

## Meet Citizen Paine in Philadelphia

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** --- For the last month or so, **Thomas Paine** (in the person of **Steve Gulick**) has been engaging in conversation with visitors to the Philadelphia History Museum, on Seventh Street across from the building where Thomas Jefferson rented rooms while in the city for the Second Continental Congress. On Monday, June 20th, I was able to venture into the city to call upon Mr. Paine for an enjoyable and informative conversation and exchange of views. Among the topics I raised with him were several of the "mysteries" associated with his remarkable life. He would neither acknowledge nor deny it when I asked whether Benjamin Franklin had enlisted him to travel to North America to deliver letters to key colonial leaders, letters containing valuable information regarding the intentions of the British authorities that, if intercepted, would have certainly put Dr. Franklin in the Tower of London. He revealed nothing to me regarding any role he might have played in the drafting of the *Declaration of Independence*, although he is aware rumors have circulated that the sentiments expressed in the *Declaration* are similar to those

he held and had shared. Anyone who might be planning a trip to Philadelphia later this summer or fall should inquire at the Museum to determine whether Mr. Paine is returning.

**Steve Gulick** has taken on the persona of **Thomas Paine** at events in Philadelphia for at least the last two decades. I first met him about a decade ago while we waited for **Professor Harvey Kaye** to arrive at the Pennsylvania Historical Society to speak on Paine. As it turned out, the event had been cancelled because of storm warnings. There were about ten of us who had not gotten the word and we showed up. So, I invited the group to come to the Henry George School (a short walk away), where I delivered an impromptu lecture on Paine. **Steve's** business card describes him as a "Peace Meal Player." Over the years I have run into him a few times portraying Paine. He has now reached an age that the Paine he reminds one of is the **Thomas Paine** returned to North America after his release from Luxembourg prison in France, far less vigorous physically than the man who departed from Philadelphia in 1987, but still mentally sharp and alert to world-changing events.

--from Edward J. Dodson, President, TPF