

# I'On's Millennium Storm Flag

The American Flag displayed at the Amphitheater for patriotic holidays has a remarkable background.

In the Fall of 2001, as our community responded to the events of September 11, 2001, the *I'Onissimo!*

winds. It greets the ships of the world as enter Charleston Harbor. The smaller storm flag flies illuminated at night, on cloudy days, when there are high winds or when there are storms. It was the storm flag of Ft. Sumter that was flying when the American Civil War began.

It is believed that this flag was flying at the turn of the Millennium at the Fort, a time of tremendous hope in fierce contrast to the events of a year later.

During the winter, the flag was fitted to a suspension pole, eye bolts and cleats were put in the bulkhead so the flag could be displayed proudly on the Memorial Day concert. It was first displayed on Memorial weekend, 2002. Later I'On Neighbor, Tom Bongiorno, whose family owned a flag business, donated extensive repairs to the flag.

The Millennium Storm flag is one of the community's most meaningful shared possessions. It brings together a sense of history and civic significance due to its use at the entrance of Charleston Harbor at our national monument, where some of the most significant

events in American history were enacted. It is an artifact of a moment of great hope for the entire human race, the belief that the third millennium could be a time of great progress for the world. It came to us as a result of the horrific events of September 11, 2001, a severe test of our national community. Finally, it arrived on Thanksgiving..

After six years of use, visitors often ask us why we display a faded and obviously distressed flag for our great patriotic occasions. It is, of course, because of its complex meaning: History, hope, loss and thanksgiving, the complex American heritage of the early 21st. century.

*William Hamilton, June 2008*



Brass Concert scheduled for Sunday afternoon, September 30 at the Creek Club adopted a patriotic theme. It was felt a flag was needed to display at the concert. Due to the tremendous demand, none could be purchased.

Representatives of the community began to ask around, hoping to find an appropriate flag to ornament significant occasions in the community. A letter was written to Ranger Rick Hatcher at the Ft. Sumter National Monument asking if one of the old flags flown at the Ft. might be available. Shortly after that, a resident of Hobcaw provided a casket flag used at the Funeral of a WWI veteran who had lived in that community many years before, which had been rescued from a yard sale. (Casket Flags are not supposed to be bought or sold.) That flag was displayed at at concert in September 2001.

At that concert the Lady Renken, a very large fishing boat, joined the spectator fleet on the creek. Unable to find a large flag to fly, the crew instead flew about sixty small ones.

The request to Ft. Sumter was forgotten until Thanksgiving weekend, 2001 when the postman delivered a large box send from Ft. Sumter. In that box was a very special flag, the storm flag flown over the Fort in the Year 2000.

The Fort flies two flags. The huge garrison flag flies during the day in good weather and moderate

