



President's Message

Dear NFRW Members:

What an exciting year this has been! As I reflect this Thanksgiving weekend about all of our blessings it is almost Christmas and then a new year. I am so thankful for my wonderful hard-working board, and also for all of our members who worked so hard this year for all of our outstanding candidates.

I recently found a program that recycles cell phones for soldiers. If you have an old phone that you would like to donate, please bring it (and any accessories like chargers and batteries) to our December meeting. I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season and hope to see you at our next meeting.

Warmest regards,

Cherie Billings

NASSAU FEDERATED REPUBLICAN WOMEN

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December 2008



LUNCHEON

December 12, 2008

11:30 Social

12:00 Meeting

12:45 Lunch

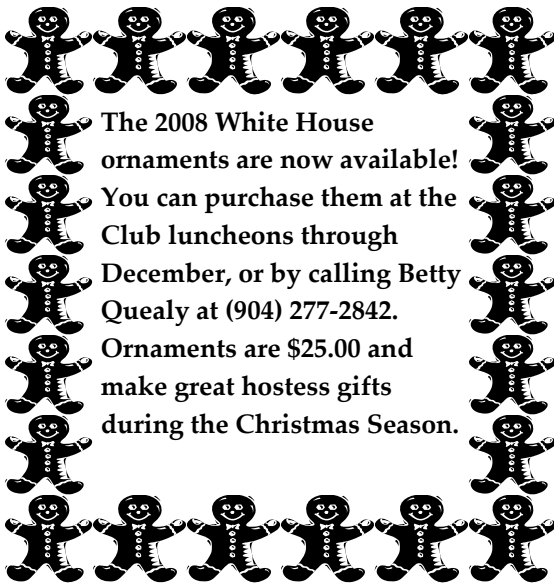
Guest Speaker:

John Crawford

Luncheon Reservations Are IMPORTANT!

Please contact Liz Seagraves by Tuesday, December 9, with a reservation. Call 904-225-2933 or e-mail lizzymae262@gmail.com. We must commit to the Golf Club of Amelia Island for food and set-up. Please make your reservation when you receive this newsletter.

Lunch is \$15.00, and you can park in the Ritz lot during the luncheon. Drive up to the speaker box as you approach the parking deck. Press the security button and say you are there for the Republican Women's Luncheon and they will open the gate for you.



The 2008 White House ornaments are now available! You can purchase them at the Club luncheons through December, or by calling Betty Quealy at (904) 277-2842. Ornaments are \$25.00 and make great hostess gifts during the Christmas Season.

Have a safe, and Happy Holiday Season!

2008-2009 Executive Board

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Get to know the December Guest Speaker:
Nassau County Clerk of Courts, John A. Crawford.



Prior to his election to Clerk in 2005, John Crawford owned and operated a small business, Crawford Insurance Agency for 21 years in Yulee, Nassau County, Florida. John previously served as a member of the Amelia Island Yulee Fernandina Beach Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and served as a District Chairman for the Boy Scouts of America. John is currently a member of the Fernandina Beach Optimist Club.

John has been married to his wife, Becky, for over 30 years. John and Becky are “proud parents” of two cats, Ricky and Lucy. Nassau County has been John’s home for over 30 years. Nassau County is also home to the entire Crawford family including John’s parents, sisters, and their families.

John’s public service includes:

Army National Guard 146th Signal Battalion (1972-1978); Nassau County Commissioner (1990-1998); Congressional Aide to U.S. Representative Ander Crenshaw (2001); State Commission on Local Government (1997-1998); Nassau County Community Alliance (2004), Advisory board for Nassau’s at-risk youth programs; Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council (1993-1997); and John is the founding member of Keep Nassau Beautiful.

The Christmas of 1776 © David J. Shestokas

In their escape from the British the Americans commandeered every boat they could find to cross the Delaware River into Bucks County, Pennsylvania. They were starving, sick and cold. By the time they crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania, Washington had only 3,000 of his original 20,000 troops. Only twelve miles away in Philadelphia, Congress sat. Seeing their army in retreat they panicked, and fled. Before fleeing, Congress granted Washington wide ranging authority and left for Baltimore, 110 miles to the south. The American cause appeared lost. On the other side of the river was Trenton, then a town of 100 homes. The British had occupied Trenton, but not with British regulars. 1600 brutal German Hessian mercenaries made up the occupation force. The citizens of Trenton had formed militia bands opposing the Hessian occupation. As Christmas neared the circumstances for Washington were desperate. Congress had left, the winter was wicked and what little army he had left was soon to disband. This was because the terms of enlistment ended December 31, 1776 for most of Washington’s troops. That was only a week away.

Washington’s Stunning Decision

On Christmas Eve General Washington met with Benjamin Rush, among the few congressmen remaining in Philadelphia. He advised Rush of a stunning and momentous decision: to launch a surprise attack on the Hessians. Washington had been making notes while talking with Rush. One of the notes read: “Victory or Death”. On Christmas Day, Washington gave his officers their orders. The officers were given words of inspiration for the soldiers from Thomas Paine’s *The American Crisis*. As the troops climbed aboard the boats to cross the Delaware, with a winter storm kicking up, they were reminded of Paine’s opening words: “These are the times that try men’s souls.” They would not forget them.

Crossing the Delaware

On Christmas night, Washington set out with 2,400 men, many them with feet wrapped in rags as they had no shoes. They traveled to a river crossing nine miles upriver from Trenton. The freezing rain became sleet and snow, as the Americans began to cross the river. Men broke through ice to get into the boats. Crossing the water with cannons weighing a ton was harrowing. Washington had ordered two other groups to cross the Delaware downriver. They had failed. Washington and his men persevered and finally, fourteen hours after they started, at 4 AM they were in New Jersey and ready to make the ten mile march to Trenton.

A Glorious Day for the United States

At 8 AM the battle began. As the Americans fell upon the enemy, they shouted Paine’s words: “These are the times that try men’s souls.” Their gunpowder was soaked and useless. They fought with bayonets, rousting the Hessians from their houses. The surprise worked, and in two hours, with few losses of their own, they captured over 900 of the enemy, their weapons and supplies. “This is a glorious day for our country,” Washington declared. This turned the tide of the war for the Americans, who were to defeat the British in another battle on January 2, 1777. The ten days begun on Christmas day sent a message through the colonies that the great British military was not invincible. Braving the weather and the danger along with Washington that Christmas night were other notable Founding Fathers. There were two other future presidents James Madison and James Monroe, the future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton.

Celebrate the Freedom of Religion

The Battle for Trenton was the Christmas gift that keeps on giving. As Americans celebrate the holiday season with the gift of freedom, they would do well to remember that among the freedoms won in the Revolutionary War was freedom of religion.