



PATRIOT



President's Message

Compatriots,

As we continue commemorating America's 250th anniversary, I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who volunteered, participated in, or supported our many America250 events over the past two months—especially the highly successful public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Our chapter joined more than 725 simultaneous readings worldwide as part of the “Sharing the Spirit of America” project.

Whether you attended in uniform, assisted with preparations, represented the chapter, or worked behind the scenes, your dedication helped make each event meaningful and successful. These activities have given us valuable opportunities to share the story of America's founding, honor the Patriots who secured our independence, and introduce our community to the mission of the Sons of the American Revolution. I am proud of the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by our members.

Please remember that our Constitution Day Dinner will be held on Saturday, September 19, at 5:00 p.m. This is one of our chapter's most important annual gatherings, and I encourage everyone to make reservations early. Your prompt response will assist the committee with planning and help ensure a memorable and successful evening.

Thank you again for your continued service and support. Together, we are making the America 250 commemoration a fitting tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and vision of our Patriot ancestors.

David Bentley, President, Signers Chapter, Nevada State Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Upcoming 2026 Events

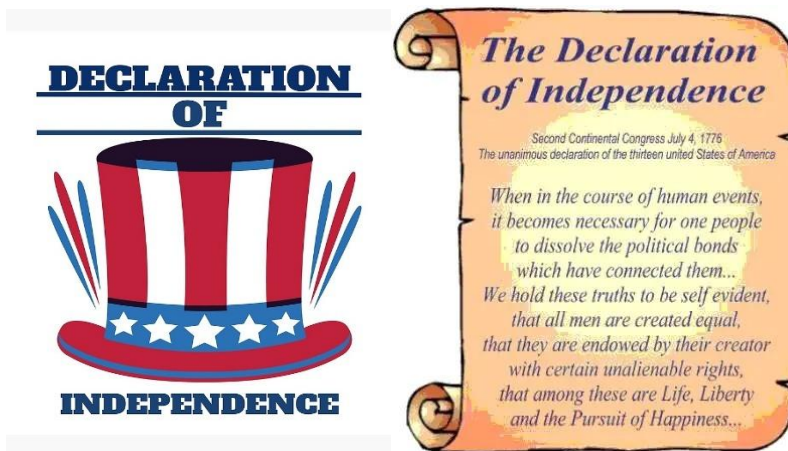
Saturday, Aug. 1, 9am, Breakfast meeting, Egg Works Restaurant, Summerlin

Saturday, Sept. 5, 9am, Breakfast meeting, Egg Works Restaurant, Summerlin

Saturday, Sept. 19, 5pm, Constitution Day Dinner, Las Vegas National Golf Club

Saturday, Oct. 3, 9am, Breakfast meeting, Egg Works Restaurant, Summerlin

July 2026 Events



The month of July was uniquely special commemorating the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. The Signers Chapter did not meet for their regular first Saturday of the month breakfast meeting, which was on July 4th.

Instead, a patriotic float was entered into the 36th Annual Summerlin Patriotic Parade by the NSSDAR Francisco Garces Chapter. Three Signers chapter compatriots were invited to portray George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris visiting Betsy Ross and her new flag. The float went on to be awarded first place by the presiding judges, Don & Greta Brizzolara. More than 10 fellow DAR members accompanied the float in the parade, wearing colonial era dresses. Lauri Oakden-Binder portrayed Betsy Ross.

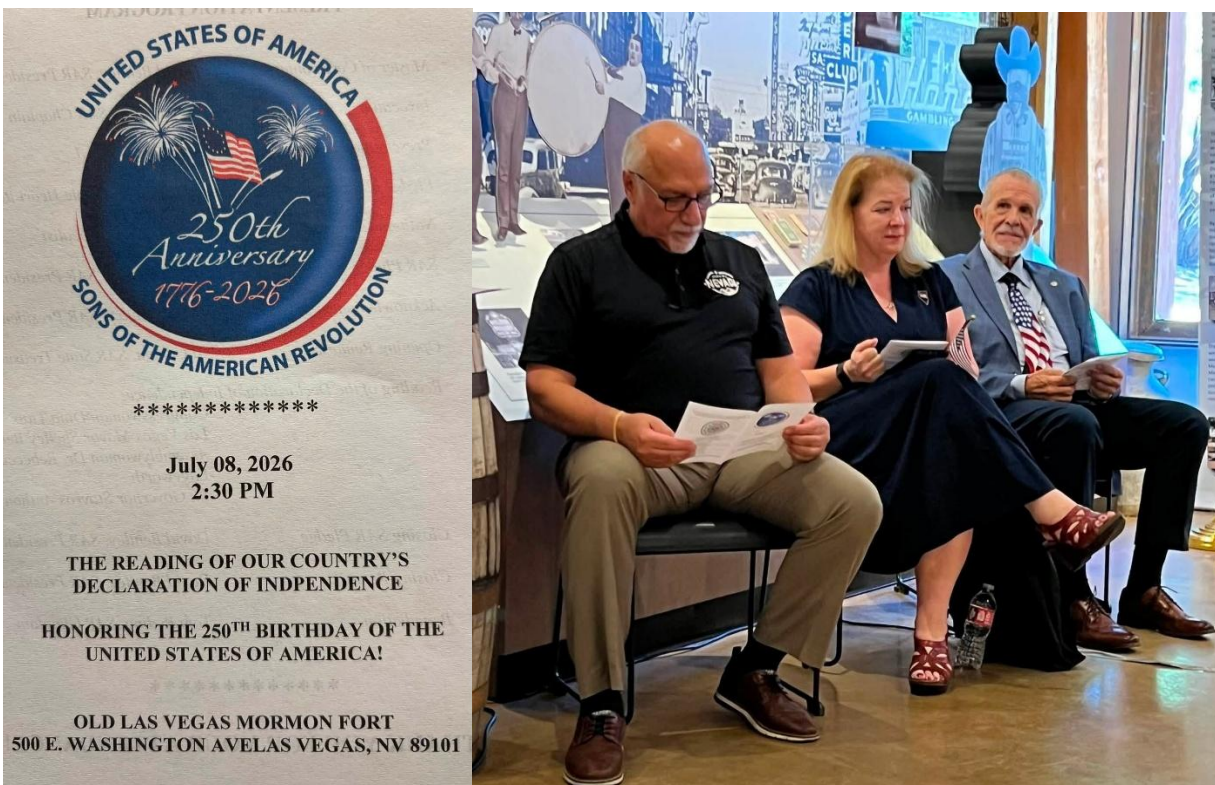


Then on July 8th, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, three Signers Chapter compatriots joined the NSSDAR Virgin Valley Chapter to read aloud the Declaration to citizens of Mesquite at 9am. Regent Leigh Roessner organized the event, which took place in the public square of the Mesquite City Hall.



Later the same day, a public reading of the same document occurred inside the Las Vegas Old Mormon Fort State Park facility. Hosted by the NSSAR Signers Chapter and the Friends of the Fort organization, the event kicked off at 2:30pm when Chapter President, David Bentley, introduced dignitaries who volunteered to help read the document. Nevada Lt. Governor Stavros Anthony, Nevada Assemblywoman Dr. Rebecca Edgeworth, Purple Heart Recipient Len Yelinek, Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley, and Congressional District 1 Congresswoman Dina Titus watched as the Signers Chapter's Color Guard presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the National Anthem. Compatriot Tom Reding gave an invitational prayer. After the reading, compatriot Al Conant portrayed Benjamin Franklin, who spoke about the document's drafting process. Signers Chapter compatriot Bob Reed organized the entire event, which was watched by an enthusiastic audience. A number of NSSDAR chapter members attended in colonial era dresses, and members of a local Boy Scout Troop handed out brochures.

A frequent comment by readers of the Declaration of Independence is that it is an emotional experience, recalling the significant impact the document had on the world. It is recommended reading every year on July 4th.





In Memorium

The Signers Chapter lost two of its well respected and influential compatriots about a month apart. Tommy Thompson and Donald Leroy Hotchkiss, Jr. were recently inducted in the Chapter's Hall of Fame for their contributions to the group's success and growth.



From left to right:

Donald Hotchkiss Jr., Al Conant,
Tommy Thompson, and Gary Parriott

Colonel Thompson, United States Army (Retired), was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and lived a life of service, patriotism, and dedication to others. Tommy's cheerful spirit, friendship, and unwavering support of the chapter will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Tommy participated in annual patriotic parades and JROTC/ROTC Cadet Achievement Recognition events.

Don Hotchkiss Jr. was a respected 20-year SAR member, and a faithful supporter and effective leader of the Nevada State Society SAR and Signers Chapter. His leadership helped the organization meet many of its program objectives. Don was instrumental in helping resurrect the Signers Chapter's Color Guard unit over the last two years and lent extensive engineering expertise in the placement of the Signers Chapter America250 monument, dedicated in May 2026 at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City. His fundraising efforts for the chapter were remarkable, allowing the chapter to fund scholarships and numerous chapter projects. Don served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and applied their motto - Essayons! "Let Us Try", to all his endeavors and service.

August 2026 Planned Events

We will meet again **Saturday, August 1st** at the Egg Works Restaurant in Summerlin at 9am, 2025 Village Center Circle.

Besides inducting several new chapter members, our featured speaker will be compatriot **Dr. Craig R. Wuest**, who joined SAR a year ago. Craig has attended almost all chapter breakfast meetings since. The title of his presentation is: **The Manhattan Project: America's nuclear race to win World War II**. It will be a short history of the Manhattan Project, including its beginnings and significant accomplishments leading to the development and use of the first U.S. atomic weapons.

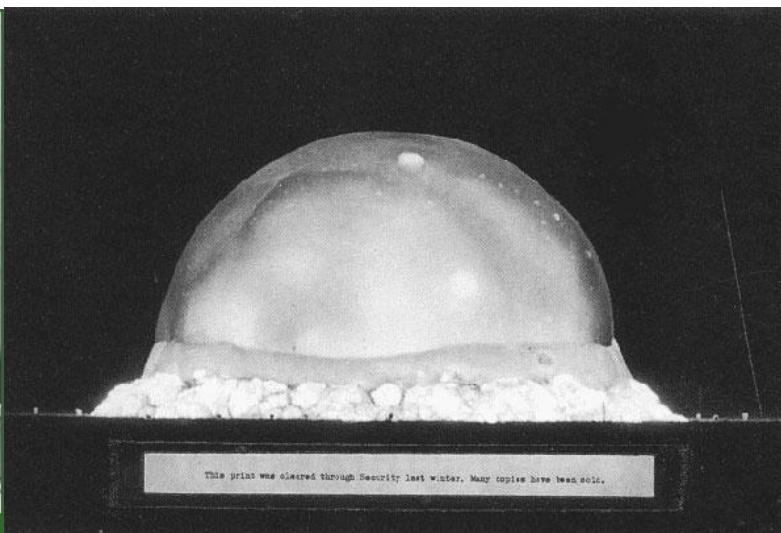
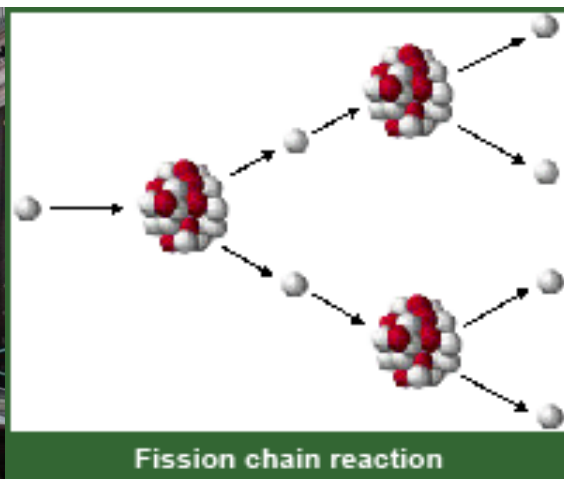
Craig received his Ph.D. in high energy physics from the University of California, Irvine in 1983. His 50 years of scientific and national security experience includes six years with the University of California, 37 years with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California, and three years at the Nevada National Security Site. Craig has served as a physicist and manager in several basic science, applied science, and national security programs. He has conducted research in high energy physics, nuclear weapons and radiation effects, radiation detection, and directed energy weapons, in support of defense, intelligence, fusion energy, and homeland security programs.

Between 2012-2013, Craig was a fellow of the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, focusing on strategic deterrence and arms control.

Between 2013-2016, Craig served in the Pentagon as special scientific advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters. He provided expertise on the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and nuclear deterrence.

Craig retired from the Nevada National Security Site in 2023 after serving as the Senior Director for Mission Support and as Senior Intelligence Executive. He currently is a senior national security advisor and instructor with TechSource, Inc.

Craig is a recipient of the 1989 Bruno Rossi High Energy Astrophysics Prize. He has been awarded the National Nuclear Security Administration Defense Programs Award of Excellence and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service. Craig has published over 200 scientific and technical papers and holds five patents in electro-optical and radiation detection technology.



Betsy Ross and her flag



Betsy Ross, American Seamstress, frontispiece illustration from *The History of the First United States Flag, and Patriotism of Betsy Ross, the Immortal Heroine That Originated the First Flag of the Union, 1878*.

Lauri Oaken-Binder, NSSDAR Francisco Garces Chapter, portraying Betsy Ross for the July 4 Summerlin Patriotic Parade, and the July 8 Public Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Las Vegas at the Old Mormon Fort.

Did Betsy Ross help design America's First U.S. Flag? Her family said she did.

Elizabeth Griscom was born in 1752 in New Jersey. She was the eighth of seventeen children and was brought up as a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Educated by the Quakers, she became an apprentice to a Philadelphia upholsterer. She married John Ross, another apprentice upholsterer, when she was 21. The couple opened a small shop two years later. John was killed early the next year when he joined a Philadelphia, PA provincial militia unit.

According to her grandson, William Canby, Betsy was asked by George Washington and members of the flag committee of the Continental Congress, in June 1776, to make a flag for the new nation that was about to declare its independence from Great Britain. Even though there is no direct evidence that this actually happened, legend took over and Betsy is celebrated as another patriotic woman who participated in the new nation's commitment to winning its independence from Great Britain.