

CINCINNATI FOURTEEN



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The State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania

In a seafood restaurant across the street from Philadelphia's storied City Hall, Chuck Coltman made it clear that he intended to bring positive, systemic change to a state society that had resisted substantial change for decades. It was November 16, 2011, and he was only five weeks into his term as president of the Pennsylvania Society as he presided over his first standing committee meeting.

Making eye contact with everyone around the table, the retired banker firmly laid down his rules for how the state society's leadership would conduct business during his term: members would speak in turn rather than interrupting or talking over each other; failure to voice an objection would be taken as assent; past presidents could voice opinions but not vote (the immediate past president is an exception), in adherence to the society's bylaws and continuing a policy instituted by outgoing President Lowell Davis; small committees would study big issues and then report action recommendations to the whole committee for debate and vote; emails circulated to all committee members would provide a forum to debate major issues

prior to formal meetings in an effort to speed decision-making; and leadership positions would change on a set schedule.

President Coltman then led a brainstorming session about the mission and role of the state society, writing the ideas generated down on paper for later ranking by committee members. The consensus that emerged led to the development of a vision statement for the Pennsylvania Society that prioritized member involvement and educational programming as the society's primary focus to achieve its goal of protecting the legacy and principles of the heroes of the Revolutionary War.

In September 2012, President Coltman hosted all standing committee members and their families in Bethany Beach for a weekend of meetings and fellowship. The relaxed retreat weekend, which has continued each fall since, gave committee members an opportunity to get to know one another on a much deeper personal level than formal meetings afford. These retreats fostered cohesion and a degree of unity of purpose in the society's leadership. The June family picnics Lowell Davis began at Anderson House have continued offer similar opportunities for fellowship, as did a dinner-dance held in

conjunction with last October's annual meeting. The weekend of festivities, organized by Lowell at Anderson House, was the first time the Pennsylvania Society's annual meeting had been held outside Philadelphia. Wives joined the social events after the men-only business meeting. This new tradition was repeated this fall at the Corinthian Yacht Club, south of Philadelphia, with a weekend of dinner and dancing following the annual meeting.

Under Chuck Coltman's leadership, the past three years has been a whirlwind of action on issues that had long stymied Pennsylvania:

- Education became a leading focus for the society with Jim Pringle spearheading efforts to develop a video game on the Revolutionary War, which is now in development with the participation of other state societies and the General Society.
- The state adopted the Rule of 1854, which broadens its membership base by 180 potential new members. The Pennsylvania Society had long adhered to the explicit wording in its charter of 1792 that limited membership to descendants of officers of the Continental Line who had joined the Society. The Pennsylvania Society has now joined every other state society

The adults lined up for a serious group photo at the Pennsylvania Society's annual picnic in the garden at Anderson House. The children had other ideas.



by adopting the Rule of 1854 and welcomes eligible descendants of all Pennsylvania officers who served in the Continental Army, Navy and Marines.

- An overhaul of the society's corporate charter made it consistent with modern Pennsylvania articles of incorporation. The society's new charter replaced the hand-

written document approved by the state legislature in 1792. A new charter was needed before the society could adopt the Rule of 1854.

- Society bylaws were scrubbed of references to the 1960s and streamlined to give the document more flexibility and to permit faster revision than in the past.
- New members were brought

on to the standing committee and given leadership positions on the various committees that were created to tackle the complex issues of bylaw changes, the corporate charter, and the Rule of 1854.

- Limited membership on the nomination committee to the current vice president and the two immediate past presidents, ending a practice

where a couple of members seemed to serve for life.

- Pennsylvania's designated representatives to the General Society are now the society's current president and vice president. The immediate past president serves on the General Society's nomination committee. This three-year rotation replaced a practice where the same people had represented Pennsylvania on the national level for decades.
- The society's room in Anderson House was redecorated and won a national award for its redesign.
- Standing committee meetings were held at Anderson House in recognition of the many

Washington-area members of the leadership group.

Incoming President Tom Etter said he intends to continue the new traditions and social events established under Lowell Davis and Chuck Coltman. His attention over the next three years will be directed to bolstering Pennsylvania's general membership and the society's educational outreach. "One of my main focuses will be on membership recruitment and retention. We will create an office of the registrar and will form a committee on membership development," Etter said. "We also want to emphasize the history of the

Revolutionary War, perhaps with trips to battlefields, in addition to the exciting video game project, *Revolutionary Choices*."

At the Pennsylvania Society's annual meeting on October 10, the following members were elected as officers: Thomas Clifton Etter Jr, president; Dr. James Orlo Pringle, vice president; William Hoyt Olinger, secretary; Mark Crosby Ward, treasurer; Col. David Bassert Jr., assistant treasurer; and Gregory John Sproat, assistant secretary.

Randolph Philip Smith

The Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati

After many years, the Delaware State Society of the Cincinnati recently ran out of diplomas for new members. New ones needed to be printed. Luckily, the plate from which the original diplomas were printed, made near the reconstitution of the Delaware Society in 1895, had been stored at Anderson House for the last few years.

Delaware was not sure whether the plate could be used. If it could, it wasn't clear how we would get it printed. New General Society diplomas are laser printed—a far less satisfying, but much

more affordable print is the result. Delaware was keen to try to have the diplomas printed from the engraved plate if possible.

Master printer Scip Barnhart, probably Washington, DC's premier master printer, was called to consult. Mr. Barnhart was enthusiastic about taking on the project because of the extraordinary quality of the plate. So, the plate left the vault and went to American University, where Mr. Barnhart is a professor.

The steel plate is unusual. It is quite heavy because it is so thick—about a quarter of an inch—much thicker than a contemporary plate. Its design is very similar to the diplomas originally