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SISTER CWRTS: COLLABORATION AND COMMARADARIE

By Rosemary Nichols, former President, current Secretary Capital District CWRT

The Capital District Civil War Round Table has a long tradition of cooperating with other organizations both in our local community and with round tables in other locations on trips and projects. This is a brief exposition of some of the things we have done over the years. I suspect these activities do not differ in many aspects from those of many other round tables who are members of the Congress.

When we were a younger organization it was our custom to take two trips a year. We would take advantage of the long weekends of Memorial Day and Labor Day for a three-day trip. Since our round table is concentrated in New York's Capital District near Albany, we are



The Bulloch Sisters: Anna Louisa Bulloch Gracie (1833-1893) and Martha "Mittie" Bulloch Roosevelt (1835-1884). Said by Pres. Theodore Roosevelt of his aunt and mother, "She and my mother used to entertain us by the hour with tales of life on the Georgia plantations."

conveniently located to allow other Civil War enthusiasts who are from other round tables or who were too far from round tables to attend regularly to join us as we congregated at a re-

gional shopping center with ample parking space in one of its remote parking lots. This had the benefit of allowing an affordable trip for Civil War

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SPEAKER SHARING: A WIN-WIN ARRANGEMENT

An interview with Jim Doncaster, Susan Hadenchuk, and Wayne Strong

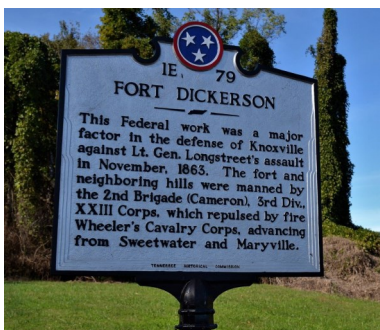
There is nothing more enjoyable to a round table audience than an engaging speaker who knows their stuff. Great presentations are the lifeblood to a Civil War round table. Yet, many round tables aren't located near battlefields densely populated by adept presenters and don't have the financial resources to pay the

travel expenses of a top-quality speaker.

Some CWRTs have found a solution in the concept of speaker sharing. One such collaboration is the Tennessee trio of the Knoxville CWRT, Cumberland Mountain CWRT of Crossville, and the Tri-City CWRT of Kingsport, all of which are located in an area rife with Civil War history. Knoxville, the oldest of the three, began in

1983 and meets the second Tuesday of the month. When Tri-City formed in 1990, they recognized that although they were 100 miles northeast, there was a reasonable possibility of collaboration. They met the second Monday of the month, and so began sharing about 15 years ago. When the Cumberland Mountain CWRT,

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Fort Dickerson, Knoxville.

SISTER CWRTS: COLLABORATION AND CAMARADERIE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

buffs in other regions of New York, Vermont, Connecticut or Massachusetts. For our round table this had the advantage of filling what would have otherwise been empty bus seats and giving us enjoyable travelers whose stories we had not already heard.

The ever-increasing cost of a large bus and the age of our members has dampened these regular trips to Virginia battlefields and Pennsylvania locations. Only rarely have we mastered the ability to carpool efficiently as an affordable substitute for a community bus.

We cooperate regularly with the Civil War events of other organizations in our region. We go to Peterboro for their Underground Railroad themed annual gathering. When the Vermont round tables host their biannual Full Duty Banquet in Montpelier a delegation of Capital District enthusiasts can be counted on to carpool join them, while taking in Civil War related sites coming and going.

On several occasions we have joined with other regional round tables and local historical organizations to sponsor presentations from nationally known speakers,

such as Jeff Shaara. Sharing speaker fees and travel costs for such well-regarded figures allows not only our round table but also our compatriots to give a special treat to their members at a price each of us can afford. An annual banquet is another special opportunity to reach out to attendees from other round tables and feature well-known speakers, such as the still lamented Ed Bearss.

We co-sponsor an annual reenactor event: a weekend in the end of summer at Schuyler Flatts, an historic regional park on the border between Watervliet and Me-

nands on the Hudson River. Reenactors come from considerable distances to spend the weekend camping in this bucolic setting and sharing their maneuvers, equipment and stories with attendees at this free event. The round table's primary contribution to this event is a picnic on Friday evening to which we invite the reenactors who have arrived in anticipation of the 2-day event starting Saturday morning.

Board member JJ Jennings and I would be glad to share more information. JJ can be reached at JJJ226@aol.com. My email address is rosemarygailnichols@gmail.com.

A UNIQUE COLLABORATION

An interview with Ed Lowe and Hannah Sher

Community involvement offers many benefits for a CWRT. Whether your round table donates time or money, the gift oftentimes benefits the donor as well as the recipient. One such collaboration is the Chickamauga & Chattanooga CWRT and the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center in Chatta-

nooga. The museum, which celebrates extraordinary heroism and sacrifice in the military, is dedicated to connecting people with history. Providing students and the community with socially interactive and immersive historical exhibits, they recently created an exhibit on the Founding of the Chickamauga battlefield. Ed Lowe and the CCCWRT saw a possible

opportunity to collaborate and they contacted the director of education, Hannah Sher. In March, the museum and round table joined with the museum's student History Club and created an event at the museum. Ed presented on the Gettysburg Address and was followed by Dr. Joe Trahan's talk on Lincoln's Civil War Leadership.

Ed felt it was "pretty exciting to reach the next generation." He enjoyed the enthusiasm in the room and was very impressed with their questions, such as, what was the importance of Gettysburg to the war efforts, and why were horses used in the Civil War.

Hannah praised the collaboration, saying "The Chickamauga & Chattanooga Civil War Round Table has not only been very generous with their financial support, but they have such amazing



Ed Lowe, President of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga CWRT

knowledge of the Civil War. It makes a beautiful partnership with our Center, the community, and the members of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga Civil War Round Table."



Members of the History Club at the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center.

2021 CWRT CONGRESS CONFERENCE AGENDA

By Mike Movius

In keeping with our past conferences, the agenda for the upcoming September 17-19, 2021 CWRT Congress conference will focus on the sustainability of Civil War round tables. This year on Saturday, we will have four general session presentations in the morning and several workshop opportunities in the afternoon.

The morning presentations will be about History Day, recruiting college students, Historic Preservation Commissions and marketing.

CWRT Congress Conference

Sept. 17-19, 2021

Philadelphia

History Day is an initiative in every state with a national component. Students in middle school and high school develop historical presentations that compete as individuals or groups for selection to the national competition. The national history day is generally held in Maryland.

Every CWRT has at least one nearby community, state, or private college. This presenta-

tion will focus on how CWRTs can attract students from their neighbor institutions to broaden their membership, but to participate in the education of young people about American history and how it affects social, political and economic lives today.

Nearly every county in the United States has a historic preservation commission. And yet, few CWRT members know about them. Their purpose is generally to recognize and preserve local historic properties and sites, offer tax considerations and perhaps to conduct archeological activities. Their members are largely appointed. This is a great forum for CWRT members to develop preservation projects or perhaps become commissioners.

Sustainability and marketing go hand-in-hand. This presentation will talk about ways that are familiar with many and some that are twists on old themes. You will learn about different ways to solicit and use assistance from current members, employ web recruitment, event recruitment, digital marketing, social media marketing, traditional marketing, networking as a marketing tool, organizational recruitment and unconventional marketing.

Our afternoon workshops are designed for partici-

pants to self-assess their current environment, learn some innovative approaches, discuss them and develop a plan or approach. Each workshop should provide attendees with a roadmap on which to base future strategies. The following workshops and their descriptions will be offered:

Board Organization – Assess, discuss and plan for a revamping of your board of directors in such a way as to enhance current strengths while minimizing weaknesses.

Member Retention – Retaining CWRT members is vital to sustainability. Learn all the elements and techniques of this important aspect of organizational life.

Mission Statements – The mission statements of most CWRTs commonly focus on education and preservation. Find out how to expand them for greater impact.

New Normal – The CWRT response to the global pandemic has been monumental. But what's next? Explore ways to capitalize on the old and the new operational imperatives.

Newsletter Improvement – Most newsletter editors are following a prescription developed by their predecessors. Evaluate and improve are the watch words here.

Organizational Change – Although change is inevitable, most of us hate to change from the familiar. Discover approaches that maximize the change management process.

Organizational Culture – This workshop is all about discovery...what culture is,



IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

how to recognize it and why it is an important aspect of every CWRT and its sustainability.

Partnerships – CWRTs have more success when they involve other organizations as partners. Learn what meaningful partnerships are all about and how to establish them.

Press Release – Anyone can write a press release. But few know the secrets to writing one that will be printed, that will be read and is impactful. This workshop is for you!

Sister CWRTs – Although the concept isn't new to many, some may be fearful that others will drive their agenda. Cast those fears away. Learn more and find a sister.

Succession Planning – Many CWRTs scramble when a leadership position becomes vacant. With this program, replacements are trained, assessed and selected.

Targeted Recruitment – The sustainable CWRT knows and understands the differences between generations. Exploit the differences, evolve your thinking and win!

As you can see, the 2021 CWRT Congress Conference will be dynamic, broadly appealing and challenging. We hope you seriously consider attending.

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CWRT Congress
2502 Caitlin Court S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 481-3117
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@comcast.net.

Board of Directors

Mike Movius,
President and Treasurer
mike@cwrtcongress.org

John Bamberl, Secretary
jbamberl@aol.com

Dennis Doyle, Outreach
d1doyle68@yahoo.com

Rich Jankowski, Ambassador
cwhistory2@gmail.com

Michael Kirschner, Advisory Council
kirschnermk@comcast.net

Carol VanOrnum, Communications
bobcatvanorum@comcast.net

Ed Lowe, Marketing
robert.edward.lowe@gmail.com

Mary Koik, Director Community Relations
mkoik@battlefields.org

SPEAKER SHARING: A WIN-WIN SITUATION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

70 miles west of Knoxville, formed in 2017, they purposefully chose to bookend their meetings on that second Wednesday.

With their schedules in place, it became a matter of finding speakers who were willing to stay and speak all three nights. Jim Doncaster, Director of Programming for Knoxville, meets with Vice President Susan Hadenchuk of Cumberland and Director of Programming Wayne Strong of Tri-City on an annual basis to determine the next year's speakers. All three agree their working relationship is strong and productive. While Knoxville meets every month of the year, Cumberland is off in the summer and Tri-City takes February, June, and December off. Ne-

“This presentation would not have been possible for us if we were unable to share travel expenses with Tri-Cities and Knoxville.”

gotiations can be lively when an exceptional speaker is available for scheduling. No one wants to lose out. Susan Hadenchuk shared, "The Cumberland Mountain CWRT was honored to have landmine survivor, Ken Rutherford, speak to us recently on *America's Buried History, Landmines in the Civil War*. This presentation would not have been possible for us if we were unable to share travel expenses with Tri-City and Knoxville."

All three round tables share equally the planning logistics and mileage or airfare. Doncaster reminisces of the days when every November brought Ed Bearss. Bearss flew into the Tri-City airport where Strong would pick him up, drive halfway to Knoxville where they'd stop and meet Doncaster for breakfast or lunch (Bearss' favorite was the Knoxville Cracker Barrel), then Strong would hand him off to Doncaster for the first presentation at Knoxville. Each round table picks up their own hotel tab, meals, and any gifts for the speaker. While Doncaster acknowledges there's never been an established financial ceiling, they do tend to draw from speak-

ers east of the Mississippi. However, it was just last year that the hopes of flying in David Dixon from California were dashed when plans fell apart through no fault of their own. They do look forward to another chance with Mr. Dixon.

Payments are given to the speaker upon arrival, whether it's airfare reimbursement or mileage. Mileage is 50¢ per mile and after estimating the trip, they will split it three ways and present a check. Doncaster is adamant that it's never been considered a problem to travel the miles to deliver a good speaker to the next site.

How do speakers feel about these arrangements? Scott Mingus, Sr., author of 23 books on the Civil War and the underground railroad, says he actually prefers presenting to multiple CWRTs. Scott has many presentations on various Civil War topics, so enjoys offering the Tennessee groups three different programs. Logistically for Scott, he prefers to drive his own car from his hometown of York, PA so that he can load it



Scott Mingus

with books to sell to the 30-50 round tables each year. As a bonus, he enjoys the time and opportunity to explore the local area that traveling by car affords.

If your round table does not speaker share, it may be worth the effort to explore. Creating camaraderie through speaker sharing is one way to enliven and engage other round tables while attracting new members.