

CAPE RETURN DAY SOUVENIR EDITION Election 2004 GAZETTE

Serving Delaware's Cape Region

"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"

Return Day - Thursday, Nov. 4, 2004

Return Day Firmly Rooted In Sussex County

By Dennis Forney

Politicians and all the people of Sussex County have been assembling for Return Day ever since Georgetown was made the county seat in 1791.

The form of the celebration, which always takes place on the Thursday following Election Day, in all the even years, has changed considerably over the years. The purpose of the day, however, has remained the same. The residents of the county come to their county seat to hear the election returns, to celebrate victories and to drown the sorrow of defeat. Tradition has many of the opposing candidates riding together in horse-drawn carriages and convertible automobiles in the Return Day parade, while leaders of the major political parties "bury the hatchet" on The Circle in Georgetown - signaling the end of the political season. In recent years, the Return Day celebration also has become the single most unifying event that takes place for all of Sussex County.

One of the largest parades held on the Delmarva Peninsula is the

centerpiece of the Return Day celebration.

The parade shows off the talents of musicians in bands from the middle school to high school and college levels, and a wide variety of floats, marching units and other exhibits put on wheels.

Thousands of Sussex County residents, and Delawareans from north and south join together in Georgetown to celebrate the conclusion of campaigning and the democratic process. W. Emerson Wilson, a frequent contributor of historical articles to the "News Journal" papers in Wilmington over the years, compiled a history of Return Day that was published for the official brochure for the event in 1974.

Much of the history information that follows comes from that effort.

Return Day, as it is celebrated in these times, is more ceremonial than it was in the earliest days of our nation. In 1776, Lewes was the county seat for Sussex County and elections for state and federal offices were held there in accordance with rules adopted in the state's first constitution in 1776.

People from western Sussex understandably didn't cotton much to traveling the whole day across poor roads and in the unpredictable weather of early November to cast their ballots.

Georgetown, equidistant from all points in Sussex County, was created in 1791 to satisfy those complaints. A gentleman named George Mitchell was among the three men appointed to come up with a location and layout for a new county seat. Surveyor Rhodes Shankland came up with the circle concept and laid out the streets from there. Mitchell must have won when straws were drawn for the naming of the county seat. The new town was to be called Georgetown.

The county seat was closer for voting purposes for many of the county's residents. According to Wilson's history, "Voters had to

drive into Georgetown to cast their ballots and it is unlikely they would return two days later for the results. Undoubtedly, the results of the election were known that night or the next day and voters would stay over to learn the results. Under that arrangement, the earliest Return Day would have been the day after the election. Those who had won held celebrations informally.

"It wasn't long, though, before voters complained about having to drive all the way to Georgetown to cast their ballots. Although it took more than two decades to change the system, the state's General Assembly passed laws in 1828 which set up polling places in the 13 hundreds of the county. "That meant votes had to be gathered from polling places

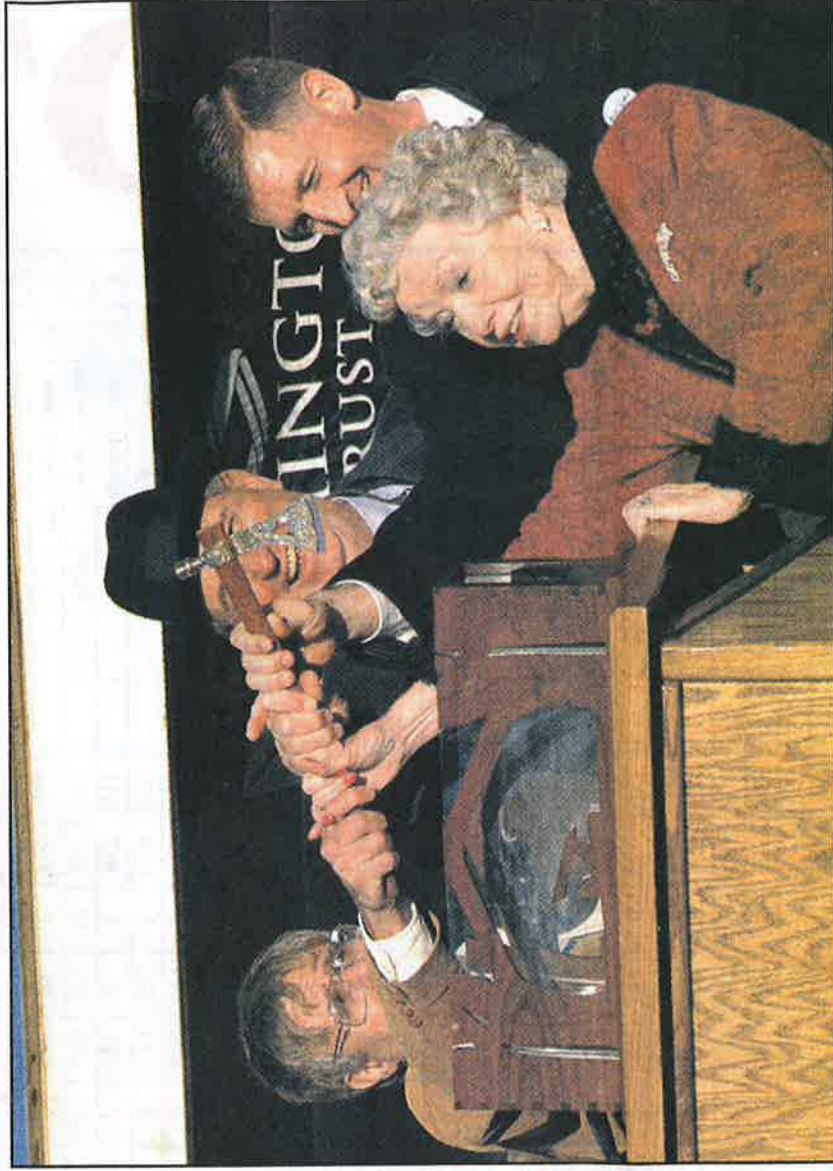
"Several thousand persons would pour into Georgetown that morning coming on foot, in wagons drawn by mules, horses or oxen, in carriages of all types, and on horseback.

"While waiting for the results the crowd listened to band concerts, wagered on cock fights and engaged in other pastimes. Soon merchants saw an opportunity for gain and stalls and booths selling all kinds of food, clothing and other articles were set up.

"The results were read from the door of the courthouse at noon and were printed on a white sheet hoisted over the courthouse door.

"The winning candidates were placed onto the shoulders of their adherents and paraded around The

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Dan Cook photos

A big part of Return Day is Burying the Hatchet. Shown at Return Day 2002 are (l-r) Sussex County party leaders Wolfgang von Baumgart, Independent Party; Jack Dalton, Libertarian Party; Keller Hopkins, Republican Party; and Thelma Monroe, Democratic Party.

Former Georgetown Mayor W. Layton Johnson reads returns during festivities in 2002.



Return Day Schedule of Events

9 a.m. - Food and art/crafts vendors open; youth activities begin on Youth Stage

10 a.m. - Dedication of Vietnam Veterans Monument by Vietnam Veterans of

America and Dedication Of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bench by the seven Sussex County Rotary Clubs (corner of The Circle and S. Bedford St.)

11:30 a.m. - Steel The Show (Steel drum band) from Southern Delaware School of the Arts on Wilmington Trust Stage located on The Circle

Noon - Mayors Hatchet Toss in front of the old Sussex County Courthouse - Sussex County Mayors compete for the coveted Hatchet Toss trophy

12:45 p.m. - Miss Delaware 2004 Linda Kurtz

1:30 p.m. - Return Day Parade steps off. Parade announced by WMDT-TV 47 personality Kelly Rouse

3:30 p.m. - Ceremonies On The Circle with Master of Ceremonies WBOC-TV 16 Anchorman Steve Hammond introducing honored guests

3:45 p.m. - Reading of Sussex County Returns by Town Crier and retired 26-year Georgetown Mayor W. Layton Johnson

4:00 p.m. - Burial of the Hatchet by Sussex County's four

political party chairmen using sand brought from the beach of the first city in the First State - Lewes

4:30 p.m. - Free ox roast sandwiches at the ox roast located in the Sussex County Courthouse parking lot. Ox Roast is sponsored by Freeman Communities.

4:30 p.m. - Unveiling of historical marker At Georgetown Train Station, 140 Layton Ave.

HOW WE VOTED

Polling Locations Sussex County 2004			President & Vice President		U.S. Congress					Governor			Lt. Governor			Insurance Commissioner		16th Senatorial District		18th Senatorial District	
Election District	Representative District		KERRY/EDWARDS	BUSH/CHENEY	NADER/CAMEJO	Paul DONNELLY	Michael N. CASTLE	Maurice J. BARROS	William E. MORRIS	Ruth Ann MINNER	William Swain LEE	Frank INFANTE	John C. CARNEY Jr.	James P. URSOMARSO	Michael R. DORE	John M. REDA	Matthew DENN	David H. ENNIS	James B. TESTERMAN	Colin BONINI	F. Thomas SAVAGE
1 14	Lowes Fire Hall	988	1,147	7	527	1,497	16	2	1,026	1,016	63	1,185	832	22	6	892	1,112		James B. TESTERMAN	Colin BONINI	786
2 14	Rehoboth Fire Co., Station No. 2	825	772	8	464	1,063	5	6	783	771	23	927	586	9	7	772	723				699
3 14	Rehoboth Fire Hall, Rehoboth Ave.	811	676	7	400	1,030	7	6	765	686	20	835	576	11	8	706	691				
4 14	Rehoboth Elementary School	948	1,070	11	507	1,435	7	10	965	1,005	33	1,046	866	7	10	894	990				805
5 14	Bacon Middle School	808	980	10	401	1,263	14	4	894	813	61	1,002	675	19	3	762	926				745
6 14	IR Fire Company, Substation	769	986	3	485	1,202	6	7	831	843	59	929	730	23	4	770	889				710
7 14	Cape Henlopen High School, Kings Highway	750	1,119	9	411	1,372	11	7	851	939	61	969	799	16	7	743	1,019				643
8 30	Milford Middle School	66	195	4	35	220	3	1	76	169	14	93	153	9	1	82	170	61	199		
9 33	Milford Middle School	313	654	8	152	791	5	9	453	481	36	514	412	18	7	364	542				185
10 33	Milford Middle School	78	216	2	47	229	7	7	93	183	13	126	148	7	2	109	177	78	209		
1 35	Greenwood Fire Hall	445	1,235	13	303	1,294	19	12	585	987	104	785	795	32	6	584	1,009				
2 35	Bridgeville Fire Hall	836	1,358	14	498	1,567	24	20	932	1,127	103	1,166	889	31	9	916	1,145				
3 35	Woodbridge High School	117	254	2	56	299	3	1	143	201	23	178	166	10	0	122	229				
4 35	Delaware Tech Higher Ed. Building	542	733	12	322	892	14	5	518	667	81	704	485	31	5	565	637				
5 35	Redden Community Hall	116	299	3	73	322	4	6	162	233	20	207	183	6	5	150	224				
6 35	Sussex Technical High School	228	451	4	137	515	6	2	245	372	55	331	292	27	1	265	386				
7 35	Ellendale Fire Hall	156	251	1	102	290	3	3	156	217	29	217	163	12	2	169	218				
1 36	Lulu Ross Elementary School	531	851	13	266	1,071	11	12	643	662	65	761	564	24	8	562	769				318
2 36	Lulu Ross Elementary School	509	972	6	269	1,153	12	6	684	724	55	792	615	20	0	586	817				330
3 36	Slaughter Neck Community Center	510	657	7	259	851	3	6	570	555	28	684	436	10	1	516	588				384
4 36	Morris Early Learning Center	496	818	7	286	967	14	7	556	644	96	731	512	31	4	575	678				
5 36	Delaware Tech Jason Building	121	256	2	60	307	1	2	124	232	18	195	169	5	1	152	218				
6 36	Morrier Middle School	552	610	9	314	796	8	9	568	538	38	673	417	18	7	581	519				614
7 36	H.O. Brittingham School	721	1,108	12	413	1,349	11	4	809	957	53	953	781	18	2	770	970				
8 36	Ellendale Fire Hall	354	491	3	210	595	7	6	371	388	66	479	303	17	6	408	391				
1 37	Lowes Middle School	918	965	12	456	1,345	9	3	1,001	838	29	1,072	697	10	6	742	1,028				652
2 37	Shields Elementary School	821	1,071	10	425	1,407	7	10	893	941	51	1,037	773	17	9	787	1,012				711
3 37	DelDOT Building, routes 9 and 30	494	815	11	286	976	10	6	482	753	60	655	587	20	3	540	711				476
4 37	Harbeson Church Hall	112	219	5	56	269	4	3	113	204	18	142	182	7	0	126	199				
5 37	Georgetown Elementary School	287	702	6	140	825	8	5	364	598	26	471	499	7	0	361	606				
6 37	N. Georgetown Elementary School	629	980	15	308	1,233	15	16	656	873	61	861	672	22	9	695	845				
7 37	Sussex Central High School	260	496	5	139	604	6	1	279	437	42	405	332	10	0	328	416				
8 37	DelDOT Transportation Building, S. Bedford St.	135	148	0	69	193	3	6	131	138	15	170	96	5	4	142	132				
1 38	IR High School	604	1,267	10	327	1,459	12	6	763	1,022	60	876	891	19	3	642	1,126				
2 38	Millville Fire Hall	571	958	8	363	1,082	12	6	686	769	41	795	641	5	1	613	812				
3 38	Lord Baltimore Elementary	857	1,367	9	528	1,591	20	5	1,073	1,076	49	1,158	923	21	6	865	1,202				
4 38	Bethony Beach Fire Hall	656	1,009	5	365	1,232	10	6	822	809	12	869	716	2	5	600	919				
5 38	Fenwick Island Town Hall	441	720	4	254	855	6	2	561	570	17	561	519	7	3	419	658				
6 38	Roxana Fire Substation	554	915	5	412	947	10	6	770	644	39	788	577	11	1	593	750				
7 38	Roxana Fire Hall	673	1,147	6	425	1,304	14	12	820	917	66	956	753	22	11	705	985				
8 38	Selbyville Middle School	307	493	3	149	586	5	4	382	367	26	428	296	7	1	315	401				
1 39	Seaford Middle School	151	387	5	90	439	1	0	195	318	25	257	259	6	1	169	351				
2 39	Seaford Senior High School	523	856	12	234	1,090	8	10	599	713	34	716	590	9	4	539	756				
3 39	Seaford Senior High School	391	651	3	188	815	4	3	459	541	30	542	445	10	1	360	607				
4 39	Seaford City Hall Annex	518	655	6	263	865	8	6	537	583	37	665	446	13	2	489	596				
5 39	West Seaford Elementary	352	700	8	154	863	4	7	465	534	46	577	423	8	3	370	618				
6 39	Blades Fire Hall	427	739	5	210	905	11	7	469	635	51	603	492	19	3	432	673				
7 39	Blades Elementary	335	466	5	195	562	5	4	337	400	53	475	269	18	4	356	393				
1 40	North Laurel Elementary	489	823	8	275	1,005	11	4	566	686	63	746	514	28	5	598	674				
2 40	Lowel Ctr. Middle School Fieldhouse	491	1,240	11	282	1,395	15	7	661	950	107	878	773	34	3	655	1,010				
3 40	Laurel Fire Hall	431	404	3	265	541	4	7	444	349	32	546	247	8	2	472	330				
4 40</																					

History

Continued from front page
Green. A large pole was erected in The Green and the emblem of the winning party was run up it. Generally the winners provided an ox roast.

"However, the spirit of good feeling and reconciliation which marks the Return Day of the present was not always there in the old days. The losers quite often did not take their defeat with good grace and in one fight in 1844 a Dagsboro man was killed."

The Return Day tradition grew and grew throughout the 1800s and represented a major festival in Georgetown every other year. With the turn of the century, however, new forces came on the scene.

The automobile and telephone and radio brought people closer to the county seat and they no longer had to go to Return Day to find out who won. Interest in the old tradition began to fade. World War II was raging in 1942 and Return Day was canceled altogether.

Following the war, however, a group of Republicans and Democrats got together and made plans to bring Return Day back bigger and better than ever.

While in previous years the celebration was dominated by whichever political party had been victorious in the elections, the goal of the bipartisan Return Day committee was to have a bipartisan celebration. A Burying of the Hatchet ceremony was begun and continues today. The county chairpersons for the Republican and Democratic parties join together on the reviewing stand and signify a reunification of purpose, following often-bitter campaigns, by burying the hatchet.

Return Day has been a festive celebration throughout the second half of this century – and has even gained national prominence on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America."

Delaware's General Assembly gave the event official recognition in 1965 when it made Return Day a legal half-day holiday for Sussex County. This year, under the guidance of Return Day veteran organizer Rosalie Walls, volunteers will

Youth Entertainment Stage to Feature Wide Array of Events

The Delaware Electric Cooperative youth entertainment stage at Return Day festivities in Georgetown, Thursday, Nov. 4, will feature youth singers, dancers, baton, fiddlers and recitals from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.. The youth will also honor military personnel.

Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Delaware will give out the Sussex Countian's youth stage entertainment schedule and coloring page, with crayons for the coloring contest. Deadline date for entering the coloring contest is Friday, Nov. 12.

Premier Glass & Screen Inc., Frankford has donated trophies. U.S. Savings bonds are donated by Citizen's Bank, on The Circle. Gift Cards have been donated by Wal-Mart Super Center

Georgetown Store, and three fluffy stuffed puppies donated by Mother's Against Drunk Driving Delaware Chapter. The Sussex County Return Day will provide blue, red and yellow ribbons for the winners. Awards will be presented by Nov. 19.

Boy Scout Troop 95 will assist with red, white, and blue balloons donated by Givens' Flowers & Gifts, Georgetown. Truth & Life Center of Georgetown teens will paint faces. Girl Scout Cadet Troop 701 and the Daisies will distribute

9:36 a.m. Present Flags Navy JROTC – Seaford Senior High School & American Legion Post 28 Oak Orchard Color Guard

9:39 a.m. "The Star-Spangled Banner" sung by Elise Harmon

9:43 a.m. Jake Breasure recognizes

and honors veterans

9:45 a.m. "O Say Can You See" sung by Amy Pugliese

9:50 a.m. Jake Breasure and Chase Harmon read names of Delaware soldiers lost in Iraq and Afghanistan

9:53 a.m. Moment of silence

9:54 a.m. "Dixie" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and The Ladies Aid Society of Sussex County with Katie Hughes, Jordan Frey, Kate Frey, Meghan Lee, Emily Mathews, & Kylie Dietzel

10:04 a.m. Sandy's Starlites Baton Twirling Club and Color Guard performs

10:08 a.m. "Tomorrow" and "You Raise Me Up" sung by Sierra Spicer

10:14 a.m. Jazz dancers Whitney Handy and Catrina Church perform

10:17 a.m. "Dust in the Wind" sung by Melissa Alesi accompanying herself with a guitar

10:21 a.m. "Aaron's Party" rap by Tay Moore

10:26 a.m. Sandy's Starlites Baton Queens perform

10:30 a.m. "Part of Your World" sung by Janelle Marie Ames, Little Miss Millsboro

10:34 a.m. Poem "One Night in My Room" – recited by Courtney Russum, Little Miss Georgetown

10:36 a.m. "Daddy's Hand" recited by Jazmyne Harris, Miss Petite Dover

10:39 a.m. Poem "Sticklie Lickie" recited by Adriana Roque, Little Miss Harbeson

10:40 a.m. Ballet dancer Ashley Wilson performs

10:45 a.m. Christonee & Alexis Hudson sing "Ain't No Mountain High Enough"

10:49 a.m. "Born to Fly" sung by Chelsea Betts, Miss Teen Georgetown

11:05 a.m. "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and "Respect" performed by The Alley Cat Dance Troupe

11:10 a.m. Patriotic song "America the Beautiful" and in Spanish "God Bless the USA" sung by Stephanie Benavides

11:15 a.m. Georgetown Boys & Girls Club Choir sings

11:25 a.m. Students of the Delaware Music School perform

11:45 a.m. Jazz dancers Whitney Handy and Catrina Church perform

11:48 a.m. Cab Calloway School of the Arts students perform

12:10 p.m. Middletown High School "Ensemble Choir" performs

12:30 p.m. DJ TECH – Chase Harmon

1 p.m. "God Bless America" sung by Rebecca Wilson

Oakley Named Grand Marshal; Honorary Marshals Announced

Sussex County Return Day has named Pete Oakley

of Lewes, winner of the British Open, as its grand marshal.

Oakley, touring professional from The Rookery, won the British Senior Open on July 25.

Oakley was instrumental in the design and opening of The Rookery in 2000.

Honorary grand marshals are C. Russell McCabe, manager of the Delaware Public Archives, and Dan Gaffney, WGMD morning talk show host.



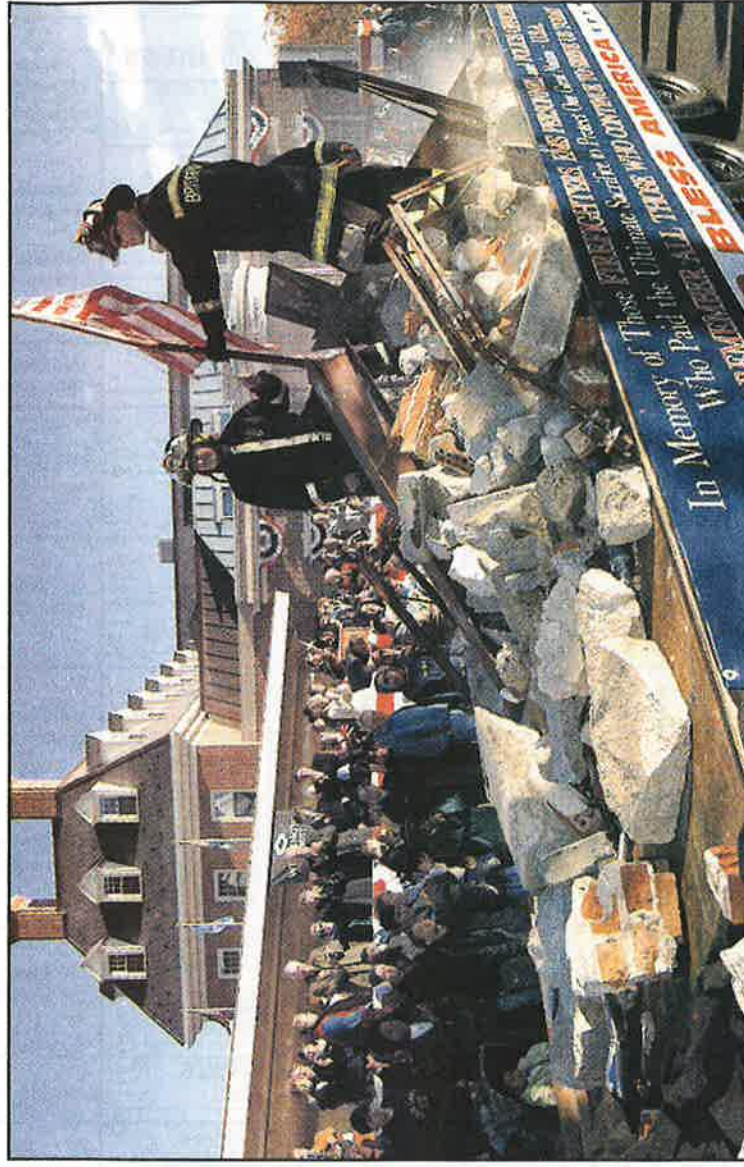
PETE OAKLEY



C. RUSSELL MCCABE



DAN GAFFNEY



Bridgeville Fire Department's 2002 Return Day float paid tribute to those firefighters who died in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.

staff Return Day activities that have been scheduled from 6:30 in the morning to dusk.

Return Day, with its candidates and carriages, free ox roast sandwiches and speeches, rousing

music and festive parade, is a great Sussex County tradition – unique in all the world.

Cupola Gets a Makeover

Clock, Bell Back in Order

A new cupola sits atop the Sussex County Courthouse on the Circle in Georgetown.

The 28,000-pound structure was rebuilt because of deterioration, particularly its east side. The cupola, a clock and a large antique bell located inside were removed following Return Day 2002.

The bell, cast by Bernhard & Co. in 1857, was kept in its original wooden cradle and replaced inside the cupola in the early hours of Sunday, Oct. 17.

In the 23-month interim after its initial removal, the bell was on exhibit at the Georgetown Historical Society.



Rosalie Walls photo

The 28,000-pound cupola was lifted atop the Sussex County Courthouse in the early hours of Oct. 17, by John L. Briggs & Co.

Ox Sandwiches: A Big Part of the Return Day Tradition

Free ox roast sandwiches are distributed on Thursday following the events on the Circle around 3:30 p.m. Stop by during the day to see ox/slow roasting on a spit in the ox roast building under the watchful eye of Ox Roast Committee Chair **Danny Milburn**.

The "ox" is **beef from one of Delaware's finest cattle ranches** and it is prepared with all required health permits. About 1,200 ox roast sandwiches are prepared and given away each Return Day.

Cold beer is for sale from the VFW beer truck until 11 p.m. under the direction of **Town Crier W. Layton Johnson**. No ID, no beer.

The ox cooks all night and takes about 24 hours to reach that perfect, mouth-watering flavor using the **secret Return Day sauce recipe**.

