cooking up a storm to create a wonderful spread at the reception.

On Sunday, December 9, 2013 at historic Bunker Hill, our Society co-hosted a major event with the National Park Service, and the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, a National Historic Trail. Participat-



ing in the ceremonies on the Hill were an Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company color guard

and French Regimental Soldiers. The new Consul Général spoke as did the W3R Marchers who had paved the way for the



trail – the French Army’s route from Yorktown to Virginia - to be recognized as an NPS National

Historic Trail by reprising the 1781 march from Newport south in 2006. This year they had arrived in Boston the previous Friday, having reprised the return march of French forces from Providence to Boston in December of 1782 for their departure to the West Indies. There were between 80 and 90 people present.

After the ceremonies on the Hill, over 50 persons repaired to the Bunker Hill Museum where Dr. Robert **Selig**, a military historian whom W3R has retained to conduct a study of various strands of the route in Massachusetts, spoke about his research into the 1782 return Route. His study is designed to add the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the NPS National Historic Trail.

Here are three events you should put on your calendars:

**April 4, 2013 in Salem, MA at the Maritime Museum.** Myriam **Zuber** is planning a program on the “Zuber Wallpaper,” in particular the 1834 series “Views of North America.” The French American Intercultural Relations and Exchanges (FAIRE) with the Bowditch Institute, the Salem Maritime National Historic Site and in partnership with Boston Strasbourg Sister City Association, are organizing a symposium titled: “French Visions of America in 1834: A Symposium Exploring Zuber et Cie’s Views of North America.” The event will take on Thursday, April 4, 2013 at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site (Visitor Center),

Salem, MA from 6-8:30 p.m. I have been asked to speak on the role of **Lafayette**.

**May 19 and 20, 2013. Lafayette Day events.** The cocktail reception will be on Sunday this year, and the State House ceremonies and Union Club luncheon will be on Monday, May 20, 2013.

**The Shirley-Eustis House** is planning an event to celebrate its Centennial, i.e., the 100th anniversary of the acquisition of the House and the chartering of the Shirley-Eustis House Association (SEHA). With the assistance of Board Member and SEHA Furnishings Committee Chair Rick **Detwiller**, the House is engaged in furnishing the “Lafayette Bedroom.” (As I’m sure all of you know, **Lafayette** slept at Governor Eustis’ mansion in Roxbury on August 23, 1824, before arriving in Boston on the 24th. He also returned for a banquet a few days later.) There will be a fundraising event to help with the furnishings project as well. In the best of all possible worlds, one or both of these events could be held late this summer or fall.

There are three projects that, as individuals, you may wish to support.

**The W3R Revolutionary Route.** One of the routes that Dr. **Selig** is engaged to study is the “Lafayette prequel route,” i.e., **Lafayette’s** return to Boston in April 1780 and his land route from Boston west to Morristown, N.J. to tell General **Washington** that help in the form of Rochambeau’s Army and a flotilla of the French Fleet was on the way. W3R has raised \$4,000 towards Dr. **Selig’s** fee, with another \$3,500 to be raised to complete the contract. If you wish to support the cause, you can send a check payable to W3R-US to me c/o Lynch, Brewer, Hoffman, 75 Federal Street – 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02110; and I will forward it to the Treasurer in Delaware.



**The Lafayette Banner restoration project.** In 2011, on Lafayette Day, many of us were shown the 39 foot Lafayette Banner – “Welcome Friend of America to the Birthplace of American Liberty” – which greeted **Lafayette** when he arrived on Lexington Green on September 2, 1824. The Lexington Historical Society and its Director Susan **Bennett** have raised \$5,000 towards the restoration of this truly unique artifact of the Farewell Tour. They have to raise another \$7,000. If you wish to contribute, you may send a check payable to the Lexington Historical Society to either me at the address above or to the Lexington Historical Society directly, attention Susan **Bennett** at 1332 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington, MA 02420.

Finally, **the Shirley-Eustis House** is seeking donations to support its **Lafayette** furniture project. You may send a check payable to the Shirley-Eustis House to me or to the House, attention Patti **Violette** at 33 Shirley Street, Roxbury, MA 02119.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our 2013 calendar of events.

Vive Lafayette,

Alan R. Hoffman, President

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### Did you know that Lafayette went to Harvard?

**Lafayette** visited Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 4 occasions. On December 19, 1781, shortly before his return to France, he attended the investiture of Joseph **Willard** as President of the College. On October 20, 1784, during **Lafayette’s** 1784 visit to America, Harvard honored him with a Doctor of Laws degree, and he attended a banquet given by the

Harvard Corporation. On August 25, 1824, on the Farewell Tour, **Lafayette** attended commencement exercises at Harvard, at which the College awarded **Lafayette’s** son, George Washington **Lafayette**, a Master of Arts degree.

**Lafayette’s** final visit to Harvard was the following day, August 26, 1824, when he attended the exercises of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and dined at Commons Hall. During these exercises, the great orator, Edward **Everett**, then a young Philosophy professor, harangued him with a laudatory address. (**Everett** gave the eulogy for **Lafayette** at Faneuil Hall in Boston on September 6, 1834 – a great read by the way and available online. No one ever said **Everett** was too short-winded. His eulogy is over 100 pages, and he preceded **Lincoln** at Gettysburg with a two-hour, 13,607 word oration which, unlike **Lincoln’s**, no one remembers.)



This marker memorializes **Lafayette’s** visits to Harvard in 1824, along with several other important events. It stands outside the iron fence that surrounds Harvard Yard opposite the subway in Harvard Square.

