



# THE BURNING ISSUES



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Volume 16 Issue 1 Official Newsletter of the Burning of the Valleys Military Association, Inc.

June 2009

## From the Publisher

Dear Friends New, Old and yet to meet: This newsletter is just a beginning. I have collected articles from several sources and would like more for the next newsletter later this year.

As the call for information goes out be sure to respond so there will be enough to have a second newsletter. Below here are some suggested topics & guidelines for submissions as given by the previous editor.

Thanks to you Kristin!

### Suggested Topics for Articles :

*Unit Histories* – we haven't seen any of these in quite a few years!

*Sutler Histories* – tell us about yourselves, and your wares – think of it as free advertising!

*Military or Civilian articles* – .

*Musical Information* – pieces of music, historical information, ethnic music, information about a period instrument or dance, etc.

*Cultural and Religious Information* – the Valleys were a melting pot of sorts, and we have a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds that we can explore and study.

*Snippets and fillers* – Definitions, quotable quotes from a period figure, trivia, trade terms, tips for reenactors, etc.

*Clipart* – they are ideal for small spaces! Photos are difficult to put in the newsletter as they makes the pdf version too large for many people to download, so mostly try to limit photos in the newsletter.



(continued on p. 2)



# 1779



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## Niagara July 3-5, 2009

NEW YORK, May 12, 2009 – Had it not been for the British and Iroquois victory over the French 250 years ago at Old Fort Niagara, visitors to New York State ([www.iloveny.com](http://www.iloveny.com)) would perhaps be greeted with a warm “Bienvenue” rather than our customary “Welcome.” This year marks the 250th anniversary of the historic siege of Niagara, and Old Fort Niagara is planning a large-scale commemoration of the event from July 3-5.

During the weekend, Old Fort Niagara will host a Living History encampment that will re-create the siege with over 2,300 re-enactors portraying British and French forces and American Indian warriors. The weekend will also include extensive battle re-enactments, a nighttime artillery bombardment with fireworks and naval forces on the advance. History buffs and enthusiasts may purchase tickets to witness re-enactors portraying in 18<sup>th</sup> century soldiers and artisans in period costume replaying scenes from 250 years ago. Participatory activities for the public include hands-on activities such as 18<sup>th</sup> century children's games, woodland skills, soldier's drills and more.

Today, Old Fort Niagara is a National Historic Landmark and New York State Historic Site that welcomes more than 100,000 visitors every year. It offers a unique collection of original military architecture and fortifications from the 18th century and the 19th century, as well as living history events and programs, historical exhibits and collections, archaeology and education. Continued on pg 2

**From the Publisher** (*cont'd from p.1*)

**Niagara ... July 3-5, 2009** by: John Osinski (2<sup>nd</sup> Albany)

**Guidelines for Articles:** Ideally, articles should be no longer than 1-2 pages. I can and will put in longer articles, but if they are very long, I may have to break them up over 2-3 issues (*I do not edit your work other than spelling, punctuation & glaring grammatical errors, other than that which is quoted from an original source, and will not shorten articles myself*). I will certainly not reject longer articles! If you have used published materials, please cite your sources. Please note that many of you have suggested information that I can “take” from other websites – note that in order to do this, I need to get permission from the author of that information. Articles can be as short as a single phrase – I always need filler, so nothing is too small!

I look forward to receiving your submissions this year! Thanks!  
 Laura Spickerman,  
 • BVMA Publisher



*The fort has become one of the most popular tourism attractions in the Niagara area, featuring the oldest buildings in the Great Lakes, spectacular scenery and exciting special events. For more information or to purchase advance tickets, visit [www.fiw250.org](http://www.fiw250.org) or [www.oldfortniagara.org](http://www.oldfortniagara.org) or call 1-800-838-3006.*

Ok... so you ask, why is the Burning Issues running a press release from the NYS French and Indian War 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Commission?

How about “Because I’m a Commissioner?” ... True .... But, there are many links from the French & Indian War to the happenings in the Valleys during the Revolution.

We take our name from the 1780 raid orchestrated by Sir John Johnson. Sir John’s father, William Johnson, came to fame during the French & Indian War. The British did not fare well in the early years of the war, and Sir William’s victory at Lake George in 1755 was the only British victory until 1759. That victory resulted in his knighthood, and the bestowal of the title of Baronet. In the Niagara campaign to be reenacted next month, Sir William assumed command of the British forces after General Prideaux lost his head (literally) after stepping in front of his own mortar. With the fall of Niagara, French interests in North America took a significant turn for the worse.

Niagara would remain in British hands until 1796. Many British sorties into the Valleys during the Revolution would be staged from Niagara, including the “Burning”.

Moreover, many of the individuals associated with the Valleys during the Revolution were junior officers during the French & Indian War. Among the F&I veterans to serve on behalf of the newly minted United States were Philip Schuyler, Stephen Schuyler, Peter Vrooman, Christopher Yates, and Goose Van Schaik. F&I veterans remaining loyal to the Crown include Sir John Johnson, Sir Guy Johnson, John Butler, and Daniel Claus. Regardless of their future allegiances, all served the Crown during the French & Indian War, and the lessons they learned would later serve them very well.

The Niagara 250<sup>th</sup> Commemoration July 3-5 will be the largest reenactment this year. If you are not going as a participant, consider attending as a spectator; its an event you don’t want to miss!

***The Value of the Latin, or Literal Numbers, are as follows.***

I	1	XI	11	CC	200
II	2	XX	20	CCC	300
III	3	XXX	30	CCCC	400
IIII or IV	4	XL	40	D	500
V	5	L	50	DC	600
VI	6	LX	60	DCC	700
VII	7	LXX	70	DCCC	800
VIII	8	LXXX	80	DCCCC or CM	900
IX	9	XC	90	M	1000
X	10	C	100	MDCXCVII	1697

(Note - for 18c would read (1750 example) MDCCL)

From: The Merchant’s Magazine: or the Trades-mans Treasury. by E. Hatton, Philomercat 1699

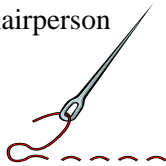
## The Bellweather Sewing Guild

## On Flags: Being a brief discussion

The Bellweather sewing guild will meet at events this summer to sew, exchange ideas, problem solve, teach, whatever is needed. Check at the Schuyler's co/2nd Albany fly for time and location.

As your representative to the BVMA , I would like to remind all of the Behind the lines members that I am here as a resource. If there is an issue that needs to be brought to the Board's attention please let me know by phone or email. I will also be happy to help with any clothing, sewing or domestic arts inquiries or problems that may arise. You may email me at :christie0820@roadrunner.com , phone 315-534-9437. or in person at most events. I am with Schuyler's co NY provincials at French and Indian war events and 2nd regt. Albany county militia for rev war events.

Chris Depta  
Behind the Lines Chairperson



On Flags: Being a brief discussion on types, sizes and shapes of flags, and how they should be flown.

By Rebecca Manthey 2/2005

Ensigns are national maritime flags flown by ships. In some countries, merchant and naval ensigns are identical to the national flag flown on land. In other countries there are distinct ensigns for vessels belonging to merchants, the government, the navy, and other appropriate authorities such as recreational boats, revenue service, post office, and coast guard vessels.

In the mid 19th century, the US and the UK independently approved special national flags to be flown only from pleasure craft, not commercial vessels. The US Yacht Ensign has a fouled anchor in a circle of 13 stars in place of the usual field of 50 stars.

The Red Ensign is flown by merchant ships and other private vessels of the UK. The red ensign has a Union Flag in the canton and may be defaced by a badge or shield in the fly. Prior to the reorganization of the Royal Navy in 1864, this was the ensign of the "Red Squadron" of the Royal Navy which tended to patrol the Caribbean and north Atlantic ocean excluding the waters around Great Britain.

Subsequently, the red ensign was re-assigned to British merchant and civilian vessels. Historically, Red Ensigns denoted commercial colonies established by Royal Charter and supplied by commercial ships, while the Blue Ensign was used by crown colonies supplied by state-owned ships.

The ensign is always flown in the after-most position, generally on a staff at the stern, but sometimes from a yard-arm, sail-leech or backstay. The stern is a position of honor on a ship, with more forward positions being less important.

Ensigns must be flown when entering and leaving harbor, when sailing through foreign waters, and when signaled to do so by a warship. Warships usually fly their ensigns between the morning colors ceremony and sunset, when underway, and at all times when engaged in battle.

Most modern US ensigns have a hoist which is  $\frac{2}{3}$  the fly dimension. There is a modern international rule that flags flown on land should have hoist which is  $\frac{1}{2}$  the fly dimension. Obviously this is disregarded by flag-makers, so I do not know if the US officially follows this rule or not.

A variety of flags can be flown from the mast-head of a ship. In general, warships fly a pennant, while other craft fly a burgee. To confuse matters, the word pennant is also used to designate a shape: a long tapering triangle, sometimes with the tip squared off.

A Commissioning Pennant or Masthead Pennant is the traditional sign of a warship, and is flown from the masthead while the ship is in commission. In some navies, it is used to represent the personal authority of the captain, although it is flown continuously aboard the ship whether the captain is aboard or not. In the Royal Navy, the commissioning pennant typically has a 10 centimeter hoist and a 1 meter fly (a ratio of  $\frac{1}{10}$ ), tapering to a point.

The commissioning pennant may be replaced by a Rank Pennant. In the Royal Navy and US Navy, admirals fly rectangular rank flags. In the Royal Navy, commodores fly a Broad Pennant which is a short swallow-tailed tapering flag, whose hoist is roughly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the fly dimension.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## The Mohawk Valley Lantern

During a recent French & Indian War event at Ticonderoga, Tom Quinn, of Schuyler's Co., asked me if I could do some repairs on his tin candle lantern. He knows I have taken winter Tinsmith classes from Walt Fleming, and he's seen some of my Tin Lanterns from those classes.

Sure, I said... I don't have the tin smith tools at home but I can probably patch it up for you.... At least get it to hold together for the rest of the season.

So he brings it out to me.

I can see right away it needs some work. I had no idea he had run it over with his Chevy Avalanche!! I'll do what I can Tom .Are you sure this used to be a lantern???

Over the next few weeks I would look at it, laying in pieces, on my back porch. Then it came to me: The only way to salvage this was to use parts in a whole new lantern. I searched through a few books I have including Neumann's Illustrated Encyclopedia, and then did a thoroughly modern Google image search. From those findings decided that I could rebuild it, but in wood, a material I have had some past success with.

I rarely make a measured drawing or plan. My approach to a project is somewhat backward, and I'm sure Norm Abrams and Bob Vila would Not Approve of these methods!

First thing is: Find the wood, laying around the cellar or garage. Sometimes it's just sitting out at the curb, the night before garbage day. It's during those night hours I am traveling incognito thru out the city, looking for that perfect piece of thoroughly dried 60 year old curly maple.

*(Continued on p. 5)*

## Cooking Behind the Lines

### *A Note from Toni Lasher*

Hello everyone. The new season has begun with some exciting events. I saw the Onrust being fitted for lee boards and masts at Lock 9 near the Mabbee Farm in May, and attended several wonderful events, including Schuyler Flats and Westernville. We at the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment Albany County Militia are looking forward to a full and busy season.

Update on Bill Frueh: He is doing well with chemo and managing to make quite a few day trips. He is still doing school demonstrations without too much wear and tear, and we are enjoying traveling. Most of our trips are day-trips, so we beg indulgence from the groups as we make our way around the region. As his driver, I can assure you that we plan to make the big events at Ti and most of the other events on the BVMA calendar.

Today I want to talk a little about traditional food and what we choose to prepare as reenactors. We are, of course, limited in what we can prepare for the period—but we are limited only by our imaginations and the equipment we use as to how it can be prepared. A good list of foods available in 18<sup>th</sup> Century America can be found in The Kings Bread, Second Rising put together by the ladies of Fort Niagara. It has a time line in the back that lists foods documented at Fort Niagara for the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War and The War of 1812. My general rule is if it is on the list, I can use it.

I want to share one of my favorite recipes with you. This would be difficult to make on site, but could be something prepared ahead and reheated at the site.

#### Cornish Pasties!

These are meat pies that are popular in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Miners would carry these below in their lunch pails and eat them cold. At table, they are served hot from the ovens. They are a lot easier to prepare than it looks. I used diced, brined beef, but some people prefer to use ground beef. Some recipes include diced turnips or rutabagas. I hate rutabagas and wouldn't let one in the house, but I have prepared the pasties with turnips and found them to be delicious that way. You choose what to include, just be sure to allow for smaller amounts of the other stuffing ingredients, or another batch of dough to take up the leftovers.

Lovingly shared,

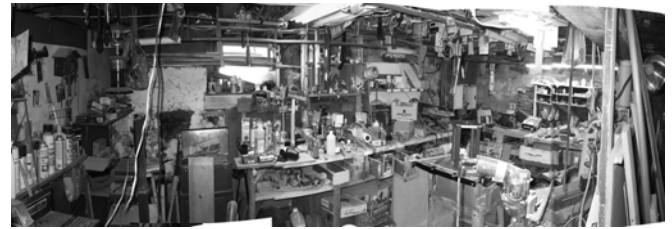
Toni Lasher

Look for Toni's Recipe in the next newsletter and check out the informational flyer about the BVMA cookbook in the BVMA files on yahoo groups



## The Mohawk Valley Lantern

And when I do find it, its always jammed under an old Kelvinator chest freezer! Of course, the best times to scavenge for junk is during our annual city wide garbage week, but that's another story.



Now with appropriate scraps of found wood, I can start to build. The tin itself needed hammering and soldering to make it once again resemble a lantern. The top and bottom although badly damaged, did look salvageable. I had to do some crude soldering to re attach the tin cone (witches hat) to the top plate. Again, I don't have the tin shop tools at home, so a small butane torch melts the lead, and sometimes it melts the whole thing if I'm not careful.

I used small headed brass nails on everything. Sometimes I will get adventurous and assemble a piece with wood dowels, but this project seemed to work better with nails and glue.

At the top of the lantern is a round handle. It too had been flattened, by one of Toms 245 x R75 Mud and Snow Michelins. It had to be hammered and re-shaped, then attached together with a piece of 12 gauge copper wire. Using pliers, it is curled into what I call the 18th century colonial twist. I'm sure there is a better name than that.

Only one new tin piece had to be fabricated. It was a small finger lift for the front glass that slides up, for access to the candle.

Among the pictures I took is what I call the Clean Room, AKA my Cellar, where all the delicate work is performed. If you look really close, you will see the lantern project underway.

Other pictures show the lantern coming together. I had some bits of thin gauge copper sheets that came in handy as a heat shield and sort of chimney, to lead smoke up to the tin witches hat top.



I also found some lightly frosted glass that would fit into the slots cut into the sides of the corner posts. It all seemed very cool while cutting and assembling it. Of course I forgot about how that glass would fit in there until after the thing was all glued and nailed together. Much cursing that evening.



Lastly, brown Deco Art paint was applied. On top of that went a brown staining wax I like to use on everything. It gives a nice faux grain look without having to actually know the technique of graining.

Another fun project, that provided hours of enjoyment and therapy was now completed. And, not a single dime had to be spent on any materials!

Huzzah!

**ON Flags**

(Continued from page 3)

The commissioning pennant may also be replaced by a Paying-off Pennant, an extremely long pennant, which is at normally at least the length of the ship, and whose length reflects the length of service. (The commission is the length of time the ship's company has been abroad, not the ship herself.) The US Navy calls this the "homeward-bound pennant". The Royal Navy now uses paying-off pennants only as part of a ship's decommissioning ceremony.

A burgee is the distinguishing flag, regardless of its shape, denoting club or squadron membership of a recreational boating organization. In general, a personal or private flag is a swallowtail, tapering swallowtail or rectangular shape. Yacht clubs burgees are usually triangular, while corporate and national flags are likely to be rectangular.

On yacht club burgees, the hoist should be 2/3 the fly dimension. The recommended size for a 20 to 30 foot craft is 12 inch hoist and 18 inch fly. For a 25 to 35 foot craft, 14 by 21 inches. Modern sailing vessels fly the burgee from a lanyard under the starboard spreader on the mast, and older sailing vessels fly the burgee from the main masthead.

Signal Flags are apparently a 19th century invention. There is now an elaborate set of International Code Flags and Signals, made up of rectangular, swallow-tail, and triangular flags. These can be hoisted on the masthead, yardarms or stays.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

<http://>

[www.worldwidewebyachtclub.com/burgees.php](http://www.worldwidewebyachtclub.com/burgees.php)

American Merchant Seaman's Manual  
West Marine 2001 Master Catalog

**Description of the BVMA Guild.** Submitted by Teresa Gage

The BVMA is an organizational and discussion forum for members and persons belonging to member units of The Burning of The Valleys Military Association. We are an umbrella organization of 18th Century British and Colonial reenactors including musicians, sutlers, distaff, citizens, and soldiers. <http://www.bvma.org/>

Structurally there are three branches: Military; Behind The Lines (BTL); and the Guild of Artisans, Artificers and Merchants (Guild).

The BVMA dues are \$10 per person. One must belong to the BVMA to be a Guild member. Members under 16 years are without dues but must be identified and accompanied by an adult member.

The BVMA has insurance, which covers its members for events that are supported or sponsored by the BVMA.

As a unit, the Guild realized that we attended many other non-BVMA events and banded together to obtain a 1M aggregate liability insurance policy. As this does not cover any armed reenactment, those members who want to do military reenactment must seek out another unit for insurance.

We realized that each member may have other techniques for insurance coverage (i.e. homeowners, shop, personal, etc.), we did not make it mandatory. But as many sites are now making insurance a necessity even to demonstrate, we hope this will be a service we can continue to offer our members.

The Guild insurance we offer for the 2009 yr \$20 per person.

The Guild insurance covers non-BVMA events, only two requirements:

- 1) It be historic in nature
- 2) That they are identified to Guild in advance.

I keep a list of events and all you have to do is post me an email before you go.

I can be reached:

Teresa Gage  
6984 Crooked Brook Road  
Utica, NY 13502-7200

315-896-6580  
[redotter@americu.net](mailto:redotter@americu.net)



### 2009 Schedule of Events June to October

*The following are events in and around our neighborhood this season. BVMA Sponsored or Supported events are so noted. Please check the website for the latest event information & registration forms.*

<b>June 6-7</b>	<b>Mabee Farm Market Fair &amp; F &amp; I Encampment Rotterdam Junction, NY</b>
June 20-21	Ethan Allen Days, Manchester VT (LHA)
June 27-28	Fort Ticonderoga Grand Encampment of the French and Indian War
July 3-5	Fort Niagara French and Indian War Encampment
July 11-12	Battle of Hubbardton - Hubbardton, VT (LHA)
July 11-12	Knickerbocker Mansion Timeline, Schaghticoke, NY
Aug. 1-2	Fort # 4, New Hampshire (Rev War)
Aug 8-9	Fort Wellington, Prescott, ON Canada
Aug. 8-9	Crown Point French and Indian War Encampment, Crown Point, NY
Aug. 8	Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Event
<b>Aug 15-16</b>	<b>Lake Pleasant Colonial Frontier Days (BVMA Supported)</b>
Aug. 15-16	Adirondack Trek
Aug. 22	Cherry Hill, Albany, NY
Aug. 30-31	Battle of Newtown, Elmira, NY
Aug. 30-31	Constitution Island event
Sept. 11-13	Fort Ticonderoga Revolutionary War Encampment, Ticonderoga, NY
Sept. 19-20	Roger's Island (F& I)
Sept. 19	Schenectady Stockade Walkabout, Schenectady, NY
<b>Sept. 19-20</b>	<b>Gelston Castle, Herkimer, NY (BVMA Sponsored)</b>
<b>Oct. 10-12</b>	<b>Old Stone Fort, Schoharie, NY (BVMA Supported)</b>
<b>Oct. 16-18</b>	<b>Burning of Kingston, Kingston, NY (BVMA Supported)</b>

***Event Organizers:** Please be sure to get your event information to me, so I can put it up on the site!  
Send to [webinfo@bvma.org](mailto:webinfo@bvma.org).*

**The BVMA Online - [www.bvma.org](http://www.bvma.org)**

**Units, Sutler's and Sustaining Members:** If you are new members, please send me the information to links to your website, if you have one. This information should include your Unit [Sutler/Site] name as you'd like it to appear, and the link to your site. If you don't have a website yet, send me some general info, and I will put up a simple page for you. If you've been a member, please check the site to make sure that you are listed correctly.

**Event Organizers/Coordinators:** Send me information about your event and I will post it to the website, linked from the schedule. I prefer you send it via email, but you can mail it and I will re-type. If you'd like online registration forms for the event, let me know, and include a "paper" registration that I can use as a template. Be sure to include who the registrations should be sent to (email address), and note there are any deadlines. Throughout the season, if you have updates you may send them to me and I will make sure that the information gets up there.

**Calling all Designers:** The BVMA website has been online since 2002. In that time, we have never changed the design. I am not a designer, and although the site has worked for us over the years, perhaps it's time for a face-lift. If you are artsy and have some ideas for a new design for the website, please let me know. We'd like to keep it simple—easy to navigate and find the information available. The BVMA logo is important to us—there's a lot of history there, and we want to keep that incorporated into any new design. You would *not* need to actually "implement" the design on the web, but submit images or sketches of your ideas, so we might be able to come up with a fresh, new look for the site. Any ideas that are submitted will be reviewed by the Board before we make any decisions. Contact me if you have ideas to share.

**BVMA Yahoo Groups:** Don't forget our members-only lists:  
BVMA: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bvma/> (Moderators - Kristin Gitler , John Osinski, Jim Sparks & Dean Barnes)  
BTL: Now included with BVMA groups

**When subscribing, include your name/unit in the email, so we know who you are.**

Don't forget to check the web site for the latest news and information, always linked from the home page. I always welcome your ideas and input for the website—it should be your source for information & resources! — *KG, Webmistress*

**The Burning of the Valleys  
Military Association, Inc.**

**2009 Executive Committee:**  
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*Deputy Chair, Crown Cmdr:*  
Mario Doreste  
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*Treasurer:* Richard Casler  
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*Guild Treasurer:* Teresa Gage  
*Guild Asst. Treasurer:*  
James Stewart  
*Behind the Lines Chair:*  
Chris Deptha

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**NEXT ISSUE SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

The next issue will be published in  
Fall, 2009. Please submit articles,  
ideas, questions, etc. at any time or by  
**September 1st** for the next issue.  
Laura Spickerman



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