



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

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December, 2002



This group photo was taken during the October trip at Federal Hill overlooking Baltimore's Inner Harbor. This was the site of Fort Federal Hill, occupied by Ben Butler's troops after the Pratt Street Riot on April 19th, 1861.

December Meeting

Friday 12/13/02

Guilderland Library

Route 20 Western Ave.

Guilderland, NY

SOCIAL HOUR 6:00 PM

BUSINESS MEETING 7:00 PM

PROGRAM & PARTY 7:30 PM

CDCWRT MEETING

The December meeting of the CDCWRT will also be our Holiday Party, which will be held on Friday, December 13th, at the Guilderland Public Library. The social hour will start at 6:00pm, with a business meeting at 7:00pm. Elections for officers and board members will also take place. The scheduled program will start at 7:30pm, and the party resumes afterwards. The library will be available until 10:00pm, so please plan on relaxing and socializing.

The guest speaker for our final meeting of the calendar year will be our own Robert Mulligan, who will talk about WAR GAMING. Bob will discuss the history of war-gaming and will demonstrate an example of this activity. Every Saturday the upper two floors of the British War Museum in London are filled with gaming students of all ages as they "fight" naval engagements and land battles such as Waterloo.

Members are encouraged to bring a favorite holiday treat to share. Cookies of all types are welcomed. The Round Table will supply drinks, cups, chips and pretzels.

NOVEMBER MEETING

At the Fall Banquet, Dr. Thomas Lowry spoke about Abraham Lincoln and military justice, and his involvement with a number of courts martial where he often intervened. For example, he commuted every death penalty for soldiers who fell asleep on picket duty. In order to obtain the background for his recent series of books, Dr. Lowry and his wife reviewed and cataloged over 85,000 courts martial. His presentation was both enlightening and entertaining. The combination of a good speaker and good food, made the evening most enjoyable for the 65 attendees.

Earlier that same day the Round Table sponsored its fifth annual Northeast Conference on New York in the Civil War. James Kelly, assistant director for museums at the Virginia Historical Society, was the feature speaker. In recent years, Dr Kelly discovered the 5000 page diary and 1000 watercolor drawings of Robert Sneed. This is the largest surviving body of Civil War art, and a portion of it is on display at the New York State Museum until December 31st. Every member should make a special effort to see this unique collection.

Earlier presentations by Christopher Kolakowski and Mike Russert provided fascinating first person accounts of events witnessed by New Yorkers. This excellent conference was organized by Sue Knost, and was another example of the superb presentations that have marked Sue's tenure as Program Chair. This Round Table has a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving!

BOARD MEETING

The November Board Meeting was held on November 21st. The treasurer was absent and was celebrating his birthday, so there was no treasurer's report

The proposed slate of officers and board member will be voted upon at the December meeting. Rosemary Nichols has volunteered to be secretary.

President	Joe Stracuzzi
Vice-President	Matt George
Secretary	Rosemary Nichols
Treasurer	Paul Rivenburgh
At-Large	Cindy Schechter
At-Large	Fran McCashion
At-Large	Mike Spaulding
Ex-Officio	Matt Farina

Nominations for any position will be accepted from the floor as long as the candidate is a member in good standing and who's dues are paid up to date.

The Remembrance Day activities at Gettysburg and the dedication of Ron Tunison's statue of Elizabeth Thorn were greatly affected by the cold, dreary, rainy weekend. Upcoming events were discussed. The final meeting of the calendar year will be December 19th.

VETERANS DAY, ARMASTICE DAY, OR REMEMBRANCE DAY

At the banquet during our Fredericksburg trip, Mike Stevens, from the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust, read the following. I asked him to e-mail the quote to me so that I could print it in our newsletter.

"It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag...The soldier is a savior and a sword

against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known."—Father Denis O'Brien, USMC

Frank O'Reilly's new book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign*, will not be released until early 2003. However an autographed copy, and your personal inscription, signed and dated December 13th, on the 140th anniversary of the battle can be obtained for \$34.95 as part of an order for CDCWRT. There will be **no shipping charge or tax, and \$10.00 of the purchase price of each book goes to CVBT**. See Matt Farina, Joe Stracuzzi or Sue Knost before December 1st for details.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 8th, is the Victorian Stroll in Troy. A commemorative 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 time to help man the table.

Friday, January 10th, is the CDCWRT Potpourri Night at the Guilderland Library. Presenters will be Maxine Getty who will talk about "Mary Livermore -The War Years," Larry Arnold, who will talk about "The Garrett Smith Brigagde," and Mike Sperenza, who will demonstrate "Cartridge Making."

This is also the meeting where members are encouraged to bring any items they would like to display. If you have such items, please inform Joe Stracuzzi or Sue Knost, so that a display table will be available. This is also the night for the *Civil War Magazine Exchange*. You may donate your old

military history magazines to the Round Table, and purchase new used magazines for \$0.50 a piece. This is also *Civil War T-Shirt Night*. Please wear the new accouterments that you acquired over the holidays.

March 7th-9th, 2003 is the spring bare bones trip to Gettysburg. Mark this date on your calendar. The projected cost of the trip will be \$199 per person, double occupancy, and includes bus transportation, room, tours, and banquet at the Dobbins House. Our tour guides are expected to be Charlie Fennell and Scott Hartwig, two of the most knowledgeable guides at Gettysburg.

Because of an early Easter next year, the trip is set for this particular weekend. Hotel rates will also go up early next year. If you do not want to tramp the battlefield, the trip will take place on the same weekend as the Civil War Women's Conference in Gettysburg. We may be able to tie in with this conference, if there is enough interest in doing so. More details will follow in later newsletters.

The Full Duty Banquet in Montpelier, VT on April 12, 2003 is the annual event of several Round Tables in Vermont and New Hampshire. This year's guest speaker will be **Ken Burns**. For the past several years, a small group of our RT members have driven up and attended the banquet. This one promises to be a sellout, but a block of tickets have been set aside for our RT before they go on general sale to the public. If it appears that enough are interested, we will explore the cost of a bus, and make it a mini-trip that would include a tour of the famous graves at Lakeview Cemetery in Burlington and a tour of the Capitol building in Montpelier. We would stay overnight in the Capitol Plaza Hotel.

The cost of the banquet reservation (**\$35.00**) includes a ticket to a huge raffle. This year there will be four "big raffle" prizes. There are two Don Troiani prints, "*Fire on Caroline Street*" donated by CDCWRT, and "*Jackson Is with Us*" donated by the Civil War Preservation Trust. Additional prizes include a 3 night stay at the Brickhouse Inn B&B in Gettysburg, and a reproduction musket. Additional raffle tickets will be available at the door. A 50 seat bus will be available on a first come basis. Likewise, a block of rooms at the Hotel will be available. If you are interested in either bus and/or Hotel, a \$50 per person deposit must be made by January 5, 2003. Please state if you want bus or room, or both. This deposit **INCLUDES THE COST OF THE BANQUET TICKET**. Reservation forms will be available at the December meeting or deposits should be mailed to Joe Stracuzzi, 3 Bradbury Street, Clifton Park, NY 12065.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!!

Jon Olson, our great Webmaster, has decided to step down as Webmaster so that he may pursue other hobbies and interests. Jon will remain an active member of the RT. The establishment of the Web site has taken considerable time, but the maintenance of the site should be less demanding. Jon has agreed to help a successor take over the reins.

I, for one, can certainly understand Jon's sentiments. Jon's work on our Web site has given the RT a premier site to match its title as premier RT in the country. Over 24,000 hits have occurred, and anyone who has visited the site will find it impressive in its scope, color, sound, and links. Jon was honored as a finalist in a Web site competition last year sponsored by the *Times Union*.

We also received a letter from Mike Huber, the Community Publishing Editor for the *Times Union*. *"He's been a diligent, hard-working Webmaster, always willing to roll with the changes we've experienced with software providers, new product releases, technology bugs and other strange behaviors from the dot com world. Through it all, Jon has consistently been a real pleasure to work with."*

MISCELLANEOUS

Here are some trivia questions. There may be a gift for you if you are called upon and have the correct answer! Cards will be available at the meeting for you to write your answer upon. The first card selected at random that has the correct answer, wins the prize. There will be a prize for each question. Good luck.

Q. Who are the only two Confederate generals buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

Q. If Lee rode Traveler, and Grant rode Cincinnati, who rode Custis Lee?

Q. How many future presidents served in the military during the Civil War?

The Civil War Preservation Trust is launching its drive to acquire 1,014 acres of privately owned land at the Shiloh National Military Park, with a fair market value of \$1,566 per acre. CWPT will be reimbursed for the full amount when funds are secured from a Federal land purchase fund. However it is imperative to move quickly on this deal, closing on one of the tracts by 12/31/02. CWPT hopes to raise the initial \$107,000 by year's end. The letter from President, James Lighthizer, ends with this:

P.S. One more thing...the Capital District Civil War Round Table of Albany, New York, has already sent in a check for \$5000 to this Shiloh Project, donated in honor of one of their members who passed away, Mr. Norm Sebastian. Those fine folks would like to challenge every other Round Table in America to join them in this crucial effort for Shiloh.

DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!

Remember that starting January 1st, 2003, the yearly dues have been increased to \$25. This was announced several newsletters ago. The increase is to cover increased operating expenses. Reminders will be included in your newsletter when your renewal is due.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Once again I find myself at the end of a term as president of the CDCWRT. This year time has flown even faster. And the goals that I hoped for the Round Table are incomplete or unfulfilled. However, when I begin to list the activities that have occurred, I realize how much this Round Table has accomplished.

Membership has steadily grown to over 200. Our meetings and conference have had excellent speakers, and have been recognized as top notch. Our trips have become legendary in quality, scope, and value. Our Web site is one that any organization would be honored to have. We have continued to donate substantial contributions to preservation activities. Our national reputation in preservation activities has continued to grow. We have reached out to inactive members and have invited them to rejoin, and this has met with some success. We have surveyed our membership and have confirmed that the activities in

military history magazines to the Round Table, and purchase new used magazines for \$0.50 a piece. This is also *Civil War T-Shirt Night*. Please wear the new accouterments that you acquired over the holidays.

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unexpected as we have seen preparations going on for some days.

We had just got fixed up for winter in our huts built of logs with the chinks filled with mud and a nice chimney in the side large enough to do all our cooking, and keep us nice and warm. The weather is now extremely cold and it is aggravating to have to leave such nice quarters. I expect to suffer exceedingly if nothing befall me on the battlefield. Our fate will probably have been decided before you receive this. Col. Zook of the NY 57th commands our brigade and Gen. Hancock the Division, Gen Couch the Army Corps and Gen. Sumner the Grand Division. They are all fighting generals, and if there is any fighting to be done, we shall have a finger in it always. I believe some other Gen is in temporary command of the 2nd Army Corps.

Edward M Carrick is well, I see him every day. He occupies a hut across the _____ from me. He was not in the fight being on picket at the time. I saw Nate Sparks Sunday the day after the fight. He was not in the fight and never will be in another if he can help it. He is (in the) Hospital ward, a petty officer in the Hospital. He seemed to be enjoying himself hugely and offered me a drink of whiskey.

You don't see how I get a chance to run. Well! My back was not toward the enemy when I ran. And I did not loose ground. There was no time in the afternoon when there could not be seen plenty of men running directly from the enemy at the top of their speed. Of course a great many of them lost their live in the attempt. This was a quickly fought battle from beginning to end --- it could not have been otherwise, attacking them as we did. There was no

chance to drive them out of their holes. Therefore we went to peppering them from the best places we could find.

I will relate a little of my experience that night. Our Brigade (or a part of it) left the field about sundown. A great many remained behind with the wounded. I did not leave till after dark. Then the firing ceased, and I went across the field alone having a great curiosity to see how a battlefield seemed after dark. The dead were lying around just as they fell, most of the wounded had been removed from that part of the field nearest the road. When I was some distance from the road, and had passed our line of pickets, some distance, I heard someone speak to me. I proceeded to the spot and found a man lying under a blanket, with a dead man on one corner of it. The first words he said were these. "Friend! Friend! Can you? Will you? For my sake, for your sake, for Christ's sake, carry me to a hospital. Oh! I'm a poor wounded soldier, and I'll lie here and die before morning. Say! Will you take me to a hospital?"

His limb was awfully shattered above the knee. I told him I was alone and the mud being very deep, I could not carry him but I would place him in a comfortable place till the ambulance corps came around when they would take him away on a stretcher. Just then a drummer boy came along and I called him. I spread a rubber blanket on the ground and a woolen one on it, placed the wounded man on it. And covered him with four other woolen blankets, and left him to his fate, and went to join the reg't quick as I could, having satisfied my curiosity. Whoever roams over a battlefield after a battle will meet with plenty of such scenes as this one.

(to be continued next month)