SAR Meeting Minutes for October 10, 2026

The Villages Chapter of SAR met in the Captiva Recreation Center on Saturday October 10, 2026, President Pat Taylor called the meeting to order at 10 am. We had 71 people in attendance, 45 members and 26 visitors.

The Pledge to the US flag was led by John Moore, the SAR pledge was led by VP Don Hansen and Pat gave the invocation.

Treasurer Lee Duff reported a bank balance of $6,600.69 and noted that we now have 128 members with many applications in process. Additionally, the Chapter voted and approved a motion to donate $500 towards the Wreaths Across America this year at the Lone Oak Cemetery in Leesburg.

Sergeant at Arms Chuck Opferman spoke about Revolutionary War events for October in 1776, including:

1. **Royal Navy warships forced their way past American defenses of the Hudson River.**
2. **Battle of Valcour Island.**
3. **George Washinton escapes from New York.**
4. **Ben Franklin left for France to seek their support.**

The September 2026 minutes submitted by Secretary Rick Smith was approved as written and sent out.

Awards:

1. **An SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal was presented to Officer Crystal Acevedo of the Wildwood Police Department for her actions on the morning of September 19. Officer Crystal responded to a report of a woman who had lost consciousness behind the wheel. Her car had rolled through an intersection, down an embankment, and into a pond in The Villages. The driver was still inside as the car began to sink. Before EMS could arrive on scene, Officer Acevedo went into the water, broke a rear passenger window with her baton, and pulled the woman out before the car submerged. Officer Acevedo received a standing ovation as she was presented with her medal by Russ Woodward and Bill Barton.**



Officer Acevedo and Russ Woodward

2. **Several Villages SAR members were presented awards for their participation in the America 250 celebration, both in planning the event and in participating in the March Through History on July 4th.**

Seven bronze medals were received for participation, and four silver medals were received for volunteer hours.



Silver Medalists: Bill Barton, Jerry Byers, Lee Duff and Don Hansen



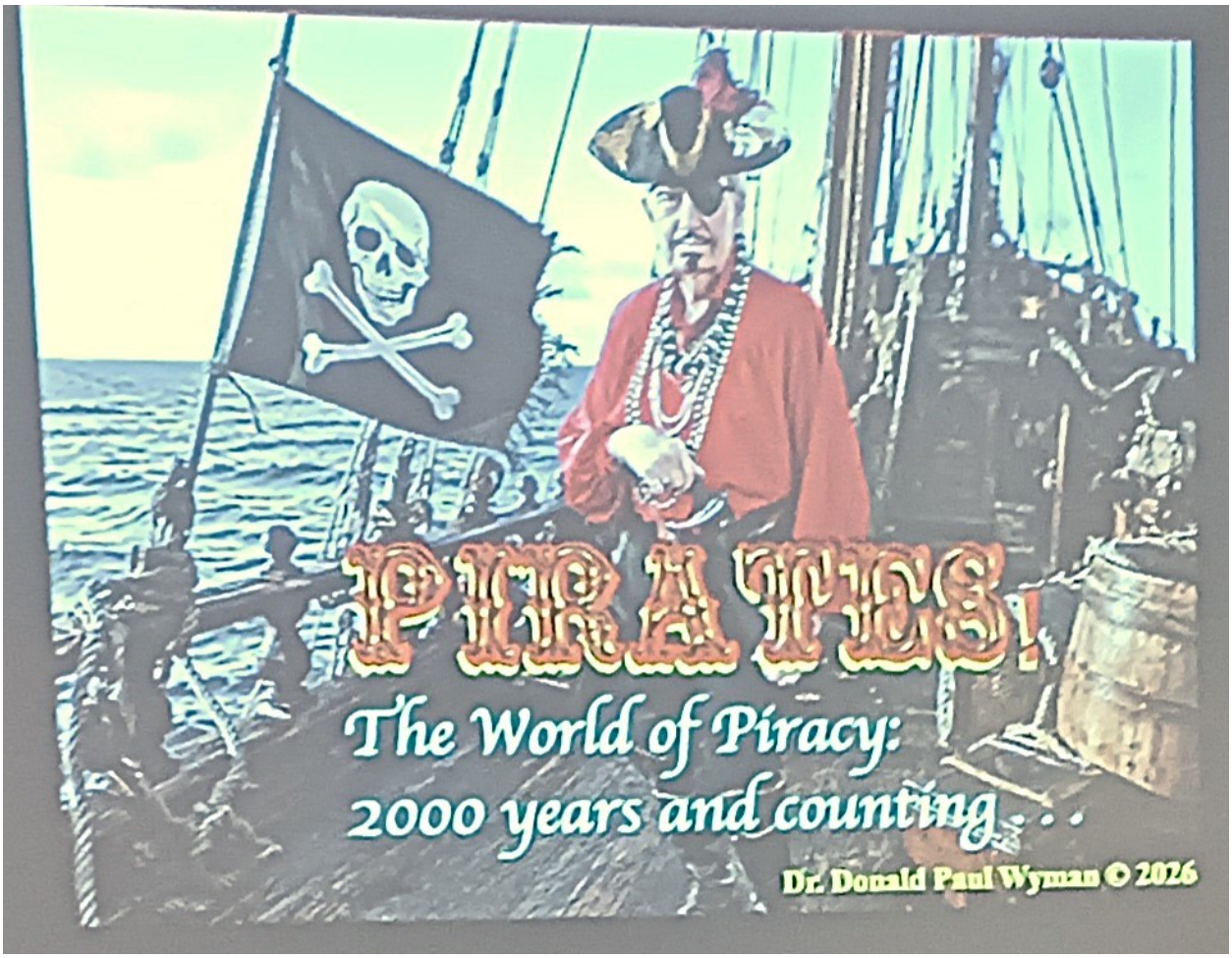
Bronze Medalists: Bill Barton (with son), Jerry Byers, Rick Decker, Lee Duff, Gary Miller, Bruce Smith and Don Hansen.

This month our Chapter inducted Richard Hall.



Pat and Richard

This month's speaker, SAR Past-President, Dr. Donald Wyman, presented a program entitled "The World of Piracy; Two Thousand Years and Counting." Pirates date back to at least 1276 BC when they were referred to as "the Sea People", and they attacked Egyptian ports and vessels.



Pirates have been known by various names over the years, depending on the period and their origin: The Sea People, Vikings, Privateers, Buccaneers (English and French), and Corsairs (Muslim). During the War of Independence, many of our naval officers were originally Privateers. At a time when the Continental Navy could only recruit around 3000 sailors, there were more than 55,000 privateer sailors. Afterall, it took only one or two cruises as a privateer to earn enough with your portion of the bounty to be able to retire, whereas in the Navy you might never get paid!

But the Muslim Corsairs were America's biggest problem. After we lost the protection of Britain, our ships were routinely plundered and the crew put into slavery. Between 1530 and 1780, up to 1,250,000 European Christian men, women, and children were enslaved by North African Muslim Corsairs. During the time of Presidents George Washington and John Adams, because of the inability of our military to challenge their might, our country paid huge "tributes" to the Barbary Coast Corsairs of Northern Africa, which amounted to 1/6 of our country's national budget!

In 1786, as US Ambassador to France, Thomas Jefferson asked the Muslim Ambassador: "What has the new country of America done to offend you?" His response was: "The Qur'an says all infidels must either swear allegiance to Islam, or we must make war on them and turn all prisoners into slaves."

By the time Thomas Jefferson became our third President, his mind was made up. He refused to pay the tribute and sent the U.S. Navy and Marines to stop the pirate attacks, launching the First Barbary War. In April 1805, Marine First Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon led a small group of Marines and a force of mercenaries on a grueling 500-mile trek across the Libyan desert from Egypt to attack the port city of Derna from land rather than by sea. O'Bannon's forces successfully captured the city, marking the first time the U.S. flag was raised in victory over a foreign fortress. This victory pressured the ruler of Tripoli to sign a peace treaty. This is the origin of the phrase "to the shores of Tripoli" in the Marine Corps hymn.

Piracy continues today, with 137 global incidents reported in 2025, but time constraints in our meeting prohibited any discussion of modern pirate history.



Pat and Don

Announcements:

1. **This month's Split the Pot drawing was $86, with the proceeds going to our Education Awards for local students.**
2. **Our speaker next month will be Bruce Smith who will present "Calvary during the American Revolution."**

3. **Our Treasurer, Lee Duff, announced that he will be stepping down as Treasurer for the Chapter and that the Board is looking for volunteers to replace him.**

VP Don Hansen led us in the SAR Recessional, and Past-President Jerry Byers gave the benediction.

President Pat Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:22 am.