



# THE LIGHT POST

MAY, 2022



## SLOW MOTION CRISIS

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- SLOW MOTION CRISIS- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** 1
- COMMENTARY BY A MILLENNIAL** 2
- ANOTHER GOES DARK—THE SAN DIEGO CWRT** 3
- NORTH JERSEY PARTNERS WITH LIBRARIES** 4
- SO-CAL CWRT ALLIANCE** 5
- DISCUSSION, DEBATES & TRIVIA CONTESTS** 6
- MASON-DIXON CWRT** 7

*By Mike Movius, President*

Have you noticed the slow disappearance of your CWRT friends and a dwindling roster? The astute are realizing that unless they act soon, their beloved CWRT will become a relic of the past in the next few years. This is indeed a slow and insidious crisis. For as much as we are prone to resist change to maintain what we hold dear, change is your only friend.

We know that some CWRT leaders will not “give up” their positions or alter the trajectory of their organizations. They will not allow those who were not with them as they built their CWRT to make changes that could improve their situation. We understand that. And that is where the slow-motion crisis is happening. Slowly but surely, those organizations are disappearing.

Think of it this way. The vast majority of CWRT members today are Baby Boomers. You are probably one of them. But so many of our generation are tired of the good fight and have other priorities these days. Moreover, we scorn the Millennial generation (ages 27 to 42) as irresponsible and lazy people. We don’t know how to connect with them or are even sure we want to.

And yet, that line of thinking is not only a misconception, but it overlooks a whole vibrant generation. These very people have been in the workplace for a couple of decades and are leaders of the non-profit and for-profit worlds. More and more, they are controlling, managing, and building the American future.

Most of us are not even aware that there are different generations in our CWRTs. By paying attention to the “generational issue,” you will undoubtedly realize some Gen Xers are fellow members. For those who don’t know, Generation X are those individuals born between 1965 to 1980 and today are 42 to 57 years of age. You probably thought of them as younger boomers. They are decidedly not! Gen Xers are the ones your CWRT

## IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

should be recruiting as leaders and advisors and on whom your marketing plans and efforts should be focused.

We hope your CWRT isn’t one of those in the quagmire we just described. We urge you to attend the 2022 Sustainability Conference in Kenosha this September 16-18. Become a beacon for your CWRT as you learn new and exciting ideas and skills while developing a network of friends and associates. Registration is open at <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/2022.html>



The Civil War Museum, Kenosha WI

**Register now!**

**CWRT Congress  
Sustainability  
Conference**

**Kenosha Civil War  
Museum**

**Sept 16-18, 2022**

## COMMENTARY BY A MILLENNIAL — WHAT WE WANT IN A CWRT

By Annalisa Pearson

As a millennial member of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table, I have been frequently asked by other members over the years my opinion on the growth and future of the group. Specifically, I have been asked questions geared towards retaining membership from a younger demographic. I cannot necessarily speak for my entire generation, but I can speak for myself and what I (and those close to me) would be interested in seeing from this group.

Currently, I am more interested and invested in the social and racial implications of the Civil War. In today's climate, it feels remiss not to discuss these implications. My peers and I are constantly feeling like we are on the brink of another Civil War. While discussions of weaponry, specific battles, strategy, and prominent white

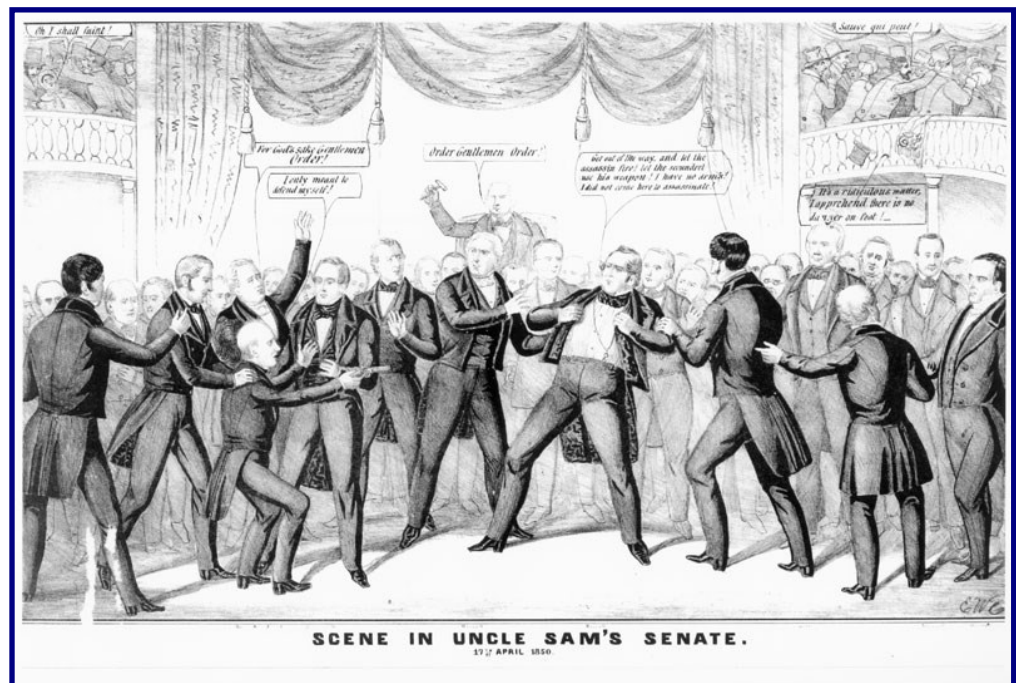
male figures of the era (sometimes teetering on the edge of glorification) tend to dominate the monthly topics, I believe younger members are looking for more variation. When talking with my peers about this time period, an interest in the history and lives of enslaved people, women's roles within the war (I was able to attend a TCCWRT presentation centered on women that I thoroughly enjoyed), myths about the war, and how to counter southern rhetoric, sympathy, white supremacy, et cetera has been shared. To clarify, I do not mean presentations center on the trauma enslaved people faced but rather a specific person's history, contribution, and impact on society at that time and today. I would enjoy hearing presentations centered on the voices, perspectives, and lives of Black and Indigenous People of Color because I think it is important and necessary when discussing this time period.

In terms of reaching a younger audience initially, utilizing higher education to entice more members could be effective. Reaching out to colleges and universities might be a beneficial way to get new, younger members in the door. If attending a presentation or two could count as credit towards a course, college students may attend with the goal of meeting that requirement and continue attending due to a developing interest.

These are just a few suggestions discussed amongst my peer group. Thank you for taking the time to read and reflect.

*Ms. Pearson is a 33-year-old substitute teacher and medical editor. She and her father, Larry, share an interest in the Civil War and have been long-time members of the TCCWRT.*

**"I am more interested in the social and racial implications of the Civil War."**



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

## ANOTHER GOES DARK – SAN DIEGO CWRT

### Farewell

*It is with great regret that we must announce the dissolution of the San Diego Civil War Round Table. Established in 1986, the Round Table has faithfully provided a welcoming forum for hundreds of its members over the decades to gather, to speculate, to argue, and to appreciate first-class presentations on a wide variety of topics. Further, its members have donated many thousands of dollars toward battle-field preservation.*

*Alas, our world has changed mightily. Technology has allowed interested persons unlimited opportunities to indulge their interest in the Civil War from their homes. Perhaps more tellingly, the actuarial tables were simply not in our favor, nor were popular attitudes. The membership rolls have declined to a point that cannot justify the continued time and effort required to maintain the organization.*

*This was no easy decision by the leadership. Two of our officers have been in the Round Table since the nineties and one since the eighties. We hope that every one of you will continue to study the “late unpleasantness” and perhaps join other groups. Godspeed to all.*

*Gordon Gidlund, San Diego CWRT*

**“Alas, our world has changed mightily.”**

**Gordon Gidlund,  
San Diego CWRT**

*By Carol VanOrnum*

This is a story that none of us want to hear. Dave Tooley, its president for over 10 years, recalled their beginnings when the *Civil War Times Illustrated* magazine shared their mailing list. Invitations to join were mailed and membership grew to about 125. The boom continued with the broadcast of *Ken Burns: The Civil War* miniseries.

Their annual Mount Hood Cemetery cleanup was canceled when the cemetery administration felt that Civil War uniforms, although Union blue, would be too controversial.

In January 2022, only 10 members remained, then six – four of whom were officers. Resigned to the inevitable, Tooley said, “That’s it. We’re not go-



San Diego, California

Yet, finding speakers in the southwest corner of the U.S. proved challenging to the board. They relied heavily on their own members to share their travel experiences or expertise. By around 2010, attendance had dropped to 30. Tooley and Gidlund felt they tried everything to retain member interest. But a combination of aging members who were unwilling or unable to drive distances, especially at night, and members resisting the zoom technology (even though it meant fresh speakers and topics) spiraled. They limped through the pandemic.

ing to keep fighting this.” Despite having a good speaker scheduled for the next meeting, Gidlund said they would have been embarrassed to bring him in. They made the decision to disband.

Aging members, unwillingness to participate in 21<sup>st</sup> century communications, and lack of good speakers or programs defeated the efforts of a few good soldiers. But the San Diego CWRT is not an anomaly. The CWRT Congress has compiled a long list of closed CWRTs around the country.

## NORTH JERSEY CWRT PARTNERS WITH LOCAL LIBRARIES—A WIN WIN

By Carol VanOrnum

The North Jersey Civil War Round Table, located in Morris Plains, NJ, struck gold in partnering with their local libraries. Rich Rosenthal, president of the NJCWRT for over 10 years, explains that since March 2020, the State of New Jersey closed all indoor public meetings during the pandemic. Members had no choice of attending a live meeting. Many of their members avoid night travel during the winter months, but they are enthusiastically willing

visitor to your library, including those from Texas, Florida, California, and Venezuela. Parsipanny agreed. Following the posting, member Bruce Blondina approached his Succasunna Roxbury Library and convinced Karen Cerreta, the Programming and Outreach Coordinator, to post their meetings.

The NJCWRT must provide their program details for the library to post six weeks in

at least 11 states and Venezuela. Round table members are encouraged to invite those viewers to consider being a member and support their programs, all for only \$39 per year. The NJCWRT membership has grown to over 150 and has the highest retention in years.

They currently partner with seven libraries in and

**“Thanks to the North Jersey CWRT for sharing their programs with us.”**

**Karen Cerreta  
Roxbury Library**

**Stonewall Jackson & the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign**

**Thursday, February 24 at 7pm**

**Reserve your spot online or by calling 973-584-2400**

**ROXBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Roxbury Public Library made their own advertisement of the NJCWRT’s event for the February 24, 2022, meeting.

and able to meet by Zoom.

Rosenthal saw that the local area libraries were holding minimal on-line events and only for their own programs, and he thought, why not offer them our programs? He first approached his hometown Parsipanny Library and after much discussion convinced them that 1) it will add another program to their calendar; 2) we don’t want your mailing list; 3) it’s free, and 4) every participant can be considered a

advance, which means both name recognition for the round table and at least one month of publicity. As a bonus, every library prints up its own flyers and posts them on their bulletin boards or electronic boards. And as a plus to the speaker authors, they’re able to reach more readers – potential purchasers of their books!

Rosenthal shares that their zoom attendance has grown dramatically, both in number and geographic location. Their February meeting maxed out at 100 and came from

around their area, which is a lot of free publicity. It also brings a sense of community service and connection for the round table members.

Rosenthal recently added a feature to the zoom meeting by inviting a representative of a participating library to speak for 10 minutes about their library and on a particular subject of local or civic interest. His February guest was Ms. Cerreta from the Roxbury Library who discussed their

programs and history in the community. She shared she was impressed that she was able to address a nationwide audience far beyond a local audience. She gave “thanks to the North Jersey Civil War Round Table for sharing their programs with us.”

## THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CWRT ALLIANCE

By Carol VanOrnum

When the CWRT Congress promoted joining forces with other CWRTs as “Sister” organizations, two of the early participants were the Pasadena and Inland Empire CWRTs. Their collaboration proved successful and advantageous. Mike Hoover, Vice President and Secretary of Inland Empire, thought further. “I reasoned I heard from round tables from around the country that we all were struggling

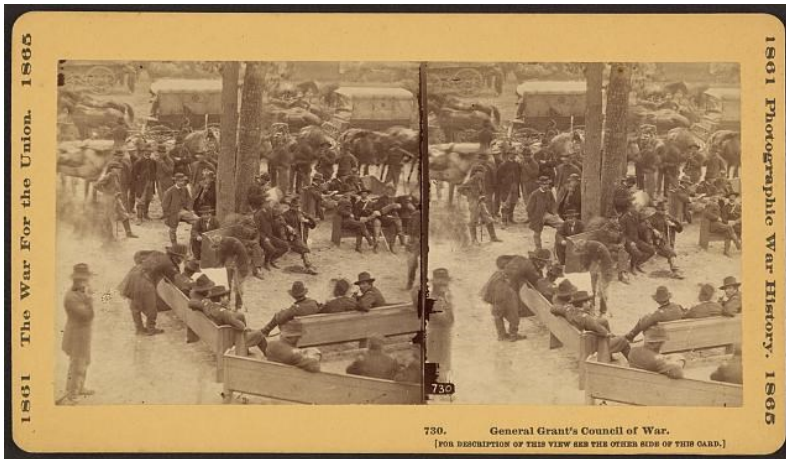
with the same issues: how to continue meetings in a Covid environment, member preservation and retention, and the unwillingness of people to “step up” and take on some responsibility. So, I thought that if our local round tables had the same issues, why not form an alliance to share our collective knowledge and experiences to improve our situations. I brought up the idea to our

president, Brian Cieslak, in mid-January of this year. He agreed with the concept, and then we reached out to Janet Whaley of Pasadena for her thoughts.” Mike invited round table leaders in Southern California, and the SoCal CWRT Alliance was born. It consists of Pasadena, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, Orange County, and West Valley Civil Warriors of Canoga Park. Sadly, San Diego had joined but disbanded

to help each other. The group came away from the first meeting feeling hopeful that the alliance could work.

They met again in March. Nick Smith, President of Pasadena, expressed appreciation for a suggestion last meeting to get new board members on board by asking individuals directly instead of sending a generic email request. He now has several new board members. They talked about the complexity of holding hybrid meetings and

Civil Warriors  
Inland Empire  
Los Angeles  
Orange County  
Pasadena



General Grant's Council of War—Library of Congress

ed in the same month. (See Page 3) The alliance held their first meeting on January 17, 2022. Leaders shared their own challenges. They discussed sharing speakers and coordinating meeting schedules. Janet challenged them to “think outside the box” about ways to provide added value for members in addition to finding new members. They realized that not all of them may have the same issues, but all of them can

agreed to continue to work on that. They also agreed to promote each other's meetings and events. And they began planning a Sunday event in June for all their members. The SoCal CWRT Alliance's goal is to be an informal resource for each other as they share concerns, ideas, and concepts. We look forward to future updates.

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## DISCUSSIONS, DEBATES, AND TRIVIA CONTESTS! ENGAGING MEMBERS IN A UNIQUE WAY

By Carol VanOrnum

In lieu of a formal speaker, a fun way to engage your members, old and new, is by holding discussions, debates, and trivia contests, either in person or by zoom. Inland Empire CWRT recently held a zoom discussion on "What if Pickett's Charge had been successful?" James A. Garfield CWRT held a "Presidential Trivia Night." But possibly one of the longest running programs is Cleveland CWRT's debate night. For the last 20 years or so in January, they hold an annual debate between members. Its conception was in response to Cleveland's unpredictable January weather which challenged speaker travels.

Their president picks a topic and advertises it at their first meeting in September. They encourage new members to participate as it's a great way to get them engaged. Debate positions are taken on a first-come-first-served basis and when five or six debaters are established, the field is closed. They have several months to prepare.

The moderator has always been the same, the very capable Honorable William Vodrey, Judge of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. He allows seven minutes each for the basic argument, followed by

three minutes to add or attack. There is a Q&A between the presenters, and in the final 30 minutes they take questions from the member audience, which can be quite challenging as they tend to throw "Gotchas" at the presenters. The winner receives "fabulous gifts and prizes" as well as a winner certificate.

Past President Steven Pettyjohn said, "It has turned into one of our best attended meetings as these affairs are usually very spirited, full of good-natured ribbing and lots of laughs along with some interesting insights." He shared that in the last two years a new member has won. One new member who joined during the pandemic and had not met anyone in person tied with another member just last year. Past topics include:

**Who is the most influential person other than Lincoln in the fight for the Union (one speaker who chose John Brown led the meeting in a chorus of *John Brown's Body* which apparently brought down the house).**

**If Lee won at Gettysburg, could he have taken Washington?**

**Would Anglo-French intervention have won for the CSA?**

**Who was the best corps commander?**

**What Civil War general who was fired least deserved it?**

**What movie or TV show had the greatest impact on how we view the Civil War (it was a tie between *Gettysburg* and *Gone With the Wind*)?**

**What was Lincoln's biggest mistake?**

### TRIVIA NIGHT

The James A. Garfield CWRT held their Trivia Night on President's Day, February 21<sup>st</sup>. Adjutant Andrew Mizesak thought "it was a rousing success, spirited with much good-natured ribbing." There were seven rounds of six questions, plus the final question. Again, it was moderated by Judge Vodrey who is also a member of their round table. Seven teams participated, including those from five historical or Civil War organizations.

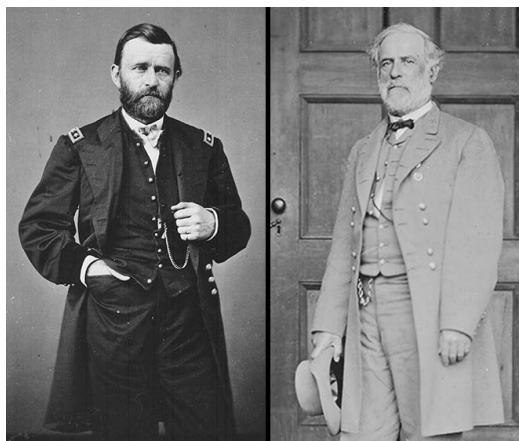
The questions and scoring process are done by Vodrey. He allows one point for each correct

One speaker who chose John Brown led the meeting in a chorus of *John Brown's Body* which apparently brought down the house.

answer. Perfect rounds of six correct questions gets teams 12 points. In the final round, teams can bet all, some, or none of their points. Mizesak shared that his team went "all in" and ended up with zero!

The categories in February included:

- ◆ Presidents and Sports
- ◆ Ohio Presidents
- ◆ Presidential Libations
- ◆ Fictional Presidents



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### TELL US

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

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In searching Civil War round tables' websites and Facebook pages, I've found some pretty interesting and sometimes beautiful images that round tables use to represent themselves. President Dr. Matt Lively provided this description of their website photo:

The Mason-Dixon Civil War Round Table is located in Morgantown, WV. The photo is an 1861 image of Union Army volunteers lined up along High Street (the main street) in Morgantown. The name of the unit is unknown.

Bill Miller, President of the Williamsburg CWRT and Secretary of the CWRT Congress added that the photo was taken from a second story window of the Massaponax Church as the Union Army was moving south after the Battle of Spotsylvania.

CVO

### Mason-Dixon Civil War Round Table

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