

# The Dispatch

Newsletter of the

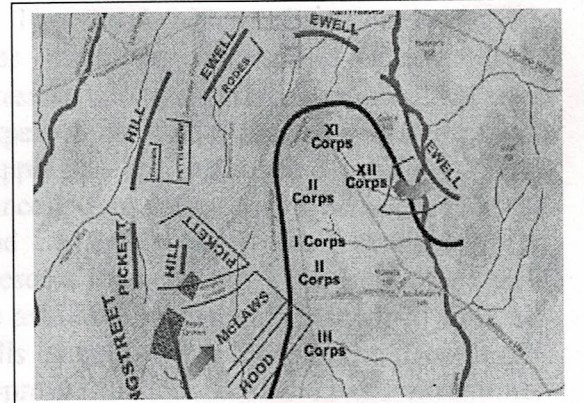
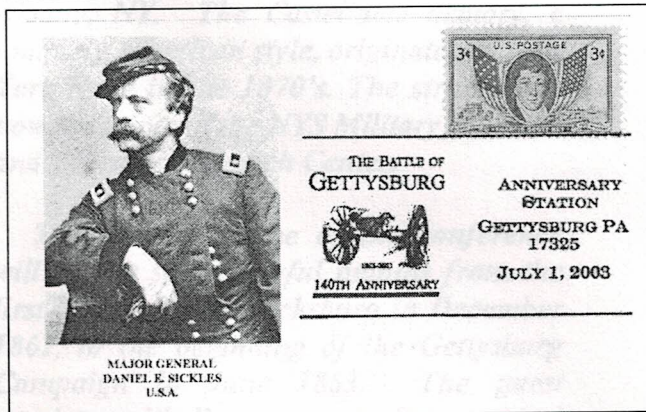
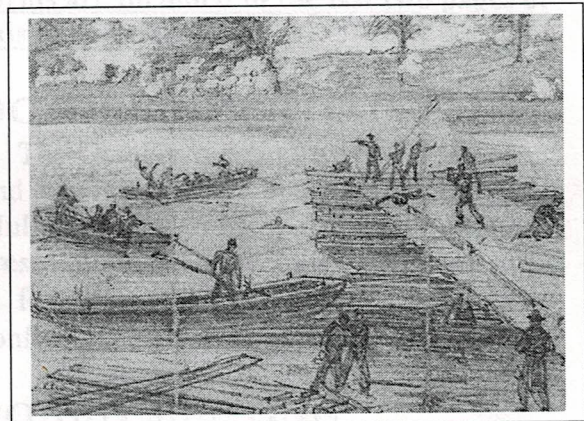
## Capital District Civil War Round Table

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

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

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*Upper Left:* New York State Military Museum in Saratoga, site of the CDCWRT conference  
*Upper Right:* 50<sup>th</sup> NY Engineers laying a pontoon bridge at Fredericksburg, December 11, 1862  
*Lower Left:* Gen. Dan Sickles, whose controversial actions at Gettysburg are still debated  
*Lower Right:* Did Lee have a clear plan on July 3<sup>rd</sup> at Gettysburg? What was it?

**November Meeting  
Friday & Saturday  
November 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>  
NYS Military Heritage  
Institute  
Saratoga Springs, NY**

**CDCWRT MEETING**

*The November meeting of the CDCWRT will be the Sixth Annual Northeast Conference on the Civil War. This year's conference will be held at the New York State Military Heritage Institute located at 61 Lake Avenue in Saratoga Springs. The date is the third weekend in November in order to avoid conflict with the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address activities. The Institute was the historic NYS National Guard Armory, which was dedicated in 1889 and was completed in 1891. It designed by architect, Isaac G. Perry (1822-1904), who was appointed in 1883 to complete the Capitol Building in Albany, NY. The Castellated armory, a uniquely American style, originated in New York State in the 1870's. The structure is now the home of the NYS Military Museum and Veterans Research Center.*

*The general theme of the conference will be the seven fateful months from the first battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, to the beginning of the Gettysburg Campaign in June 1863. The guest speakers will discuss some of the critical issues and decisions that were made during this time frame. Frank O'Reilly will talk about first Fredericksburg; Chris*

*Kolakowski will discuss second Fredericksburg; Rich Carlton will cover the Meade-Sickles arguments; Bud Hall will discuss the impact of Brandy Station; and finally, Troy Harmon will present his interpretation of Lee's battle plan at Gettysburg for the Saturday night banquet.*

*Friday nights activities will include more dramatic readings by Nellie and Bill Edmonston, a lecture about the telegraph, book signings and sales, and other Civil War items for purchase.*

*The cost is \$85 for the whole conference, including the banquet, or \$35 for the banquet alone. There will also be an opportunity to have a tour of the gun vault at the museum. Details and reservation forms are included in the last two pages of this newsletter.*

**OCTOBER MEETING**

The October meeting was well attended and the RT heartily thanked member Bob Mulligan for his Corporal Tanner presentation. Bob graciously was a late fill-in for Dana Shoaf, who had a scheduling conflict. Dana will be a speaker next spring.

**BOARD MEETING**

The October-November Board Meeting was held on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. President, Joe Stracuzzi announced that after expenses, including purchase of stamps and supplies for future mailings and cancellations, somewhere between \$10,000 and \$12,000 will be available for preservation activities. The final figure will be available next month, by which time all bills should be settled. The Board did approve three donations in the meantime: \$500 to the Rensselaer County Historical Society to assist in the up-coming Home Front Exhibit; \$570 to the Civil War Preservation Trust Hatcher's Run land

purchase; and \$580 to CWPT's Bristoe Station land purchase.

The Board also put forth the following slate of candidates for the up-coming elections at the December meeting.

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | <b>Joe Stracuzzi</b>    |
| <b>Vice-President</b> | <b>Matt George</b>      |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | <b>Lew Warner</b>       |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | <b>Rosemary Nichols</b> |
| <b>At-Large</b>       | <b>Mike Spaulding</b>   |
| <b>At-Large</b>       | <b>Fran McCashion</b>   |
| <b>At-Large</b>       | <b>Chris Kolakowski</b> |

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the December elections. Any member in good-standing, may run for any office.

## UP-COMING EVENTS

Starting Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, Remembrance Day Weekend will be celebrated in Gettysburg. The parade will be Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Members of the RT will be there to do a 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cancellation, honoring the Gettysburg Address. Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, will be the actual anniversary date. There will be a special service in the National Cemetery.

The Victorian Stroll in Troy will be held on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. A commemorative stamp cancellation will occur in the Troy Post Office, where the Round Table will again have an information table, some exhibit items, and some gift items for sale. Why not stop in to say hello. Better yet, why not volunteer an hour's worth of your time to help man the tables. No experience is required, other than an interest in the Civil War.

The December Meeting of the RT and the Annual Holiday Party will be on Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Guilderland Library. Our guest speaker will be Mark

Johnson, a career military officer and historian. He will talk about the Regulars in the Army of the Cumberland. The RT will provide the usual snacks and soda, but members are encouraged to bring some special holiday treat to share with other members at the party to follow. The annual election of officers and the board will also be held at the December meeting.

Our Spring Muster will be a 3-day weekend starting on Friday, April 24, 2004. The trip will cover the Wilderness and Spotsylvania battles. Mark your calendars NOW, and look for more details in future newsletters.

## BOOK REVIEW

This book review by Sanford Levinson, Professor of Law and Government at the University of Texas at Austin, was printed in the most recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The section is entitled: WHAT BOOK MOST RICHLY DESERVES GREATER ATTENTION?

*For me this is an easy question. The answer is **The Great South Carolina Ku Klux Klan Trials, 1871-1872**, by Lou Falkner Williams. Published in 1996 by the University of Georgia Press, it is already out of print, perhaps because readers think it a narrow book interesting only to specialists. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is, in fact, essential reading, especially at the present time.*

*Its topic is the difficulties of Reconstruction in South Carolina and how, basically, the terrorist Ku Klux Klan was able to defeat the well-motivated efforts of state and federal officials to bring about a new day in that state. Given the U.S. Supreme Court's almost willful amnesia about the realities of Reconstruction, it would be helpful if all lawyers and judges*

*brushed up on this facet of our history. But the reason I find it so important at this very instant, is for the light it casts on what is involved if one is serious about "regime change." To put it mildly, such change is difficult and expensive. Even if one has defeated an enemy on the field of battle and attained unconditional surrender, one will still have to invest immense time, political energy, and money in changing the society that has ostensibly been defeated.*

*This doesn't mean that "regime change" should never be tried; The United States would have been far better off had Reconstruction worked (though it would have required far, far more than the North was ever willing to spend in order to achieve that victory). But one ought never undertake a process of regime change while being almost willfully ignorant of its likely costs. This 147-page book by a professor of history on an ostensibly narrow topic provides far more food for thought about both past and present than many far-longer tomes written by the most famous of professors. I do feel very strongly that --- in the words of 7<sup>th</sup> graders everywhere when delivering book reports --- "everyone should read this book!"*

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

We received the following letter from the Pejepscot Historical Society.

*On behalf of our Board and volunteers, please extend our sincere thanks to the members of your Round Table for the most generous gift of cachets, delivered earlier this month by Dave Wilcox. I checked with the site manager today who told me that sales have been brisk. More than half are gone. As you requested, we will make sure that all proceeds are designated for continued restoration of the Joshua Chamberlain Museum.*

*The envelopes with John Pullen's signature are, of course, especially meaningful. We were blessed that the well being of the House was always a keen interest of John's. It is comforting to be able to keep alive the link with him a little longer through his familiar handwriting.*

*Cordially,  
Deborah A. Smith  
Executive Director*

\* \* \* \* \*

Several RT members are collection soda/beer can pop tabs for charities. If you would not mind, please collect them and bring them to each meeting where a container will be available in which to deposit them.

## **TRIVIA QUESTION**

**Trivia Question:** What do the following all have in common? John F. Farnsworth, Adolph von Steinwehr, Philippe de Trobriand, Franz Sigel, Michael Corcoran, William Gamble, Wladimir Krzyzanowski, Alexander Schimmelfennig, and Edward Ferrero.

**Answer:** This is a partial listing of foreign nationals who became generals in the Federal Army during the Civil War.

**New Trivia Questions:**  
**So you think you know the South?**

- 1. Which of the four border-states was least likely to depart from the Union?**
- 2. Which southern state supplied the most union troops?**
- 3. Which state was bordered by three slave states and three free states?**

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4. Lincoln once said he hoped to have God on his side, but he must have \_\_\_\_\_ . (which state)?
  
5. Who was the one southern U.S. senator who did not go with the South?

## EDITORIAL

The following was noted in the Old Baldy CWRT October newsletter.

*Where the @#\$% were you on September 10<sup>th</sup>? That's a simple question, and likely has a simple answer: you were NOT at the Civil War Library & Museum, listening to Roger Arthur, Hugh Boyle and Steve Wright engage in a great lecture and fascinating discussion about Abraham Lincoln. Who was there?---That's a total of fifteen people. What was your excuse?---- I've long lamented the wretched excuse for a Round Table that is Old Baldy, but this night takes the @#\$%ing proverbial cake. We gather in the finest Civil War meeting place on the planet. We have the hardest working guy in the game, who gets us world-class speakers. All we have to do is show up, figure out where to park, and partake. But we can't even do that---. I am ashamed of you weasels...Editor*

And this is from the October issue of the Civil War Round Table of Alexandria, VA. Which was a single page newsletter. The group meets at the Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site.

*This will be the last year that I will be serving as the President of our Roundtable. Sadly, with the exception of Treasurer, we have no other officers serving right now. We need to fill the positions of President,*

*Scheduler, and Secretary. If anyone would like to see the Roundtable continue on after this year, please help by volunteering to serve as an officer.*

There are two different, but powerful, messages delivered in those newsletters. The first is anger and frustration, and the second is resignation. In the first, the editor hopes to galvanize the membership into action---there is hope. In the second, I sense the president is pleading for membership participation, but there is little or no hope of action. The Alexandria RT was in dire straits a year or so ago, and as a last resort, several members stepped forward. They have not been able to sustain the organization. I wrote an editorial with a similar theme, at that time.

We are a dynamic round table with a clear mission statement. We have a large membership that enjoys the fruits of the round table's programs. However we still have a small cadre of workers and volunteers who pull it all together. We need your help! What can you do?

Support your RT by attending its meetings and conferences. This year's conference at Saratoga is a new venue for the Round Table. It's a 40 minute drive, but the day and/or evening promises to be very educational and entertaining. Bring a spouse or friend to a meeting and spread the word about *your* round table. Volunteer as a greeter or help with set up/take down and refreshments. Attend a board meeting. Stop by at a local cancellation event. Volunteer for a committee or a newsletter mailing party. A gift membership makes a great holiday gift. Let us know it's a gift and we'll dress it up nicely. The list is long, but you get the idea. I never want to be in a position where I have to write an editorial like the two above.