

**EDITORIAL COMMENT
& LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR**

Historical groups should anticipate the future as well as remember the past. We are no exception to this fundamental premise.

CBHMA is a research organization that is dedicated to the dissemination of information about things past: the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn and 19th Century Plains Indian Wars.

But the Association also has an educational mission that transcends simple sharing of research and historical information with members about our shared passion.

Through outreach at schools, civic groups and other organizations we have a compelling obligation to educate students and communities about the historic clash of cultures on the Plains and the preservation of our nation's heritage and history. Such outreach should also address past, present and future challenges at Little Bighorn Battlefield.

In view of demographic changes in our country, Battlefield Supt. Kate Hammond has emphasized that the "challenge for the National Park Service and all the friends of the battlefield [will be] to find ways to keep this story relevant to the next generation."

In view of the aging composition of our own organization, we could not agree more with this assessment of the future. Stable yet static membership testifies to this challenge, as noted in the insightful column of Mike Sullivan in this issue.

Mike makes a compelling case for the critical need to appeal to college students to sustain our membership and relate the Little Bighorn story.

Younger generations, however, do not appear to see the relevance of the past. They might not appreciate or even know of the need "to protect the Battlefield or to tell its story," in the words of Supt. Hammond.

Outreach at high schools is another effective way to realize our objective to maintain the CBHMA as a credible and viable Association. Presentations by members of the Custer Association of Great Britain and publication of student articles in that organization's newsletter attest to the value of such a program. Please refer to the Spring/Summer 2008 issue of *The Crow's Nest*.

In his blueprint on the future of the Association (Spring 2005 *Dispatch*), former president Rod Thomas wrote that "we need to do something positive to encourage students at all levels to study, really study, history."

Rod's strategy called for reestablishment of our scholarship program and sponsorship of a student presentation at each Symposium. His creative vision assumed that the CBHMA has the funding for scholarships and speakers and has "enough folks to judge who should be selected."

Youth, we believe, will determine the future viability of the CBHMA. What is your opinion?

Lee & Michele

Thank You!

I would like to thank the membership of the CBHMA for allowing me to serve on the Board of Directors for two terms.

It was an enjoyable time and I made many friends. I enjoyed the camaraderie and great dedication many have shown concerning the Battle of the Little Bighorn. It's nice to see that I am not alone in my craziness toward the battle.

I would like to thank the past and current Board of Directors for all of its support. They are all dedicated to the organization and spend a lot of their personal time to ensure that the organization is the best that it can be.

The main thing with which I was associated was the field trips. They were hot, wet and long. I do believe that they were enjoyed. Many people helped me with the field trips. I can't remember all of you but your help was appreciated.

A special thanks to Kevin Connelly, Joe Creaden, Jim May, Lee Noyes, Dave Wagner, Craig Fisher with his remarkable bugle, Derry Mounce, the guardian of the colors, and Jon Custer. You all made my job easier.

My hope is that the Board will continue to honor the fallen by laying wreaths at the Reno/Bentzen monument and Custer Hill to honor those who fought and died. No matter what your consensus about the commanders, nine bodies somewhere on Reno/Bentzen Hill are still unmarked and not honored and many in the Valley and environs of Custer Hill.

It seems to me that there is more to the annual gathering than a pizza or hamburger party, the symposium or field trip. Most of us get caught up with all of the things concerning the battle but forget why we come out to Montana in the first place, namely to pay homage to those participants, red and white, who made the supreme sacrifice. Lest We Forget!

God Bless you all and the United States of America!
Tom Heski

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The CBHMA welcomes the opinions of its members on issues involving the Association or the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

Address letters to:
CBHMA *Battlefield Dispatch* Editor
C. Lee Noyes
126 Rand Hill Road
Morrisonville, NY 12962
Email address: CLeeNoyes@aol.com

Letters must be less than 300 words and must give a genuine identification and a daytime phone number. We will not print anonymous letters, but names may be withheld. We reserve the right to edit and condense letters.