



# The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

**Capital District Civil War Round Table**

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CDCWRT's web site: [timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt](http://timesunion.com/communities/cdcwrt)

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## **VICTORY!** **CHANCELLORSVILLE SAVED**

**WE WON!!!!** Dogwood was defeated this morning (March 27, 2003) at approximately 12:30am by a vote of 6 against the project and one abstaining. Now on to the next phase of the mission, the purchase of the Mullins Farm and the preservation of the May 1<sup>st</sup> battlefield.

Steve (Overly Joyed) Stanley

Chairman, Friends of Fredericksburg Area Battlefields

Board Member, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Greetings to all my Northern Friends,

I was elated to be able to give the wonderful news of defeating the Dogwood project. It was a special victory and one that everyone, who is preservation minded, should be proud of. I would hope that other groups/coalitions would look upon our now vast experience and learn how to fight the developers. This was a great learning experience. But the fight is not over yet. We now **MUST** convince the present landowner to sell us his property. He has threatened to develop it by-right (which is 225 homes) and sounds like he won't consider any offers from preservationists. I hope that this is only a threat and not true. The coalition's work is not done yet....This defeat was a victory in its own way; we were able to protect the NPS holdings at Chancellorsville... That is our next fight; let's save the May 1<sup>st</sup> battlefield forever. Thanks for your support.

Steve Stanley

**April Meeting**  
**Saturday 04/12/03**  
**VERMONT**

<b>SOCIAL HOUR</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>
<b>BUSINESS MEETING</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>
<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>7:30 PM</b>

**CDCWRT MEETING**

***THERE IS NO ROUND TABLE MEETING SCHEDULED LOCALLY FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL. SINCE 63 MEMBERS ARE TRAVELLING TO VERMONT TO HEAR KEN BURNS SPEAK AT THE FULL DUTY BANQUET, THE BOARD DECIDED AT AN EARLIER MEETING TO USE THE APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> DATE AS OUR REGULAR MEETING. HOPEFULLY THOSE ATTENDING THE APRIL MEETING IN MONTPELIER WILL BRING BACK STORIES, RAVE REVIEWS, AND PERHAPS SOME BOOTY FROM THE HUGE RAFFLE!***

**MARCH MEETING**

The March meeting was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of 87 members, who heard Chris Kolakowski talk about New York City events during the Civil War. Chris delivered a similar presentation at the November Conference, and it was so well received, that he was asked to present it again to the general membership. The Round Table is lucky to have Chris as a member while he completes his Masters in Public History at the University (even though he's enthusiastic about the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps).

**BOARD MEETING**

The March Board Meeting was held on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The treasurer's report noted \$1325 in the regular checking account, and \$4347.13 in the preservation account. The preservation balance does not include monies deposited for the up-coming trip. A contingent of 72 members has signed up for the April Full Duty Banquet in Vermont.

The Board discussed future meetings and the requests for Round Table participation in Civil War events at the Military Heritage Museum in Saratoga, and in Norwich, NY. The next Board Meeting will be April 21<sup>st</sup>.

**UP-COMING EVENTS**

May 9<sup>th</sup> is the monthly meeting at **Guilderland**. The battle of Gettysburg resulted in over 21,000 wounded men. In the weeks after the battle, many received care from hundreds of volunteer doctors and nurses. Among the nurses, few would provide more professional care than a most unique group of women belonging to a Roman Catholic religious order. While serving at a partially completed hospital in Philadelphia, a construction worker dubbed the nuns the "Flying Battery" Sisters, because of their unusual wing shaped headgear. Janet Bucklew will speak, in the traditional clothing of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul.

May 10<sup>th</sup> is the 125<sup>th</sup> NYSVI bus trip to **West Point**. If you are interested, contact President Joe Stracuzzi for details.

May 17<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, is the **Annual open house at Peebles Island**. This is an opportunity to explore the state historical preservation facilities. The RT will have an information booth at the open house.

an opportunity to meet the public locally, and just casually talk about the RT and why you joined. Volunteers are requested to contact Joe or Sue.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday, the monthly meeting of the CDCWRT will be held in the Guilderland Public Library. Member, Ray Wemple will speak on *The Signal Corps at Gettysburg.***

**June 14<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, historian, Robert Mulligan, will be giving a tour of "Some Interesting Veterans Buried in Oakwood Cemetery."** More details will be available in next month's newsletter, but mark your calendar now.

**On June 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, Saturday and Sunday, Civil War Days will be held in Petersboro, NY.** This is also Flag Day Weekend and it promises to be a big event. Each year re-enactors, historians, history groups and vendors gather to celebrate the region's Civil War heritage. This has been a cancellation event for the CDCWRT for several years now.

**June 28<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, to July 6<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, will mark the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg.** More than 25,000 Civil War re-enactors are expected to be on hand for the celebration. This will be the major event for 2003. Volunteers are being recruited to man possibly two booths. This will be your opportunity to see Pickett's Charge on a life-size scale. The RT has a block of rooms reserved in a motel as close to the battlefield as the NPS allows. Volunteers who work at the booth will have a portion of their room paid by the RT. See Joe, Sue, Matt G. or Matt F. if you are interested. Car-pooling may also be available, depending on the number of volunteers.

**The July Picnic will be held on Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at the Peebles Island Pavilion. More details will follow in later newsletters.**

## MISCELLANEOUS

*The answer to last month's question is listed below.*

*The designation "4F," meaning exemption from military service for any physical disability, dates from the Civil War. What did "4F" stand for?*

*The answer: Four front teeth, more specifically, the lack thereof. Regulations required examining physicians for the Union army to consider the absence of the four front incisors a handicap, because soldiers had to tear open paper cartridges with their teeth in order to load their muskets. 2.4% of men examined were excused from military service for missing teeth. The lack of four front teeth was abbreviated as "4F." It later became the abbreviation for any physical disability.*

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Board member, Lew Warner, is developing an exhibit at the Guilderland Library on the History of the GAR. If any members have any items concerning the GAR (i.e. documents, photos, badges, uniforms) that they might want to loan for this exhibit, please contact Lew at 458-2282 or by email [ldwarner@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ldwarner@nycap.rr.com). The exhibit will run from mid-May until the end of June.

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Rosemary Nichols, Board member, is inviting people, who like Civil War music, and/or like to sing, to contact her to help set up a music program for the picnic in July. Rosemary's email address is [rmichols@nycap.rr.com](mailto:rmichols@nycap.rr.com).

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On March 7<sup>th</sup> I had the opportunity to work with Tom McGrevey, a teacher, and his son, John, a senior student, at the Farnsworth Middle School Wellness Day. Tom and John are re-enactors in the 77<sup>th</sup> NYVI, and we presented 4 one-hour presentations to students about "The Life of the Civil War Soldier." Members of the RT have done this for the past several years. It has always been gratifying to try to excite students about Civil War history. On March 18<sup>th</sup> I received the feedback for our efforts.

*Overall, I would rate this workshop: Excellent 36, Good 30, Fair 3, Poor 1. The information presented was: Better than expected 33, What I expected 26, Was not what I expected 9. I would recommend this workshop to other students: Yes 67, No 3.*

Perhaps some of these students will be the next crop of RT members in a few years. Why not join us in other school ventures when we are seeking volunteers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Say thanks to our Service men. This is National Military Appreciation Month, and if you visit the Department of Defense web page listed below, you can sign-in and thank the men and women of the U.S. military services. The compiled list of names will be sent out to our soldiers at the end of the month.

[www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html)

## JOE'S JOTTINGS

*By Joe Stracuzzi*

Spring is here and most of the snow around the house is gone. There is even some green popping up and, most important of all, the geese are honking their way north. **IT IS A GREAT SPRING, BECAUSE CHANCELLORSVILLE IS NO LONGER THREATENED BY DOGWOOD.** I like to

think that CDCWRT had a hand in causing this turn of events, with our donations, petition gathering, and our \$2.00 bill spending on our trip down there last October.

We had a wonderful tour of Gettysburg. Once again, our program chair had everything running well. Despite the fact that my alarm clock stopped during the night and I overslept! Gettysburg is certainly different with snow on the ground, with no leaves on the trees, and temperatures below 90, just like it usually is in July. The only complaint I heard was that we had to leave. Thank you, Sue, for a great job and thank you to everyone who pitched in to help during the trip.

There will NOT be a regular meeting at the Guilderland Library. It is being replaced by the trip to the Full Duty Banquet in Montpelier, Vermont. Ken Burns will be the speaker and we have tickets reserved for 72 of us. Once again, Sue has done all of the work setting this trip up, including tours on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday. Sue, we thank you in advance.

The Board will meet on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm at Rosemary Nichols house. In closing, I would like to thank all of the members and guests who have been filling the seats and enjoying the speaker and refreshments each month. Calling attention to your mailing label: if you have a "DD" after the date, it is to call attention to our mailing crew that you get the red insert about paying your dues. If you have a "V" after your date, it calls attention that you are to receive the insert for the Vermont trip. Remember, you do not have to be a member of the CDCWRT to participate in any of our activities. If you get our three months of complimentary newsletters or hear about us from a friend, feel free to join us.

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

April marks, for the most part, the end of battlefield hostilities in the Civil War. Here are a few of the memorable orders of the day.

*General Orders No. 9  
Hdqrs. Army of Northern Virginia  
April 10, 1865*

*After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the brave survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to the result from no distrust of them. But, feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that must have attended the continuance of the contest, I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.*

*By the terms of the agreement officers and men can return to their homes and remain until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you his blessings and protection.*

*With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous considerations for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.*

*R. E. Lee, General*

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*Appomattox Court House April 9, 1865  
My Dear Mother*

*I am almost too much excited to write. You will know the reason why long before you receive this. Lee has surrendered with his whole army, and from this day the war is virtually over. Thank God we have been permitted to see this glorious day. Johnston's army will certainly surrender and, then, dear Mother, we will all return home again to enjoy the blessings of that honorable peace for which we have striven so long. The men of Lee's army have torn down their works, stacked their arms and are now encamped quietly alongside of us as through they formed part of our army. As soon as the arrangements for the surrender were made, officers and messengers bore the news to the troops and, oh, what a scene! All the pent up emotions of our hearts burst forth in a mighty shout, like the shout of battle, while the bands struck up our national airs and the artillery broke forth in salutes. How the hats of the boys flew skyward in the air and the hills fairly shook with the cheers of the massed thousands, when General Meade, with uncovered head and beaming face, rode down the lines with the glorious news. We have orders to remain here, close in camp, until it is settled what will be done. Good night, my dear Mother, and look for our return "when Johnny comes marching home."*

*Unknown Union soldier*

## AN AFTER -THOUGHT

This month's *North & South* magazine (volume 6, No. 3) has a section where historians respond to "Gods and Generals." Most are critical of the movie. Director, Ron Maxwell, responds to his critics. It is a good article, and Maxwell defends himself quite well, and gives a different perspective than the critics. It's worth reading, and seeing the movie a second time. Better yet, get the DVD.

## ABOUT OUR COVER

Some of you may be perplexed about the cover page of this newsletter. **VICTORY!** Whose victory? R.E. Lee's or T. Jackson's? **CHANCELLORSVILLE SAVED.** Isn't it already part of the National Park Service? Well the answers are **yours and your descendents and yes, no, and maybe.**

The Mullins Farm is a 790-acre tract of land that is outside the park boundary, but a significant action occurred there on the first day of the battle, May 1<sup>st</sup> 1863. Mr. Mullins had indicated he did not want to sell to those "preservationists," who tell you how you can use your land. Mr. Ray Smith, president of Dogwood Development Group, wanted to build a town with almost 3000 homes and over 2.5 million square feet of stores and offices on the tract. The land was undeveloped, and was similar in plantings as it was in 1863.

When the prospect of HUGE tax revenues was presented to the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors, it seemed a 'done deal' in October 2002 when CDCWRT visited the battlefield with Frank O'Reilly. In fact, we billed the trip as the last opportunity to see this pristine land before the vote, which was slated to occur the day AFTER our trip. Steve Stanley and other members of CVBT spoke somberly about the loss of this land at our banquet. In an attempt to draw attention to tourist dollars that come into the area because of the battlefield, Joe Stracuzzi's idea of the RT paying for all purchases with two-dollar bills was great, but the news was lost in the sniper slaying nearby that weekend. Joe also started a signature petition, and he collected over 2000 signatures. The RT also donated \$1250 to CVBT in October.

Lee's brilliant victory at Chancellorsville occurred in part because of the action on Mr.

Mullins fields on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Union forces had pushed out of the Wilderness and neared the vital ridge at Zoan Church. But Hooker stopped his advance and pulled his soldiers back into the woods. He gave the initiative to Lee. "My God," Meade exclaimed, "if we can't hold the top of a hill, we certainly can't hold the bottom of it!" And the rest is history.

In a campaign reminiscent of Lee's, CVBT and the coalition battled with Dogwood. The project was scaled back to 1950 homes and 2.2 million square feet of commercial use. The public learned of the 'down-side' of the project, and the coalition learned how to fight and weed through accounting gimmicks and misleading statements. In the end, the proposal went down by a margin that no one anticipated. Hence, the Victory. Had the development passed, traffic on route 3, the old Turnpike, would have increased tens of thousand of cars per day, right through the battlefield.

So we have won for the present. If the land is not acquired, it still can be developed to a lesser degree. So maybe it's a partial victory. But the county is rapidly growing, and traffic may yet destroy the battlefield ambience. So maybe it's a hollow victory, but only if we let that occur.

**What can we do?** Nothing happens without the support of all of us, and that include **financial support.** Join CWPT, or CVBT, or both! In this newsletter is information on how to support CWPT when you purchase books, etc. Support your round table with dues, attendance and volunteerism. Most of the donations from CDCWRT stem from the stamp cachets we keep urging you to consider. This round table's reputation stems from these donations, and that's why Steve Stanley wanted to share his fantastic news with us at 01:54AM.