



The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

Capital District Civil War Round Table

P.O. Box 14871, Albany, NY 12212-4871

CDCWRT's web site: www.cdcwrt.org

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

“The grand event of the day was a regimental mock parade which came off at ten o’clock; all the companies turned out in full dress.”

Holiday parade in the camp of the 44th New York State Volunteers

Leslie's Illustrated

DECEMBER MEETING

Friday December 10th
Guilderland Library
2228 Western Ave.

SOCIAL HOUR	6-7PM
BUSINESS MEETING	7-7:30PM
LECTURE	7:30-9PM
PARTY & EXHIBITS	9:00-10PM

CDCWRT MEETING

Our final meeting of the calendar year and the final meeting of our 20th year celebration will be held on Friday, December 10th, at the Guilderland Public Library. This will also be the year-end business meeting to elect a new President and Board. It is also our traditional holiday party, so feel free to bring your favorite holiday snack, cookies or dessert. There will also be items to purchase for holiday gifts, including commemorative postal cachets, framed artwork, T-shirts, used and new Civil War books. Monies raised will support the preservation activities of the Round Table.

Our speaker for this meeting is Chuck Veit, President of the Navy and Marine Living History Association, an organization dedicated to researching and sharing America's nautical history in the period 1750-1900. His presentation is entitled, HOW THE U.S. NAVY WON THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. This promises to be a fascinating topic since we all know that Grant won the War. However, consider the role of the Navy including the naval blockade, the river campaigns, the support of Grant's land campaigns in the west, the transport and support of

McClellan's forces in the Peninsula Campaign, the support of Grant in the Petersburg Campaign, the capture of Confederate ports, and the development of new naval technologies, to name a few.

Chuck is also the founder and leader of the U.S. Naval Landing Party, a Civil War living history group that portrays Union sailors and marines in the Civil War.

Chuck will also talk briefly about the U.S.S. Alligator – the First Submarine. Although there is little written in history books, the Alligator was a dark green, 47-foot-long vessel with oars that protruded like reptilian feet. It was sold to the U.S. Navy by Brutus de Villeroi, a French inventor who may have taught mathematics to Jules Verne. Verne may have used the idea for his vessel in "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." It was an engineering marvel launched in 1862, but it sank off the coast of North Carolina on April 2, 1863, during a storm, while being towed. Its location remains unknown, because experts doubt the accuracy of the USS Sumpter, the towing vessel. Teams of dedicated naval historians, maritime archaeologists, oceanographers and students have been looking for the Alligator the past several years.

GETTYSBURG COMES TO GUILDERLAND LIBRARY

The CDCWRT and the Guilderland Library will host a very special, one-day exhibition of Civil War battle flags from the collection of the NYS Military Museum & Veterans Research Center. This exhibition commemorates the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg with conserved battle flags that were carried by New York regiments on July 1-3, 1863. Each flag is a silent testimonial to

the gallantry of New Yorkers who followed their colors into battle. Day One of the battle will be represented by the 13th Independent Battery flag, Day Two will be represented by the 44th NYVI Regiment's national flag, and Day Three will be represented by the 111th NYVI Regiment's guidon.

The program begins at 9:00 am with some opening remarks by Michael Aikey, Director of the NYS Military Museum. The flags will have an honor guard by members of the 125th NYVI Association since the 111th was in Willard's Brigade at Gettysburg along with the 125th. In the lobby of the library there will be Duryee's Zouaves (5th NYVI) re-enactors. Along with the flags, there will be a series of display panels.

At 9:30am there will be presentations by Sarah C. Stevens about preservation, and what is being done to preserve the Battle Flag Collection. Sarah received her M.S. in Historic Costume and Textiles from the University of Rhode Island, and has worked on the Flag Project at Peeples Island since 2000. Christopher Morton will then do a short presentation on the history of the Civil War flags in the collection, the Flag Project, and what has been accomplished thus far from a curator's perspective. Chris received his Masters degree in Public History from the State University at Albany, and is Assistant Curator at the New York State Military Museum

At 12:00 there will be a presentation on "Why Gettysburg." At 1:30pm Bill Neiffer will talk about "Regimental Chaplins," and at 3:00pm Howard Young will discuss, "Life of the Common Soldier."

Don't miss this unique opportunity to see these flags and the exhibit that accompanies them. This exhibit is co-sponsored by the Capital District Civil War Round Table.

PAST EVENTS

On Friday, November 12th, a group of about 20 Round Table members has a personalized tour of the Capitol Building with Stuart Lehman, who pointed out many of the Civil War connections in the carving of the Great Western Staircase. This was followed by the opening of the "*Flags of the Fighting Zouaves*" exhibit, on the second floor of the Capitol. A crowd of 60-70 were on hand to hear remarks on this fifth installment in the NYS Battle Flag Preservation Project's exhibition series, designed to raise awareness about the collection's conservation needs. This is an exhibit all members should plan to see.

On Saturday, November 13th, a similar sized crowd was on hand at the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga for the opening of the "*New York State's Fighting Zouaves*" exhibit. The Museum had been closed for several months for renovations. The hardwood floors were spectacular and there were many new exhibits that should be seen. The program included a lecture about Zouaves, a bayonet drill competition demonstration, and living history Zouave re-enactors.

The 20th Anniversary CDCWRT Banquet was held that night. Our special speaker was our own John Hennessy, who gave a very insightful presentation about Lincoln's efforts to change the focus of the war effort in 1862. For example, the selection of Gen. John Pope to command was much more complex than I ever had imagined. (You'll have to ask someone who was at the banquet to find out!). John's analysis of Lincoln's

actions is worthy of publication in *North and South* magazine.

After the questions and answers, John spoke about his selection as the RT's first lifetime member. He praised the efforts of the group in preservation activities. Then we completely surprised Sue Knost with an award as the second lifetime member of the Round Table. Sue joins John Hennessy in this great honor. It was primarily through John's example that we realized that as a RT we should recognize and promote preservation activities as a major goal. Sue has provided us with the means of carrying out this mission. She came up with the concept of selling commemorative postal cachets to raise funds. Through her efforts, Albany was designated one of the first day of issue sites for the Civil War stamp series in 1995. We raised over \$7000 that weekend in 1995. Since then, we have donated almost \$150,000 to preservation activities, an accomplishment which is singular and unique among the over 1000 round table in the world.

In addition, as Program Chair, she has organized the extensive, broad-based programs we have provided over the past several years. She has made our trips memorable, comprehensive, affordable, and the envy of other groups. This was the most appropriate way we could recognize her efforts. Sue was both surprised (it is hard to keep secrets from her) and speechless (briefly). *Congratulations to Sue Knost.*

UP-COMING EVENTS

A.R.T. Together: A retrospective of sculptor-photographer, Ron Tunison, and new work by Alice Tunison, will be on display from December 1st to 22nd at the Kaaterskill Gallery at Columbia Greene Community College in Hudson, NY. The

show marks the first time the couple has exhibited together. Ron is known for his historical Civil War subjects, and is the only living sculptor with four monuments at the Gettysburg Battlefield. The exhibit includes his latest commission, a life-sized statue of Confederate General, Patrick Cleburne. Alice's paintings are inspired by the lines and colors in the works of Picasso, Gauguin and van Gogh. CGCC is located on route 23 in Greenport, one mile east of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, and can be reached from Exit 21 of the NYS Thruway.

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The Victorian Stroll in Troy will be held on Sunday, December 5th. The Round Table will have information and display tables at the Troy Post Office, The Atrium, and the Visitor Center. Volunteers are needed to meet the public and talk about their interest in the Civil War and the Round Table. Books, prints, T-shirts and cachets will be on sale in all locations.

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The January meeting will be our Potpourri Meeting on Friday, January 14th. This is also T-Shirt Night, and Show and Tell Night. Bob Mulligan will talk about *Civil War Gaming –Gettysburg Style*. Mike Spaulding will talk about the *History of Action Figures and How to Display Them*. There are Civil War computer games that allow you to fight the Battle of Gettysburg the way you think it should have been fought. Bob will discuss the much more interesting situation where you are matching your wits with another human being. This sometimes can be done with models. A visit to the British Military Museum any Saturday morning will reveal a host of commanders of all ages, fighting all the great battles, including Waterloo, Arnheim, the Jutland Sea, to name a few.

And speaking of models, Mike will talk about the development of the action figure from G-I Joe to the life-like models today. He will also talk about how to display them in dioramas. Both young and old are fascinated by the Civil War dioramas, which are in some of the national parks.

This is also the meeting where we encourage members to wear their new Civil War T-shirts, which they may have received as holiday gifts. If you have none, come topless, since the RT will have a supply of new T-shirts for sale, including the new Irish Brigade shirt and the Civil War Harley-Davidson shirts. Any members who have some interesting *objects de art*, which they would like to show, can bring them. Tables will be available for you to display your prized possessions.

BOARD MEETING

At the Board Meeting on November 29th, the Treasurer reported about \$1300 in the regular account, and \$8710 in the preservation account. Sales of items at the Zouave event in Saratoga and the banquet grossed about \$800. Remembrance Day at Gettysburg grossed about \$1300 for the preservation fund. The Board voted to donate \$500 to the historic landscape restoration project at Gettysburg. Another \$500 was donated to support the Women's History Symposium at Gettysburg next April. While not land purchase donations, the tree project thanks the staff at the National Park who have supported the RT with battlefield guides and the opportunity to set up our tables in the Cyclorama and the Visitor Center. The Women's Symposium donation supports educational groups whose activities relative to the Civil War parallel our own. The Symposium may alternate between Saratoga and Gettysburg in the future, bring this conference to our region.

Sue Knost discussed future programs, however at this time the February program is still not settled. The meeting may be on Saturday, February 12th, Lincoln's birthday, depending upon speaker availability.

Officer and Board member elections will be held at the December meeting. The final proposed slate is as follows:

President – Matt George
President ex Officio – Joe Stracuzzi
Vice-President – Lew Warner
Treasurer – Mike Spaulding
Secretary – Rosemary Nichols
At-Large – Mary Ellen Johnson
Donna Goyette
Fran McCashion

TRIVIA

Many members know that I often quote Bernard DeVoto, a historian who said, "The Civil War is the crux of our history." This month's puzzler is a two-parter. The first part shows that the Civil War influences our everyday lives.

The first quote is from *Rolling Stone* magazine. In a recent autobiography, he writes that he settled into reading American newspapers from 1861 to 1865 in the New York Public Library. "*You wonder how people so united by geography and religious ideals could become such bitter enemies.... Back there, American was put on the cross, died and was resurrected. There was nothing synthetic about it. The god-awful truth of that would be the all-encompassing template behind everything that I would write.*" Who is this popular songwriter?

The second part is: *How many civilians were killed in the siege of Petersburg?*

Answers should be mailed to the Editor of the newsletter. Board members are

excluded, since they know the answer to the first question. Send answers to the CDCWRT, attention Matt Farina. There are prizes for winners.

LINCOLN'S THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they can not fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has been prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well as the iron and coal as of our precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect

continuance of years with large increase in freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the imposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the city of Washington, this 3rd day of October, A.D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

The Board sincerely hopes that all had a happy, safe, and meaningful Thanksgiving.

EDITORIAL

At the Fall Banquet On November 13th, several founding members of the CDCWRT were present. They talked about their decision to formally establish a Civil War interest group. Paperwork was submitted, officers were elected, and dues were assessed in order to publish a newsletter and pay for the incidentals of having meetings. The year was 1984.

Almost immediately the membership felt a responsibility to preservation. Records indicate that in 1985, a \$25 donation was made to help restore the Civil War Monument in Elmira, New York. In 1986, the first donation was made to the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) whose main efforts were in land acquisition to preserved battlefields.

The first large donations occurred after a very successful conference at West Point, was sponsored by the CDCWRT. Donations were made to APCWS, Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), the Museum of the Confederacy, the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association (GBPA), the National Park at Gettysburg, and the U.S. Military Academy, totally over \$6000. However a bitter disagreement arose between members of the Board over the direction of monies raised. One viewpoint was to use the funds to clean the New York State Monument at Gettysburg; the other was to use the funds primarily for acquisition of land first, and objects, second. The latter position won out overwhelmingly.

Subsequently, monies were raised from book raffles, print raffles, trips, banquets, and in 1995 the sale of commemorative postal cachets. The rest is probably well known by most members. Actual donations now are approaching \$150,000. Leveraged

donations probably bring this to \$200,000. For example, the Board is considering a \$1030 donation to CWPT that is leveraged 17:1 by matching grants. Thus the \$1030 donation is equivalent to \$17,510 and will purchase 10 acres of a Virginia battlefield. Nationally known speakers are willing to speak at our meetings because of our level of commitment to preservation activities.

In 1993 a Congressional commission identified 10,500 Civil War battle sites, tagging 384 as “principal battlefields.” More than one third of these were lost then, and, *“within ten years we may lose fully two thirds of the principal battlefield.”* Those ten years have passed and instead of the \$90 million the commission recommended be spent for land acquisitions during that period, only \$20 million was appropriated and spent. CWPT estimates that it will be lucky if 10% of the 249 most important unprotected battlefields can be preserved during this next decade. At the same time, the budget for the NPS has been reduced, and many believe this imperils battlefield parks. This has resulted in cutbacks in services —*oops*—“*service level adjustments.*” So what does this have to do with our round table?

There is no national policy on Civil War battlefield preservation. There are a variety of interest groups debating the questions: how much land do we save, and how much are we willing to spend to save it? This is not a Confederate thing, or a Union thing; it’s an American thing. If we don’t protect this land, who will? *“Who will be the guardians of American history if the American people don’t do it.”* I want my grandson to see the historical battlefield, and understand what occurred there and why. This is my motivation; what is yours? Join us; support us; get involved; our goals are mutual; we are making a difference.