



The McHenry Register

And the Flagpole was Still There...

The Star-Spangled Banner still waves by the “dawn’s early light” but on a new flagpole. On June 19, 2009 the existing pole, dating to 1989, was removed. A temporary aluminum pole ensured that the flag continued to wave for 24 hours a day at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine until the new wooden flagpole was placed two weeks later. Moreover, visitors still had the opportunity to participate in flag changes and see a period flag with 15-stars 15-stripes.

“Historically, Fort McHenry has gone through a lot of flagpoles” says Chief of Interpretation, Vincent Vaise. “The first known replacement was in 1810, four years before the bombardment. It was struck by lightning and blown apart; nature had better aim than the British.” The new flagpole, which stands at 87 feet, is made of Douglas Fir. Resembling a ship’s mast, the pole is constructed in two parts for stability and to make it easier to perform maintenance. “They used to build sailing ships in Baltimore” says Park Ranger Scott Sheads. “If you wanted something that tall for a flagpole, you likely built it as a mast.” Visitors to the fort during this project were able to view the flag from another historic location on one of the fort’s bastions. The location of the temporary flagpole was where the flagpole was located historically during the American Civil War and the First World War.

The new flagpole is a blend of modern technology and Nineteenth-Century craftsmanship. Steven Wagner and Son, of Center Valley, Pennsylvania who have been making flagpoles since 1989, were busy shaving, cutting, and blending vintage iron hardware, much as their historic



The new flagpole is hoisted into the Fort, the temporary flagpole is seen in the background.

predecessors had done. However, modern epoxy and paints will ensure that the pole weathers the elements for a long time. Steven Wagner and Son, a family business, specializes in custom projects. They installed the main flag pole at the U.S. Naval Academy, the flagpole on the Federal Courthouse in Brooklyn, New York, and designed and fabricated exhibits at Ellis Island in New York. “It is a great sense of pride to be doing something awesomely symbolic of our nation’s history,” said Steven Wagner.

NPS Acting Facilities Manager, Wayne Boyd discovered hidden rot in the existing flagpole prompting the need for a replacement. “I was taking part in a special National Park Service maintenance

training program,” says Wayne. “Part of the program was to make a careful assessment of park facilities and historic structures. That’s when I noticed that there was some rot in the center of the pole.” This discovery made it essential to install a new flag pole to ensure visitors safety. “Often visitors only see the Park Rangers giving tours,” says Chief of Interpretation Vaise. They don’t know that a major part of what we do is preserving the buildings and structures in a park.”

During the project the fort was closed for a non-consecutive total of four days. During these days, fees were suspended and Park Rangers offered a wide variety of programs.

Superintendent's Corner

Welcome to Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine!

The summer of 2009 is like no other that I have experienced at Baltimore's only national park. With a brand new historically-accurate flagpole waving the Star-Spangled Banner, there is no better place to spend the day. There are more ranger programs and opportunities to learn about the site's history than ever, and the Fort is still a wonderful place for a picnic or stroll along the seawall.

Of course, we encourage visitors to attend all the special events. The park's living history group, the Fort McHenry Guard, offers programs and demonstrations on every Saturday and Sunday of the summer - and on other special occasions. The U.S. Army will participate in the August 1st Tattoo program at 6pm, and September is only a short time away, when the park comes alive for the anniversary of our national anthem celebrated throughout the weekend of September 11-13th. Defenders Day will be bigger than ever - staged on the Orpheus side of the property to accommodate the construction of a new visitor center.

As always, the National Park Service staff is here to share stories of the Fort and preserve it for the future. Please enjoy and learn from this extremely special place.



Gay Vietzke
Superintendent

Fort McHenry's Youth Intake Program

On June 8, 2009, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar created the office of Youth in Natural Resources in the Department of the Interior. Secretary Salazar instituted this program to "provide jobs, outdoor experiences and career opportunities for young people..." In the spirit of this new initiative, Fort McHenry has added five new youth employees to the staff in order to meet the goals of a 21st century National Park Service.

These new staff members bring a fresh outlook, a youthful energy, and different experiences to the park. Sharneasha Street, Shandrika Davis, and Shabray Hobson, seniors at the Coppin Academy, were chosen to participate in this highly competitive program. Keith Parham will be a freshman at Coppin State University where he will study civil engineering. Tyler Mink joins us from the ranks of the Fort McHenry Guard where he has been a volunteer in the Fife and Drum Corps for the past six years. They have already proven themselves quite capable in different aspects of the Park's functions.

Here at Fort McHenry, these youth intake employees will learn about a variety of functions that the park performs. On a daily basis they will serve

at the visitor center desk, perform flag talks, participate in the living history program, and greet and answer visitor questions. Also during the week these employees will have the opportunity to perform maintenance duties and curatorial duties at Hampton National Historic Site. The wide-range of experiences they will acquire throughout the summer will provide them with a thorough understanding of Fort McHenry.

In addition to operations at the park level, the youth intake employees will also be learning about the role of the National Park Service as a government agency. During the course of their summer employment they will be visiting other national parks to assess their operations and compare them to Fort McHenry. This educational experience will provide them with hands-on knowledge of the inner workings of the National Park Service.

We wish all of our new employees well and look forward to working with them in what will be a very productive summer.



The New Intake Employees
From left; Keith Parham, Tyler Mink, Shandrika Davis, Shabray Hobson, and Sharneasha Street

“The Urban Ranger”

With an academic background in Criminal Justice and hands on experience in Law Enforcement, Chad Kitchens is the newest Seasonal Law Enforcement Officer at Fort McHenry National Monument and Hampton National Historic Site. Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Chad spent most of his childhood in the suburbs of Atlanta and Chicago. As an adolescent, his family spent many vacations touring National Parks, and these experiences inspired him to become a U.S. Park Ranger. “I became a LEO after acquiring respect for the grey and green as a kid.” In order to pursue these ambitions, Chad began his academic studies at the University of Memphis with a major in Criminal Justice. He also attended Northern Arizona University to complete his training in Seasonal Law Enforcement. While at NAU, he served as president of his course group as well as graduated third in his class. His studies have continued as he majors in Criminal Justice Administration at the Columbia College of Missouri.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Chad also possesses hands on experience that will make him a valuable asset.



Ranger Kitchens in the field

For the Memphis Police Department, Chad worked as a Traffic Crash Investigator and acquired hours of field experience. However, Chad recognized his desire to “mix his passion of outdoor living and law enforcement” and became a Commissioned Police Officer for Naperville Park District Police. In 2008, Chad joined the National Park Service as a seasonal LEO at Shenandoah National Park.

Glen Clark, Senior Law Enforcement Officer of the Division of Law Enforcement, hired Chad to this seasonal law enforcement position to improve the safety at both parks. The LEO position requires 85% of Chad’s time to be spent in the field monitoring park resources and ensuring the wellbeing of the visitors. Clark said, “This is an essential position that allows LEO rangers to be more visible in the field.”

Chad is eager to return to an urban National Park, he feels that “in our current times of urban sprawl, it is important for Americans to appreciate their green space.” Hence, he sees himself as “a protector of that green space.” Chad’s career goals include the improvement of under-utilized parks through the creation of well implemented law enforcement plans.

On his uniform, Chad wears the 15 star-15 stripe flag above his name plate with pride. Kirby Shedlowski, a Park Ranger at Hampton, said, “He is an enthusiastic addition to the staff.” We are happy to have Chad here and welcome him to our park.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

O say can you see, by the dawns early light, a large red, white and blue banner? Whose broad stripes and bright stars . . . were so gallantly streaming! over the star-shaped Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore, September 13-14, 1814. The valiant defense of the fort by 1,000 dedicated Americans inspired Francis Scott Key to write The Star-Spangled Banner.

Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Navy Tattoo 2009

On a beautiful, clear Saturday evening, Fort McHenry honored Mayor Sheila Dixon, by hosting a twilight tattoo ceremony and naming her Honorary Colonel of the Fort McHenry Guard. This popular program is one of the oldest traditions in the city of Baltimore. The program commenced with the Navy Band, which preformed several patriotic pieces, much to the crowd’s enjoyment.

The Naval Drill team followed and executed modern rifle exercises. Their split-second timing and precision marching were quite the crowd-pleaser for the 500 visitors that came to watch the program. This type of drill has made the Navy Drill team famous throughout the world.

The Fort McHenry Guard was a highlight of the program. The Guard marched around the parade ground while performing the 1814 manual of arms. As the Guard took their places on the field, Honorary-Colonel Mayor Sheila Dixon trooped the line with Superintendent Gay Vietzke. The Honorary-Colonel then gave a moving speech about the defenses of Baltimore and the unity of the citizens of Baltimore in helping to prepare for the immanent attack.

Following the Honorary Colonel’s speech, the Fort McHenry Guard completed the ceremonial 1814 roll call and tattoo call with the fifes and drums. The conclusion of the program featured a new addition where the Park’s new 18 pound cannon ended the ceremony with a “bang.”



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The McHenry Register is published several times a year for our friends and partners across America.

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Upcoming Events!

Mark your calendars, there are many special events coming up at the fort!

Join us for Fort McHenry’s flagship event on **September 11-13!** This three-day encampment and extravaganza is celebrated with over 100 War of 1812 reenactors, parades, military bands, fireworks, a symbolic ship-to-shore bombardment and much more!

The Star-Spangled Banner Weekend honors Defenders’ Day, Baltimore’s oldest holiday commemorating the bombardment of Fort McHenry and the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner!” Events begin with a Friday evening ceremonial procession of War of 1812 “soldiers” from the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House to the Inner Harbor, followed by a ceremony at the amphitheater. After the ceremony the reenactors will board sailing boats and return with the 30’x42’ replica flag to Fort McHenry.

Saturday and Sunday, activities include children’s programs, historic boats, military encampments/demonstrations and a “privateer’s auction” of “captured goods.” **Saturday evening’s program**, beginning at 6 p.m., features a concert, a musket firing tactical demonstration with volunteer reenactors from all over the country (narrated), a symbolic ship-to-shore bombardment and evening fireworks show.



The Fort McHenry Guard