



THE LIGHT POST

FEBRUARY, 2021



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ATTRACT YOUNGER MEMBERS? — TAKING CREDIT CARDS

Ben Keller, Treasurer
 Rappahannock Valley CWRT
 Rappvalleycivilwar.org

Early in 2017, we realized we were going to have to start accepting credit cards as payment for our dinners and memberships or sacrifice some new members, especially among the younger generations. After several weeks' research and a lot of help from many, we came up with a solution that still works today. It has some limitations, and the process takes work, but it is very inexpensive, and until the COVID-19 interrupted our dinner meetings, we were taking more credit card payments than cash and checks. The big benefit of our approach is that it requires no smartphones or internet at the point of purchase, so you can have your meeting in the middle of The Wilderness and it



A "knuckle buster," manual credit card imprinting device

works. Also, after about \$40 investment in equipment and supplies, we pay only \$35/month for the capability.

You must have a single point of contact to make contracts and procurement less confusing. This person needs a basic understanding of the US banking system and its vocabulary, and how credit cards work. You need a bank to accept and process your transactions (most

banks pay a third party for this). Finally, you need a manual credit card imprinting device, also known as a "knuckle buster." These come by various names, but you may remember the early days when retailers only had these manual imprinters. They, and the two-part carbonless paper imprinter slips they use, are available from Amazon and many other online paper supply stores.

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Official White House portrait of James Garfield

POPCORN SHOP SUNDAYS: THE JAGCWRT

When the James A. Garfield CWRT founded in 2015, the command staff decided its mission would be to embody the spirit of community service from the man who inspired their name. James A. Garfield was an itinerant minister in his community, a Major General in the Civil War, an Ohio Senator, a

Congressional representative, and finally President of the United States.

For four years, the Popcorn Shop, nestled between Cleveland and Akron in Chagrin Falls, co-sponsored JAGCWRT's symposiums, donating coffee and tea. The Shop supported many community organiza-

tions. So when COVID-19 hit, the JAGCWRT thought the least they could do to thank them was to create "Popcorn Shop Sundays," encouraging members to get what they claim is "the best ice cream east of the Mississippi."

Pre-pandemic, the JAGCWRT's regular meetings convened at

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GO TO A CONFERENCE – LEAVE WITH A SKILL

By Mike Movius

Most Civil War-related conferences we attend are focused on an aspect of the war, listening to speakers and a battlefield tour. They are usually fun and everything we wanted.

The 2021 CWRT Congress Conference will not follow that model. During our breakouts, we will teach you a skill and urge you to take it home and to use it for the

betterment of your CWRT.

They will be structured with instruction, a simple assignment and ask you to tap into your creativity to take it to a skill level.

For example, every CWRT can use someone with the skill to write an effective press release. We will teach you what an effective press release is, how to conceive and write one and then mentor you as you develop an exquisite

press release

We are asking for your ideas about what skill you and your CWRT would like to develop at the 2021 conference.

Help us make this a conference to remember! Send your ideas to mike@cwrtcongress.org



IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

POPCORN SHOP SUNDAYS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Russo's Pizzeria and Restaurant, where they were treated like family. When meetings ended, the Board created "Russos Thursdays," encouraging take-out. Other organizations have followed suit and the efforts have helped the restaurant stay afloat.

Besides the RT's love of pizza and ice cream, their members understand and appreciate the value that businesses

like Russos and The Popcorn Shop bring to their community. Their shared concern for their community may even attract potential round table members. First and foremost, the JAGCWRT continues to look for ways to give back, to engage, and to support the places that make their communities the great places they are, just as the man himself would have done.



Beautiful and serene Hazel Grove, Chancellorsville

THE MAGIC OF MARKETING IN THE ZOOM AGE!

The Brunswick CWRT recently discovered just that. Their shut-down began last April when they switched to Zoom meetings. Thinking it was a short-term fix, they offered presentations free to the public. They advertised in a weekly and daily newspaper (both free) in addition to Facebook, Instagram, web page, and YouTube. What began with an audience of 150 grew to over 350.

Looking ahead beyond December, they felt a need to protect their paying members. They cut off free Zoom and in advertisements encouraged non-members to join – and they did! They have received over 50 applications. President Mike Powell shared, "My experience is that those CWRTs that do not advertise in the local newspapers are making a big mistake, especially small town CWRTs, whose papers would love to do it."

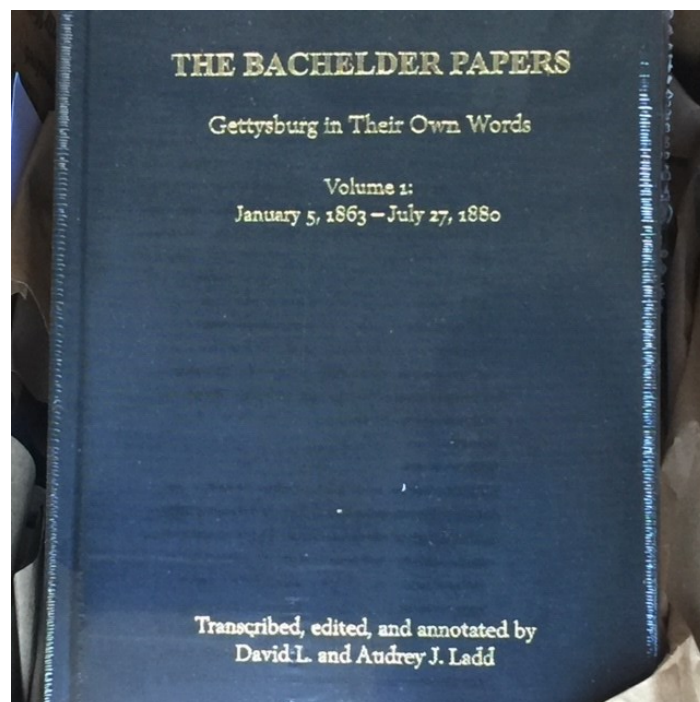
THE BACHELDER PAPERS – PASADENA CWRT GIVES BACK

In May, 2020, the CWRT Congress sent out a suggestion to its CWRT members – purchase a copy of the Bachelder Papers from publisher Savas Beatie, and donate one of the limited edition, three-volume reprint sets to their local library.

The Pasadena CWRT, which usually holds their monthly meetings in the auditorium of the Pasadena Central Library, thought this was the perfect gesture of thanks to their library host. The Board approved the purchase and the order was placed. Due to delays caused by COVID-19, the books were not able to be

shipped from the printer to Savas Beatie until late October. In November, the donation of the Bachelder Papers (pictured) was able to be delivered to the grateful History Librarian at the Pasadena Public Library.

Due to a simple, yet innovative, suggestion from the CWRT Congress, one Round Table was able to use their financial resources to improve the Civil War history holdings for their local library and provide this invaluable resource for its patrons.



If your CWRT would like more information on the Bachelder Papers, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

CWRT Congress Plans The 2021 Conference

The weekend of September 17-19, 2021, is set for the upcoming CWRT Congress Conference. It will be held at Camden County College in Blackwood, NJ, just across the Delaware River from Philadelphia. It is open to any member of a Civil War Round Table.

Our conference philosophy is to provide a friendly environment that engages and inspires. We make sure there are ample opportunities to learn different approaches

and to develop skills that will be useful to the sustainability goals of your CWRT.

Although the program has yet to be finalized, you can expect to learn about innovative ways to attract new members, develop extraordinary programs, partner with community organizations and govern your CWRT effectively. There will also be opportunities to develop plans, templates and fun approaches to a wide variety of subjects.

Watch our website for registration, lodging, program agenda and tour information at <https://www.cwrtcongress.org/2021-congress.html>. And, if you have a program request that conference planners might consider, please contact Mike Movius at mike@cwrtcongress.org.

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CWRT Congress
2502 Caitlin Court S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 481-3116
Email: mike@cwrtcongress.org

HELP WANTED

If your round table has a unique situation or is successful in any way, please share with us. Contact Carol VanOrnum at: bobcatvanorum

Board of Directors

Mike Movius, President
mike@cwrtcongress.org

Chris Mackowski, Vice President
cmackows@sbu.edu

John Bamberl, Secretary
jbamberl@aol.com

Kim Brace, Technology
kbrace@aol.com

Dennis Doyle, Outreach
d2doyle68@yahoo.com

Rich Jankowski, Ambassadors
cwhistory2@gmail.com

Michael Kirschner, Advisory Council
kirschnermk@comcast.net

Carol VanOrnum, Communications
bobcatvanorum@comcast.net

ATTRACT YOUNGER MEMBERS? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

To begin, set up about 15 minutes before the meeting starts. One Registration person takes the cash and checks, while another is dedicated to credit cards. Ask the customer what they are buying, then fill the slip out with a ballpoint pen, including goods/services abbreviations, price per item, initials of person performing the process, and total charge. Confirm with the customer the total is correct. After receiving an affirmation, place the person's plastic card into the knuckle buster, place the filled-in imprinter slip over the card, and roll the knuckle buster back and forth one time. Remove the slip, confirm legibility of the 16 digits, expiration date, and your merchant number, then request the customer to sign

the slip on the line indicated. When the customer has signed, they give you the slip, and you tear the two parts apart, hand the bottom part (the receipt) and card back to them, keeping the top part for your records. Log the transaction immediately, and keep the top slips safe. When you get home that evening, at your earliest convenience log on to your computer and into the bank's virtual credit card interface and perform a virtual transaction for each slip. Then shred the slip before a witness and log the destruction.

This process is based on trust. If the person is unknown, decline the credit card. Charge-backs by customers claiming they have been bilked are expensive for you as the merchant. Similarly, you run the risk of performing the virtual transaction long after the

meeting and finding the bank will not accept the cards. American Express and Discover costs are much higher than Visa/MasterCard, so the latter are all we accept. We cannot accept any of the various smartphone payment apps like Venmo or Apply Pay. If a customer presents a non-embossed card, you have to request permission to manually write the 16 numbers and expiration on the slip. In that case, you should still roll the slip so they have a receipt.

It looks like a lot of detailed and precise work, and it is. The federal authorities are not kind to organizations and people that don't safeguard credit cards and buyers' personal information. Keep logs of transactions and slip shredding.

You could certainly use more modern credit card processing methods if you have a smartphone, secure Wi-Fi internet access where you meet, have a knowledgeable person, and don't mind the expense. However, *this* method has been in use for years and can be used under any condition.

While we have no statistics that prove that credit cards attract younger members, what we do know is that credit card usage for meal payments is preferred by most existing members and walk-ins. Credit cards have quickly become the payment of choice once we instituted the option.