

The Friends & Neighbors of Putnam Memorial State Park

"Connecticut's Valley Forge"



January 2009 NewsLetter

Bethel/Redding CT

2009 - A New Year at the Park



We just finished a great year, but we want to add to the super events that we already have, and expand our scope. We need your ideas and your help wherever possible.



Flags at the gate



The park visitor center is the hub of Putnam Park.

LIVING HISTORY SCHOOL DAYS



Hundreds of school kids for a long week in May, each year.



Visitors are getting a lot of information about the park and its history.

Summer Craftsmen Program



Crafts persons demonstrate their colonial era specialties each weekend during July & August

Battle Reenactment and Military Camp Life



The full fledged battle reenactments are now held every other year, although there will be more smaller military campouts throughout the season

Battles
Craftsmen
History
Kids & Digs

FANs

2009 - New Year At The Park

December Winter Walk



Resident historian and archaeologist, Dan Cruson, leads the Winter Walk on the first Saturday of each December.

FANs and the Park crews have brought the park back to life in the past ten years. After being closed down for most of the 1990's, during which the grounds deteriorated, the park is an active part of the community once again. Blessed with state funding, the crown jewel of the park is the visitor center which was transformed from the old broken down 1893 Pavilion into the all-season facility of today.

The half dozen events that the FANs and park staff run each year have evolved by trial and error, to fairly well oil precision today.

But president Steve Levine says we need some other components to draw more people, and different people to the park. This is where he is asking for ideas.

For example, we could sponsor lectures pertaining to the colonial period. Or music by musicians playing colonial music. These event could take place either inside or outside the visitor center facility.

We should be looking for more ways to spread our park story to the region. One example could be through the state sponsored tourism bureau which used to give the park support, or through networking with other historical venues related to colonial history, i.e. Ft. Griswold, Ft. Trumbull, Putnam Cottage and Fairfield Historical Center ... to name but a few.

Ongoing Archaeological Digs



Dan Cruson has fielded archaeology digs at the park for almost a decade. The digs have answered many questions about the army encampment of 1778-79

Any suggestions are welcome, either at one of our monthly FANs meetings, or e-mailed to our site .. Friendsofputnampark@comcast.net .Our postal address is Friends of Putnam Park

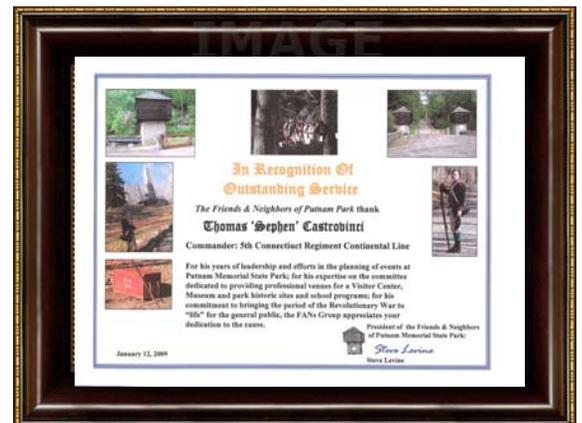
PO Box 736
West Redding, CT 06896

Castrovinci Steps Down At 5CR

Tom Castrovinci is stepping down as Commander of the 5th Connecticut Regiment. Tom has been instrumental in working with FANs on the reenactments, winter walks programs, and the new Ghost Walk Tour begun this past year at the reenactment.

The FANs group gave Tom a plaque of appreciation for all of his contributions.

We look forward to working with the new commander of the 5CR.



Thanks To Webmaster Colley

In May of last year, one of the greatest positive additions was made to the FANs organization. That is when our new Web site went on-line for the first time.

This has opened new doors for us in disseminating information and news about FANs and the park. Brent Colley, a Web designer by trade, has developed the site which keeps growing with our needs. Go to the site and peruse the different features at www.putnampark.org

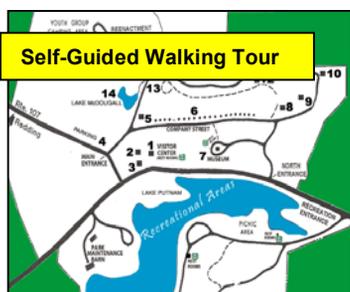
It has information about the park, directions to the park, hours of operation, and phone numbers for the public. It tells about the history of the park as well as the history of the 1778-79 army winter encampment. It tells about the Revolutionary War in our region and gives historical resources and links to related information. It tells about Redding's most famous war novel ... My Brother Sam Is Dead, (which Colley has spent several years in preparing for teachers and schools all over the country).

It is a billboard for coming attractions at the park. Announcements and flyers advertising reenactments and special programs are listed for all to see.

It has a section on the park site along with a map of the walking tour with numbered sites which can be visited at anytime during the year (even during the few winter months when the visitor center and museum are closed down due to seasonal staffing constraints).

It posts each month's *FANs Newsletter*, plus past issues. These offer pdf file copies for crisp colorful viewing pleasure. It has also reduced our mailing costs.

The site is a natural information platform for information on the Friends & Neighbors (FANs) of Putnam Park, their history, what they do, and how to join.



Get the map of the walking tour and print out a copy to take to the park for your own tour.

Go to: **FANs new Web site at**
www.putnampark.org

Putnam Memorial State Park
"Connecticut's Valley Forge"

HOME PAGE • PARK HISTORY • VISIT THE PARK • DIRECTIONS • FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS • SITE MAP

Welcome to Connecticut's Oldest State Park

Welcome to Putnam Memorial State Park, the oldest state park in Connecticut. Located on the site of the Winter Encampment of General Israel Putnam's Continental troops from December 1778 - May 1779, the park is dedicated to the role they played in the Revolutionary War in helping secure America's independence.

Putnam Memorial State Park is located at the Intersection of Rte 58 and Rte 107 in Redding, Connecticut.

For Group Tour Reservations Call: 203-938-2285.

Park is Open: Daily - Sunrise to Sunset. ***Visitor Center and Museum are closed for the Winter.**

Pets on a leash are permitted in picnic areas and on hiking trails.

This website has been developed by the Friends & Neighbors (FANs) of Putnam Park, whose mission is to help promote the historical, educational and recreational values of the park.

The FANs group is always looking for new members to join the group or who wish to make a donation in support of our mission.

Site Resources

- **History-The Winter Encampment 1778-79**
View the history of the park and learn what makes this park so special.
- **History-Connecticut's Oldest State Park**
The movement to preserve and memorialize the site of the winter quarters of 1778-1779 in Redding began in 1967.
- **What's at the Park Today**
View our map and walking tour prior to visiting Putnam Park and make the most of your visit.
- **The Revolution in the Area**
Fairfield County was very active during the Revolutionary War. Learn more about the events, the people and the historical resources available in our area.
- **My Brother Sam is Dead**
Sam Meeber was stationed in Redding during the winter of 1778, this

FANs News

FANs Newsletters are available for download! Learn more about our group & activities. Harry includes great photos & post cards too.

- December 2008
- November 2008
- October 2008
- August/September 2008
- July 2008
- June 2008
- May 2008
- April 2008

The 230th Anniversary Weekend a Huge Success! The March, the Encampments, the Colonial Craftsmen Demonstrations, the Children's Drills and Battles were all a huge success, thank you to all that attended.

DEP - State Park
(203) 938-2285
dep.putnammemorial@ct.gov

<http://www.putnampark.org/>

1/29/2009



Web site creator Brent Colley, and one of his editors, now live in the hills of Sharon,CT.

Do a search on the internet by entering "history of redding", and you will be at [The History of Redding](http://www.historyofredding.com) Web Site, which has been evolving for the past ten years. Redding native Brent Colley has created an encyclopedic database of historical facts on Redding. He has digitized documents, books, archaeological reports and photographs so the interested user can have full access to Redding history

Brent can be contacted at
colley@colleyweb.com
with inquires or call 860-364-7475.



To contact us:

friendsofputnampark@comcast.net



The January meeting was held at the visitor center on Monday, January 12th, 2009.

Notes from the prez ...

1. **President's Opening:** Steve opened the meeting. ...” before I begin, I know we all want to pass along our best wishes to T.G. for a speedy recovery. T.G., we wish you and your family the very best and hope to have you back soon. As in any army, the “quartermaster” and “paymaster” are essential to a well ordered army. In our group, our Treasurer is indispensable!”
2. **Winter Walk Recap:** Steve asked for a recap of the Winter Walk in December and 2008 in general. Everyone that attended the Winter Walk felt it was the best one yet, with more attendance than ever. Kudos to Dan for his knowledge and making the encampment come alive with his engaging commentary. Kudos to Jeanine for orchestrating the fine refreshments.
3. **2008 Year:** It was the consensus that 2008 was a very good year for Putnam Park and the FANS group. From a successful School Week in May (kudos to Nancy), Summer Craftsman Program, 230th Celebration Weekend (kudos to Brian, Dave, Tom and the whole group) and Winter Walk to working with the DEP folks on new Interpretive Displays in the Visitors Center (kudos to Harry for taking the lead), to launching a great website (kudos to Brent), to continuing with the wonderful newsletters and putting them on the web (once again kudos to Harry and Brent) and to purchasing much needed items for the park (US and CT Flags, Vacuum Cleaner, supplies for the Visitor Center displays, supplies for constructing the new Interpretive signs and underwriting the cost to finish Sharon’s fine artwork).
4. **2009 Priorities:** Steve also asked to follow up on some ongoing priorities for 2009: 1. Increasing membership; 2. Community outreach to increase awareness of the park; 3. New events. Hopefully, we will keep these subjects in the forefront of future meetings with concrete actions.
5. **Treasurer's Report:** Steve passed out an “end of year report” that T.G. compiled. It included income sources, assets, expenditures and notes. T.G. also noted purchasing copies of “My Brother Sam is Dead” as well as various historical flags for the Gift Store.
6. **Park Update:** Nate filled us in on the park. While nothing is certain yet, state budget woes will certainly have an impact. We discussed the needed repairs to the “Officers Quarters”: Nate said he would put in a “project request” to the state for possible work, but in the interim will look into “plugging the holes.”
7. **Visitor Center Committee Update:** Harry passed on some great news ... that FANs had been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Meserve Memorial Fund for the creation of the permanent panels of the interpretive displays at the Visitor Center. More on this, next meeting. He also discussed the potential loans of military uniforms and equipment from member and reenactor Rob Doshier. Again, we have to sit down with Rob and decide on which equipment and where it will be placed (Visitor Center vs. Museum). And finally, Sharon Skystimas from Nate’s Graphics Dept., will be finishing up the art work on the interpretive signs to be placed around the park this spring. They are looking just great.
8. **Membership:** According to Buzz, we have received about 40 memberships so far for 2009 (letters went out at the end of November). Buzz said he would put together a follow up letter as the return rate was around 30%. And of the memberships, very few were new memberships, even though we passed out hundreds of membership flyers at the 230th and the Winter Walk. Hence our need to step up efforts to increase membership.
9. **School Week:** Nancy passed out a list of schools that wish to participate so far: 800-plus students from Oxford, Trumbull, South Salem, Redding, Brookfield, Norwalk and Sherman. Nancy will get with Brent to see what content can be put on the web for both teachers and students. (Kudos to Nancy!)
10. **Update FANs Bylaws:** Steve passed out copies of the FANs Bylaws with suggested changes – the last revision was made in May 1999. He, Harry and T.G. met over the summer to review and these were the recommendations. The hope is that next meeting we can review and finalize.
11. **New Event Ideas:** We discussed Summer Evening Events, ie speakers, music, etc to be held in the Visitor Center or somewhere on site. Any body with a concrete idea let’s discuss in the next few meetings.

The next FAN's Meeting will be on Monday, February 9th, 2009

at 7:00PM at the Visitor Center at Putnam Park.

New schedule : 2nd Monday of each month