



# VALLEY FORGE PARK ALLIANCE

*Inspiring appreciation for and citizen stewardship of Valley Forge Park since 1976.*

**E-News - February 13, 2024**

## Washington's Birthday Celebration, Feb. 19

*Celebrate*  
**Washington's  
Birthday** at Valley Forge  
Monday, February 19, 2024 - 10AM to 2 PM

Create a Birthday Card!

Eat a cupcake!  
(while supplies last)

Meet George & Martha Washington!

Celebrate George Washington's birthday at Valley Forge National Historical Park on Monday, February 19, 2024! Reenactors, hands-on activities, and cupcakes will be on the Mini Grand Parade behind the Visitor Center at Valley Forge from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

[Learn More](#)

## A History of Celebrating George Washington's Birthday

Did you know that the first public celebration of Washington's birthday was at Valley Forge on February 22, 1778? For George Washington's 46th birthday, Martha surprised her husband with a public celebration at his headquarters, bringing some mid-winter excitement (and cake) to the General and his troops. It is said that a group of fifers and drummers serenaded Washington. In subsequent years, Washington's birthday was publicly celebrated with events or parades, making this the "First American Holiday."



### **The Birthnight Ball**

The custom of the Birthnight Ball originated in Britain to celebrate the birthday of the king. After the Declaration of Independence, Americans continued this tradition and turned to the next closest figure, George Washington, as they had no king. The first recorded ball was on February 26, 1779, according to the Virginia Gazette. The first Birthnight Ball in Alexandria, Virginia, Washington's hometown, was in 1787. Alexandria made it an annual, grand event where all the ladies wore their finest dresses and the men their best suits. Birthnight Balls came to be celebrated in several locations throughout the country, but by the Civil War they had fallen out of custom.

In the 1870s, the Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York began hosting their annual George Washington Birthday Ball which continues to the present time. The Bicentennial of Washington's birthday in 1932 saw a renewed interest in other locations. Even today there are Birthnight Balls in Laredo, Texas and Mesa, Arizona, along with those at Fraunces Tavern in New York City and Alexandria, Virginia – and even Mount Vernon itself!

### **A Federal Holiday**

In 1880, George Washington's birthday was first observed as a Federal holiday. Today, we continue to celebrate the "Father of Our Country" because of the great role he played in the founding of the United States.

The Valley Forge Muster Roll and Valley Forge Park Alliance are proud to celebrate the Commander-in-Chief's birthday and honor him for his steadfast leadership during the harsh winter of Valley Forge.

Visit [www.valleyforgemusterroll.org](http://www.valleyforgemusterroll.org) and click on "Search the Muster Roll" to see if you have an ancestor who bravely encamped with General George Washington!

**Mindfulness Walks Win Greater Philadelphia  
Innovation Award**

The Alliance is thrilled to announce that our Mindfulness Walk series with Daemion Counseling Center was the runner up in the Healthy Communities and Environment category at this year's Social Innovations Awards!

Want to see what all the buzz is about? Join us on the first Wednesday of the month from 10:00-11:00 AM to take brisk three-mile walk (starting at the Steuben statue by the Grand Parade) accompanied by counselors from Daemion Counseling Center. Take steps towards positive mental health through movement in nature and conversation!



## Technology Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteers with technology expertise who can help us determine a technology strategy and oversee technology related projects.

As a technology volunteer, you will be:

- Working with our Technology Committee to determine a technology strategy that aligns with our mission and goals.
- Oversee technology projects to ensure they are completed on time and within budget.
- Providing guidance and support to our team on technology-related issues.

We are looking for volunteers who have experience in the following areas:

- Technology strategy development
- Project management



- Website operations and development (including SEO)
- Database management

If you are passionate about technology, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at [volunteer@vfparkalliance.org](mailto:volunteer@vfparkalliance.org) to learn more about this opportunity.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us!

## Art in the Park Returns!



Calling all artists! Come out and join Rangers Beth and Greg as we paint, photograph, sketch and explore various locations around Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Our next outing will be Saturday, February 24, from 8:00 AM-10:00 AM. Meet Rangers Greg and Beth near the Steuben statue (Encampment Tour Stop #8) to begin a walk down the Historic Trace or Baptist Trace trail.

Outings are sponsored by the VFPA and are free, open to all abilities, and weather dependent. If the weather looks uncertain, check back to the [Art in the Park:](#)

[Landscapes and Structures Facebook page](#) or call the visitor center at 610-783-1099.

## Thank You, PECO, For Your Support of the Valley Forge Park Alliance!



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