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THE LIGHT POST

NOVEMBER 2026

A CIVIL WAR CEMETERY

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By Carol VanOrnum

For the past six years, Mike Campbell of the Bucks County Civil War Round Table has guided townspeople through the Historic Doylestown PA Cemetery. Founded in 1849, the 33-acre cemetery is the final resting place of many local Civil War-era citizens and soldiers. Mike conducts his tour on Saturday mornings from May to October, with two tours around Halloween.

Most recently, Mike fine-tuned his tour to relate the story of a community "as it lives through the conflict" from 1861-1865. Included in his narrative is the outreach of the Ladies Aid Society, who came together to make necessities for the boys and also help with their burials. Mike's tour highlights the town's history and its residents rather than retelling the battles of the Civil War. The exception lies in his longer tours when he inserts a battle for context. In fact, there are no battlefields near Doylestown – the closest troops were the 104th PA who fought at the Battle of Fair Oaks in Virginia.

"I want to share our fundraising success and give others an opportunity to try a different fundraising model," said Mike. This focus of "telling the local stories" piqued the interest of local citizens, and as an experiment, Mike decided to move his tours to Friday nights to see if it appealed to more



people. He advertised on Facebook, reached out to local history groups, and by word of mouth drew 30 people for the first evening event. The Halloween tour drew about 50. And in July of this year, there were 90 in attendance! At $10 a head (kids under 16 are free), they raised $830 for the Bucks County CWRT Library and Museum.

Mike believes that the move to Friday night brings out young people, meeting them halfway in their realm. It also provides a fun and educational activity for families, not to mention a good date night activity for couples. Mike shared, "Something is clicking with the young people when you don't talk about battles."

Mike believes it's essential to have a well-prepared tour and a guide who is an excellent speaker with a good sense of humor. With the larger crowds, he's had to recruit volunteers to handle the money, direct people to the facilities, and manage the stragglers.

He's received many compliments on his tours. One person shared that, "The tour gave great meaning and beauty of the people who came before us."

Mike Campbell is Past President of the BCCWRT and can be reached at mkcc419@gmail.com.

A CONFERENCE OR WORKSHOPS?

By Mike Movius

The CWRT Congress regretted the decision to cancel our three-day Conference in Petersburg this past summer. We considered timing of the summer season, the numerous local tour opportunities, and evaluated the positive features of the venue. Our selection of Pamplin Park, coupled with the additional presence of Will Greene and Curt Fields with their knowledge and enthusiasm of the Siege of Petersburg, seemed to check all the boxes for success.

In order to determine how other Civil War organizations are dealing with dwindling Conference attendance, we evaluated the costs of food, transportation, and admission fees that have increased beyond normal expectations. As a result, we have concluded that some organizations will not be hosting three-day events in the near future.

Thanks to our great friends at the Emerging Civil War,-we were invited to conduct a half-day event at their annual Symposium this past August. With minimal marketing, we hosted over forty CWRT leaders and members to a half-day Workshop. We concluded that an "add-on" program to an event with a successful history, great speakers, guided tours, and tremendous opportunities for fellowship and networking, to be the right call.

Based upon that success, the CWRT Congress has resolved to return to the Workshop concept in the forthcoming year.

In April 2027, we will sponsor the Carnegie Civil War Symposium in Carnegie, PA, and host a half-day Workshop on Friday morning before the Symposium begins. Similarly, we will be returning to the Emerging Civil War Symposium at Stevenson Ridge in August as a sponsor with a Friday morning Workshop for Round Tables. Recalling successful Workshops in 2024-25, we will also be hosting one-day Workshops in Frederick, Maryland, and Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 2027.

The Frederick event will be held on Saturday, July 17th from 9am until 4pm at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. The agenda will address some of the most prevalent challenges that Round Tables are facing. At the conclusion of the event, our attendees will be treated to a guided tour of the Museum.

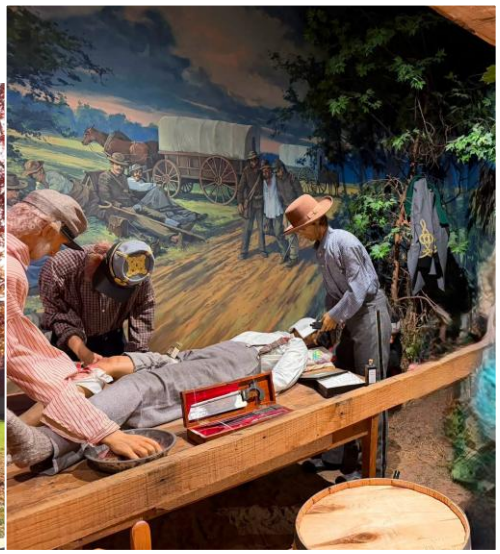
The Kenosha Workshop will take place on Saturday, July 31st from 9am until 4pm at the Kenosha Civil War Museum. We have been working closely with Civil War Museum Manager Doug Dammann, a member of our Advisory Council, to host the event. The workshop will be followed by a guided tour of this highly regarded Museum.

And as a special treat, all are cordially invited to attend our 10th Anniversary Birthday Party at the regular meeting of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table on January 14th in Centreville, Virginia. You may recall that our first one-day Workshop was conducted at the Bull Run CWRT in 2017.

We're looking forward to seeing each of you at one or more of our events in 2027.

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING





Kenosha Civil War Museum (below left) and a display from the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick (below right).

WHEN YOUR MEETING PLACE DISAPPEARS: TURNING A VENUE CRISES INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWAL

By John-Erich Mantius

What began as a vague concern about our longtime meeting place quickly became a race against the clock—and an opportunity to rethink what the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table needed for the future.
In late May, following our final meeting of the season, we learned that our longtime home at the Bloomington Event Center might be going away. Exactly when wasn't clear. As the newly elected president of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table (TCCWRT), I initially heard that we had until the end of the year.

December seemed a long way off. Then I began asking questions.

By June, we learned that the facility might only be available through September. Suddenly, "the end of the year" had become "perhaps three months."
With 155 members and a full season of programs ahead, I had no intention of waiting until the last minute to find a new home. So, I started looking.

START BEFORE YOU HAVE TO

A venue committee had already been formed, but I wanted options—and lots of them. I created a spreadsheet and began identifying potential locations, initially concentrating on the I-494 corridor near our current meeting place. And we looked everywhere. Dance halls. Repurposed movie theaters. Community colleges. Government exhibit halls. Banquet centers. Heritage organizations. Breweries. Hotels. Barns…yes, actual barns! You name it, we probably considered it.

As the list grew, it also began to shrink. Some facilities were too expensive. Others had inadequate parking, limited accessibility, restrictions on food or alcohol, or schedules that simply didn't work for us. One had the right space but required nighttime security. Another was nearly perfect but closed earlier than we needed. It was, in the words of one observer, a "dog's breakfast" of options.



Historic Fort Snelling. Photo: MNHS

But this wasn't simply about finding a nice room.

MORE THAN A NICE ROOM

The Bloomington Event Center had been convenient and, critically, offered us free rent. That was a very difficult benefit to replace.

At the same time, I had recently visited the Civil War Round Table of Fredericksburg, Virginia, which meets in a beautiful historic building associated with the University of Mary Washington. I remember thinking that perhaps it was time for us to up our game.

Could we find a venue that would appeal not only to our existing members but also to younger people who might walk through our doors for the first time?

That created a dilemma. We had to consider the needs of our existing members, many of whom valued convenience, familiarity and affordability, while also thinking about the future of the organization.

We therefore evaluated potential venues on much more than appearance. We considered cost, food and beverages, parking, accessibility, technology, administrative complexity, member experience, historical relevance and the ability to attract and retain members. We even performed a ZIP code analysis of our membership to understand the actual geographic impact of a move rather than simply declaring a location "central."

> "The process didn't eliminate judgment. It made our judgment better."

The process didn't eliminate judgment. It made our judgment better.

THE FINAL CONTENDERS

Several venues emerged as serious candidates.

A nearby VFW offered attractive economics and was familiar to some members, but its dated appearance and limited availability ultimately ruled it out.

The Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center was my personal favorite. Beautiful and impressive, it checked virtually every box and had the kind of atmosphere that could appeal to both existing members and prospective members.

Braemar Golf Course and Club was another strong contender, with an

(Continued on Page 4)

WHEN YOUR MEETING PLACE DISAPPEARS: TURNING A VENUE CRISIS INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RENEWAL (continued)

(Continued from Page 3)

excellent facility and many attractive features. But its food and beverage minimums created too much financial risk if attendance declined during the transition.

And then there was Fort Snelling.

Fort Snelling had been on our list from the beginning. In many ways, it was the obvious historical fit for a Civil War Round Table.

There was, however, a practical problem. The walk from the parking area to the Plank Museum, where we would meet, was longer than at some alternatives. For a membership with an average age of roughly 75, that mattered. Fortunately, Fort Snelling offered golf-cart transportation from the parking area during the non-winter months.

Still, Fort Snelling checked almost every other box. And when we considered the complete picture—including its extraordinary historical connection to our mission—it became increasingly compelling.

There was just one problem: the economics.

We had prepared a recommendation to the Board based primarily on the Masonic Heritage Center and Braemar, with Fort Snelling included because of its historical significance but considered out of contention because of cost. Then, within hours of sending the recommendation, Fort Snelling unexpectedly responded.

They couldn't quite match the Masonic Heritage Center's hourly rate, but they came close. With a preferred caterer we had already interviewed, our food costs would also be somewhat lower. Suddenly, the overall economics were nearly a wash. And the historical alignment was exceptional. Fort Snelling became the leading contender within a matter of hours.

MAKING THE DECISION

The Board met in July. We brought the research, financial information, scoring system and recommendation. The Board approved the motion to select Fort Snelling as the TCCWRT's new home.

We then finalized the agreement before notifying the other finalists. Fortunately, the process went smoothly, and we were able to thank the other organizations for their time and consideration.

Our first meeting at Fort Snelling took place this past September and we're looking forward to ending the year on a successful note.

THE HARDEST PART WASN'T CHOOSING THE BUILDING

The membership reaction was, for the most part, relief. There was also some unhappiness. And that shouldn't be surprising. The average drive would increase by roughly three to six minutes for many members, parking would be different, and the walk to the meeting room would be longer. Our meals would now be buffet-style rather than served at the table, and some familiar conveniences would disappear.

None of these changes is catastrophic. But collectively, they represent something significant: **Change.**

And perhaps the most important lesson I learned through the entire process is this:

A venue decision is not really about a building. It is about people.

We had to balance what works for our members today with what will help the Round Table thrive tomorrow. Sometimes those goals are at cross-purposes. The most comfortable venue for today's membership may not necessarily be the venue that helps us attract new members and remain vibrant ten years from now.

Time will tell if the Historic Fort Snelling will have been the right decision, but we are very pleased to have found a home and grateful for all of their assistance to make us feel welcome.

We didn't arrive there by accident. We started early. We gathered the data. We considered the financial and human consequences. We evaluated the alternatives against consistent criteria. And we made the decision knowing that not everyone would be happy.

> "A venue decision is not really about a building. It is about people."

That's the mixed bag that comes with organizational leadership. You can't always make everyone happy. But you can make sure that, when the time comes to make a difficult decision, you have done the work to make the best decision you can.

And perhaps that is the real lesson of our venue crisis:

The best time to look for your next meeting place is before someone else decides you need one.

John-Erich Mantius is President of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table.

ROANOKE, KENTUCKY, AND FREDERICKSBURG RECEIVE AWARDS

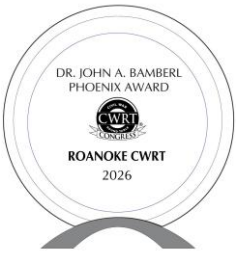
By Carol VanOrnum

The CWRT Congress presented three local Civil War Round Tables with Awards recognizing their inspirational efforts to adapt, adopt, and establish strategies for sustainability.

On September 8, 2026, CWRT Congress Director David Hamon presented the Roanoke CWRT with the 2026 *Dr. John Bamberl Phoenix Award.* Two years ago, the RCWRT faced extinction due to low attendance, inadequate paid memberships, and scanty finances. Due to the united efforts of the 24 members, membership has grown to 61 – a 154% increase! President Alicia Pryor and Vice President Kevin Donovan received this Award.



Left to right: CWRT Congress Director David Hamon, President Alicia Pryer, and Vice President Kevin Donovan





CWRT Congress President Mike Movius and President Bill Farmer

On September 21, 2026, CWRT Congress President Mike Movius presented the 2026 *Matthew Borowick Marketing Award* to Kentucky CWRT President Bill Farmer for their successful marketing of their Round Table by using a variety of methods and channels, including newsletters, website material, and an expanded Membership Dues Sponsorship Structure with rewards and recognition for participants.



The CWRT Congress congratulates the Roanoke, Kentucky, and Fredericksburg Civil War Round Tables for their outstanding efforts to enhance their growth and sustainability.



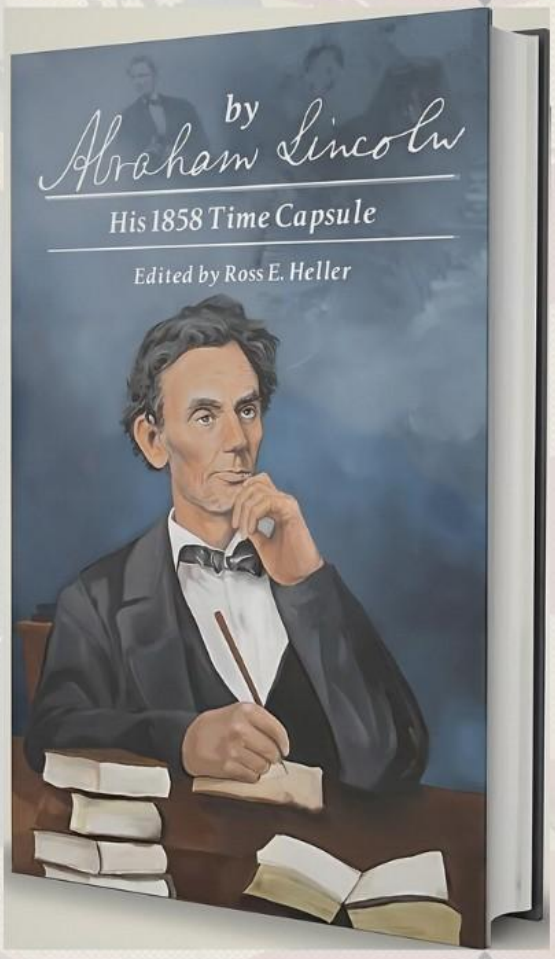
On September 23, 2026, Mike Movius also presented the 2026 *Wallace L. Rueckel Innovation Award* to President Jerre Wilson of the CWRT of Fredericksburg for their multiple innovative efforts, including, but not limited to, creating comprehensive administrative procedures that would address the full-time functions of planning organizational issues surrounding effective management of all the Round Table's activities, including finances and day-to-day functions.



President Jerre Wilson and CWRT Congress President Mike Movius

Discover Lincoln's 1858 Time Capsule

by Abraham Lincoln: His 1858 Time Capsule



SPECIAL OFFER:
Author-signed soft cover FIRST EDITION, originally $34.95;
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This book could be your curriculum guide.

It contrasts Lincoln's 1858 views on slavery and negro equality with those of Sen. Stephen A. Douglas.

Editor/Author Ross E. Heller is also available by Zoom or in-person to tell the book's story: "Unearthing Abraham Lincoln's 1858 Time Capsules."

He can be reached at info@byabrahamlincolnbook.com.

MEET KELLY BOYER SAGERT

By CWRT Congress

Book awards are always worthy of attention and accolades. Recently, Kelly Boyer Sagert of the Quincy Gillmore Civil War Round Table of Elyria, Ohio, received such honors. We posed some questions for Kelly.

CWRT Congress: You recently had some honors given to a book you wrote. Tell us more about that.

Kelly: *Wells Waite Miller and Me: An 8th OVI Civil War Biography* won the San Francisco Book Festival Award 2026 in the biography category and was a finalist in the history category. The book was also a finalist in the Next Generation Indie Book Awards 2026 in the history category and a finalist in the 2026 Storytrade Book Awards in the biography category.

This book shares the story of my seven-year search to reconstruct the life of a forgotten Civil War hero. Wells played key roles at both Antietam and Gettysburg with his name vanishing from retellings of Civil War history. Throughout this research and writing journey, I have connected with several of his descendants—all wonderful people.

CWRT Congress: How long have you been writing?

Kelly: I've worked as a professional writer for thirty-six years, writing and ghostwriting books, penning scripts for plays and documentaries, creating blogs, business/marketing material, and so forth. I wrote the script for the Emmy-Award-nominated film, *Trail Magic: The Grandma Gatewood Story*, and served as scriptwriter and assistant producer for *Victoria Woodhull: Shattering Glass Ceilings* that won the Boston Film Festival Award and appeared at the Cleveland International Film Festival. Here are more details: https://kbsagert.com/about-kelly/

CWRT Congress: Those projects aren't related to the Civil War. How did your focus on the Civil War come about?

Kelly: I've been fascinated by Civil War history since elementary school! I live along Lake Erie where plenty of Underground Railroad history exists, and that has become one of my writing focuses whenever I have the choice about what to write (other than writing what an editor or business client needs). I want to continue to add to the body of history-related research and writing, bringing forgotten people back into the spotlight.

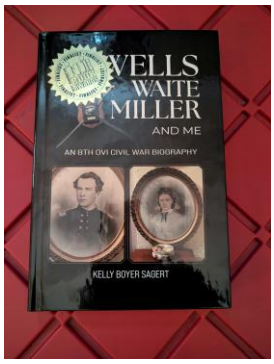
From a practical sense, I'm always balancing the need to write what brings in income with passion writing like *Wells Waite Miller and Me: An 8th OVI Civil War Biography.* People matter to me, and I believe that even those from the past deserve to have this generation serve as witnesses to their lives. This belief drives my passion to research and write about people from the past—or, as I say, I am driven to speak their names.

CWRT Congress: Tell us about your role in the Quincy Gillmore CWRT. Do you use your skills to help your organization?

Kelly: I'm the outgoing president of the QGCWRT. We're a small group with only a few people able to serve as officers, so I am also the incoming vice president. As VP, I help establish programs, and I use my writing when crafting letters to the group, press releases, and other marketing material.

CWRT Congress: What is your educational background? A history major perhaps?

Kelly: I have a BA in psychology from Bowling Green State University with a concentration in communications—followed up by two years of college business courses. Regarding my psychology degree, my high school counselor said my aptitude testing clearly showed I should go into journalism—but I thought that sounded like endless homework. So, I got a degree in psychology and, when my master's program was about to start, I realized I didn't want to work in that field. I eventually recognized that I'm fascinated by people and writing about them. My counselor had been absolutely correct.



CWRT Congress: What is your next Civil War project?

Kelly: I'm currently writing a book titled *Northern Ohio Mysteries* for History Press where I explore fifteen mysteries focused on lost identities, three of which are Civil War stories. When writing a book like the ones I've mentioned, it can be challenging to know how deeply to go into a story versus how widely within a designated word count. Rabbit hole research is so enticing!



CWRT CONGRESS AT ECW

By Jared Peatman

The Civil War Round Table Congress firmly believes in the value of partnerships among organizations, and on August 7 was pleased to partner with the Emerging Civil War group to host a free seminar before their signature weekend-long event.

Our morning seminar focused on two topics of relevance to all Round Tables – recruitment and retention of members. We were pleased to be joined by representatives from 13 Civil War Round Tables who gathered to share their ideas and gain some new ones in these two areas.

Recruitment is a huge topic with many facets, but in the hour dedicated to the subject we focused on three things:

1. Making recruitment the job of every Round Table member, not just an appointed person or committee.

2. How to make an effective "pitch" for your Round Table, and how to ensure every member has the tools to do so.

3. Strategies to incentivize new attendees to attend three meetings, thereby increasing the odds they become a regular member.

Under the first point, we encouraged a strategy of asking members to share what they have done to recruit others, and then to offer a small token of appreciation such as free raffle tickets for those who have made an attempt to spread the word. In terms of the "pitch," we shared various ideas about what should be included in the pitch and then gave folks a chance to practice their pitch and get Input from their colleagues

Several attendees noted the importance of adapting the pitch to the interests of the prospective member – which requires first asking what things they might find intriguing. In short, the pitch isn't about *us* and why we enjoy the Round Table, it's about *them*, *their* interests, and what *they* might find engaging. Lastly, we watched and discussed the applicability of a video from restauranteur John Taffer that lays out a plan to get potential "customers" to visit not just once but three times, thereby drastically increasing the odds they will continue to come back. Let us know if you'd like to see a copy of that video.

For the second hour, we focused on "Retention" of members. One of the key points that arose during this session was that members join Round Tables for all sorts of different reasons. Some like the social aspect of gathering in a group, some like a good meal, some enjoy the charitable or public service work Round Tables do, and of course many enjoy hearing about the past. Structuring your events in such a way that there are multiple draws is one way of boosting the odds of retaining members. Secondly, several of the Round Table members present noted how important it was to ensure that the programming on offer was of the highest quality, and therefore that speakers need to be heavily vetted before a Round Table puts them on their schedule. Some folks may be great historians and authors, but ineffective public speakers. Asking for or tracking down videos of actual presentations is a best practice in terms of vetting the speakers.

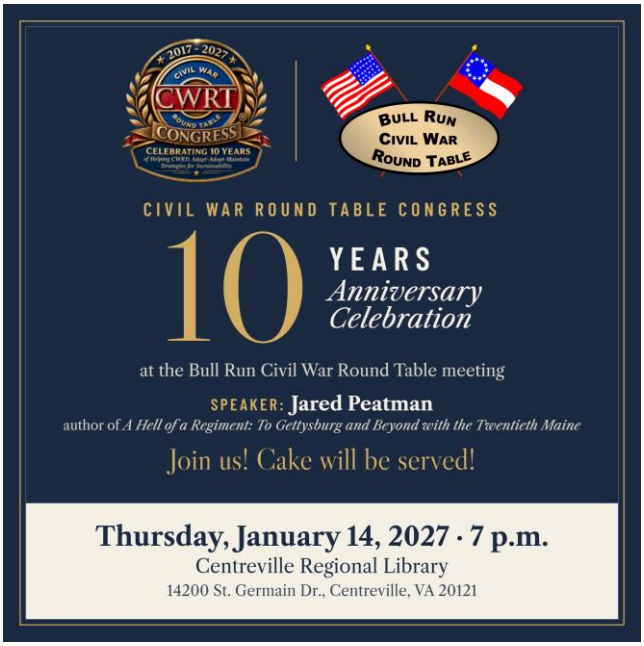
One theme came up as a best practice for both the "Recruitment" and "Retention" pieces, and that is the necessity of creating a welcome

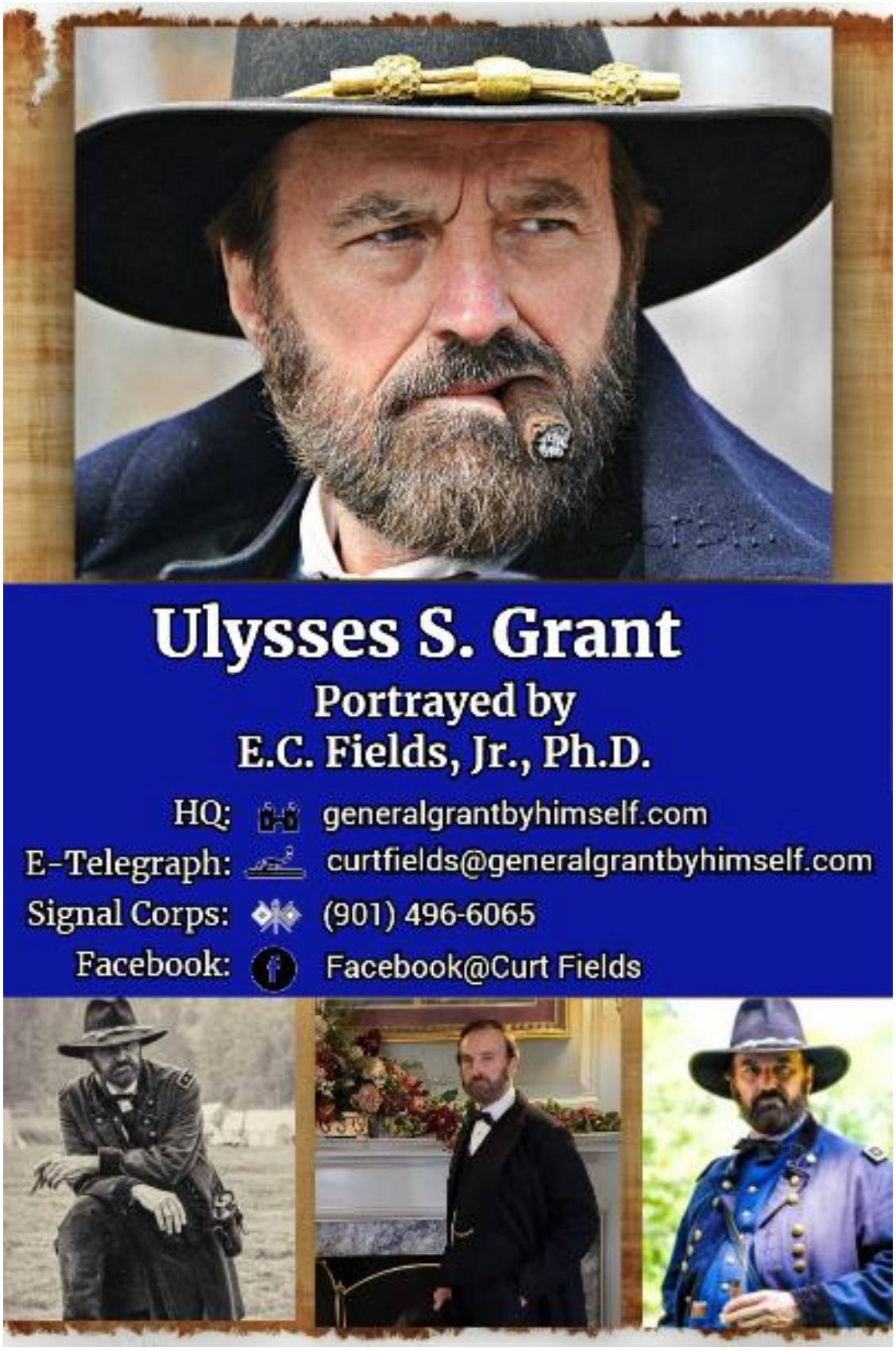


environment for both new and returning members. Having someone (or multiple people) stationed at the door to great folks as they arrive and to ensure that everyone feels a part of the group is essential. Thinking intentionally about where new members are seated – with gregarious members, or with board members, or at the head table – is something all groups should consider.

Our time together flew by, but it was encouraging to hear all of these good ideas and to see representatives of various Round Tables who had never met before exchanging cards and making plans to stay in touch going forward. With 200 or so Round Tables in existence, there are an awful lot of good ideas out there just for the asking. We will be hosting more seminars like this in the summer of 2027. Keep an eye out for our upcoming announcements about dates and topics!

Jared Peatman, Ph.D., is a Board Director of the CWRT Congress.




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THE HOUSATONIC CWRT

By Carol VanOrnum

In October 1990, the Reverend Charles Smith of Huntington CT, recorded the Ken Burns PBS Civil War series. He invited a few friends to view it together – one segment each week. Many friends showed up for the Monday night programs. Occasionally, before a segment aired, a viewer would share a bit of Civil War history with the group. Everyone enjoyed the weekly events.

The Reverend wanted to maintain the momentum and suggested the establishment of a Civil War Round Table. Only three people – George Geer, Craig Heyse, and the Reverend Smith – attended the organizational meeting, but they were determined to succeed. The Housatonic CWRT, named after the great river that flows from Massachusetts to Long Island, was born.

Geer volunteered to serve as President with Heyse serving as Vice President in charge of programming. They chose the second Tuesday between September and June to meet. Their programming choices were creative, e.g., their first meeting was a short presentation on the Great Locomotive Chase, followed by a showing of the 1956 Walt Disney movie starring Fess Parker. They delighted in hosting an enthusiastic group with coffee and refreshments – the highlight being Mrs. Geer's brownies.

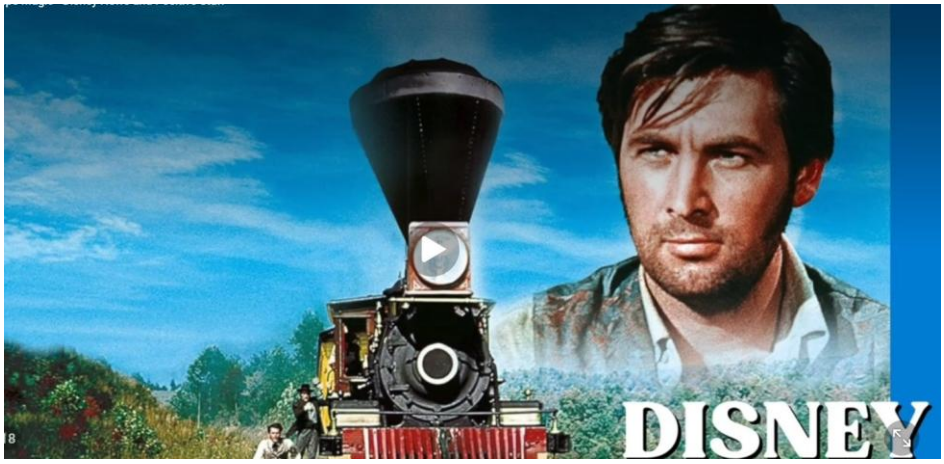
After the first year, the Reverend retired and moved to Rhode Island, founding the CWRT of Rhode Island. But the Housatonic CWRT carried on, changing venues over the years, all for the betterment of the organization. They never charged dues, instead passed the hat as needed. They made it work.

But, like many organizations in 2020, the Pandemic hit them hard and Housatonic did not survive. The last program was held in March 2021.



George Geer with the Colonel Charles Lambert Russell monument. Col. Russell, of the 10th Connecticut Infantry Regiment, was a prominent Union commander who became the first regimental commander from Connecticut killed in combat during the American Civil War.
https://appx.archives.ncdcr.gov/findingaids/PC_5121_Charles_Lambert_Russell_.html

After the passage of a year the former Housatonic-members moved on to join nearby Round Tables.



Editor's Note: The Pandemic pummeled many businesses and organizations, leaving only the strongest or most viable to survive. The Housatonic CWRT was one such organization that was unable to carry on. But the CWRT Congress has been, and will be, there to help. As we approach our tenth anniversary in 2027, we continue to work with diligence to help local Round Tables find ways to strengthen their organizations and thrive. And in the Housatonic case, we can also assist displaced members find new homes within which to celebrate American History in the Civil War.

CURIOSITY ABOUT OTHER CWRTS: A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR YOUR OWN RT

By Kevin C. Donovan

There is a scene in an episode of *Ted Lasso* that strikes me as good advice for Round Tables seeking to improve themselves. "Be curious, not judgmental," Ted quips. I am always curious about what other Round Tables are doing, what concepts and initiatives work for them and what my own Roanoke CWRT might be able to adopt. The CWRT Congress is a valuable resource in that regard, as one of its goals is sharing information on Round Table "best practices."

But I have found another ready source of useful information–Round Table websites and newsletters. It is surprising how many excellent ideas can be gleaned simply by satisfying one's curiosity through periodic reviews of these resources. Some examples make the point.

Recently I was scanning the Bull Run CWRT website in connection with offering to speak to them. I also was curious about that Round Table generally. I discovered that their website contains information on a high school scholarship program they run, including detailed rules, an application form, and a wonderfully eye-catching advertisement. Their material provides valuable ideas for running a successful program that surely helps draw younger people into that Round Table. The discovery also led to discussions with one of their members on the challenges they faced in setting up the program and how to overcome such. It all was a very valuable experience that might one day result in Roanoke setting up its own scholarship program.

Also, I recently learned that the CWRT of the District of Columbia sponsors a "Edwin C. Bearss Preservation Award," a $2,500 grant available to qualified applicants to assist in preservation of a Civil War site. Armed with this information, I contacted a local mayor on behalf of our Round Table. I suggested that D.C.'s grant money could assist the city's ongoing project to memorialize an African American cemetery that has the graves of several USCT veterans. This outreach prompted a warm thank you from the mayor, who appreciated our Round Table's help. It helped us build a new relationship within our community.



Two members of the Roanoke Civil War Round Table recently participated in a film for Lynchburg at War. Betty Shideler and Linda Breckinridge portrayed widows attending the funeral procession of Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson.

Review of Round Table newsletters also has generated many useful ideas. We have learned how other Round Tables engage with their members, including articles highlighting individual members, listing birthdays, and the use of surveys on member concerns. Other newsletters reveal regular fun contests, such as asking members to identify a person or site in a photograph. As I recall, there even was a Civil War crossword puzzle offered in one newsletter. All good ideas worth considering.

Reviewing Round Table websites and newsletters generates other useful information, including identifying new speakers and topics, what types of activities are being tried (*e.g.*, field trips, preservation initiatives), whether they have pre-meeting dinners (and how they handle logistics and costs), and even what each Round Table charges members. We learn how other Round Tables organize their websites. Again, this information can help us in Roanoke consider how to address the same issues, by learning what our colleagues already are trying. We will not judge those efforts; we simply observe and learn, by being curious.

> **"I am always curious about what other CWRTs are doing… and what my own CWRT might be able to adopt."**

Many Round Tables put their newsletters on their websites. I also am a member of several Round Tables (Jersey Shore, Shenandoah Valley, Twin Cities, United Kingdom) and so receive their newsletters, which I read with interest to learn how they operate.

Ted was right. Be curious. Applying curiosity towards other Round Tables' operations is a great, and *cost-free*, way to learn how to run a successful Round Table.

Kevin C. Donovan is Vice President of the Roanoke Civil War Round Table and Book Review Editor for Emerging Civil War, emergingcivilwar.com.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

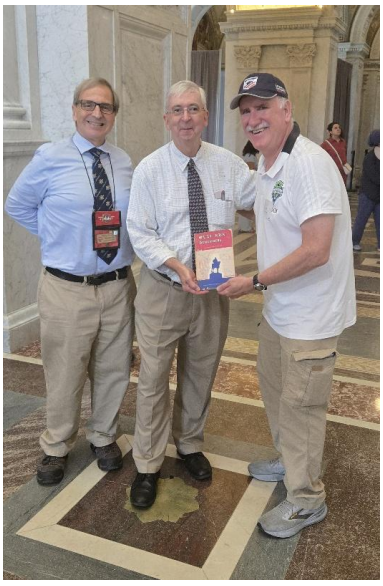
By Mark R. Terry

The May 2026 cover story of *The Light Post* was the article "CWRT Friendships: Past & Present." It was the story of a Civil War history book discovered in a Seattle area storage that was the personal copy of the author, a former superintendent of Manassas Battlefield Park, Joseph Mills Hanson. Hanson had given this book to his good friend Francis Van Natter. Both were members of the CWRT of the District of Columbia in the 1950s. A yellowed newspaper clipping from 1956 was found inside, describing a Round Table meeting where Hanson was given an award. Curious, as a long-time member of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table, I wanted to see if the CWRT-DC was still around. The CWRT Congress put me in touch with their past president, Kurt DeSoto. Because of our common interest in Civil War history as well as our passion for Civil War Round Tables, Kurt and I hit it off right away and began a friendship, separated by a continent.

The story might have ended there except for one thing: Our family had been planning a 15-day trip to the east coast: Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York City and Plymouth, Massachusetts. As I thought about the book and its unique connection to the CWRT-DC, I began to feel strongly that the book needed to be returned to them. I contacted Kurt and told him what I planned to do.

We flew into Washington, D.C. on July 19 and had reserved a tour of the Capitol on July 21. Kurt asked us to add him and a friend from his CWRT, Paul Mazzuca, to the tour. Paul is a retired lobbyist, but he is also a Board member of the "Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC." My wife Kim and daughter Lorena and I took the Metro to Union Station and walked down to the East entrance to the Capitol. It was a great tour, augmented by Paul's experience and insights. In addition, Paul also took us on a tour of the Library of Congress.

During our tour, I presented the book to Kurt and the CWRT-DC on behalf of our PSCWRT. **I stood with Paul (left) and Kurt (center)**, and Lorena took a photo of the occasion. Mission accomplished!



Since that time, the PSCWRT board has agreed to a proposal to start a "Sister CWRT" relationship between our two organizations. Given the distance between "the two Washingtons," it may mostly be participating in Zoom meetings reciprocally and being available to help guide or host CWRT members when they either visit the Washington, D.C. area, or the Pacific Northwest. It will be interesting to see where this new friendship takes us!

Mark Terry is currently the past president and editor of the Washington Volunteer, the newsletter of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table in Seattle, WA. He and his wife Kim have been members since 1994.

JOIN US FOR OUR FRIDAY NIGHT & GIVING TUESDAY PRESENTATIONS

NOVEMBER

KELLIE GORMLY
CEASE FIRING: LIFE & DEATH AT THE SWOPE MANOR
FRIDAY Nov 6 @ 7 PM EST

GIVING TUESDAY EVENT
LARRY MCCLUNEY
NORTH MISSISSIPPI RAILROAD CAMPAIGN
TUESDAY Nov 10 @ 7 PM EST

CHRIS J. HARTLEY
CONFEDERATE GENERAL D. H. HILL: A MILITARY LIFE
FRIDAY Nov 13 @ 7 PM EST

DR. CURT FIELDS
1868 - PRELUDE TO THE PRESIDENCY
FRIDAY Nov 20 @ 7 PM EST

DECEMBER

STEVE EDEN
CRISIS AT ANTIETAM: THE CORNFIELD & WEST WOODS SEPTEMBER 17, 1862
FRIDAY Dec 4 @ 7 PM EST

DAVE SCHRADER
THE NEWS! THE NEWS! REPORTING IN THE CIVIL WAR - THE NORTH
FRIDAY Dec 11 @ 7 PM EST

JASON BRUENING
LEGACIES OF LIBERTY: THE FOUNDING FATHERS' INFLUENCE ON THE CIVIL WAR GENERATION
FRIDAY Dec 18 @ 7 PM EST

JANUARY

MELISSA WINN
DEAD LETTER OFFICE IMAGES: THE CIVIL WAR'S LOST SENTIMENTS
FRIDAY Jan 8 @ 7 PM EST

CAROLYN IVANOFF
CORNELIA HANCOCK'S CIVIL WAR
FRIDAY Jan 15 @ 7 PM EST

ADOLFO OVIES
THE BOY GENERALS - SHENANDOAH TO APPOMATTOX
FRIDAY Jan 22 @ 7 PM EST

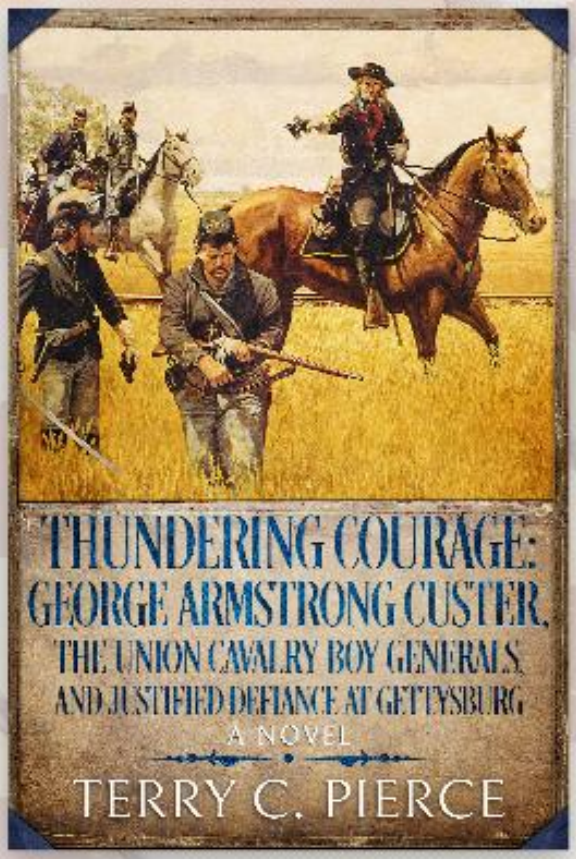
STEPHEN G. EVANGELISTA
FOREVER SILENCED: THE STORY OF THE GETTYSBURG GUN
FRIDAY Jan 29 @ 7 PM EST

Why is *"character"* the heart & soul of leadership?

How do you respond to a *"Without Warning"* moment?

Can a battlefield order ever be *"Justifably Defied?"*







To learn the answer to these thought-provoking questions, read the first two novels of Dr. Terry C. Pierce's (Captain USN, retired) Gettysburg Trilogy. Both meticulously researched works examines the battle through the lens of the character and leadership displayed by the key Union soldiers and officers during this pivotal battle.

To reach Terry Pierce or arrange for him to speak at your CWRT email him at: PierceTerryC@gmail.com or at:

www.terrycpierce.com

GRANT INITIATIVES PROJECT UPDATES

By CWRT Congress

In 2025, the CWRT Congress awarded six $250 grants to Civil War Round Tables which proposed initiatives in the areas of Fundraising, Marketing, and Historical Research. The recipients provided regular updates on their projects.

Three of the CWRT award recipients have successfully completed their projects.

Quincy Gillmore CWRT used their Marketing grant to create and distribute tri-fold brochures and business cards and create engaging recruitment posters for an annual Taste of History event. They felt they had reached a lot of people, hopefully resulting in new members.

The Tennessee Valley CWRT created printed materials to support their recruitment efforts. They learned a lot about what is effective in recruiting new members (word of mouth) and that rack cards played only a supporting role in recruitment, noting that there is greater value when the cards are strategically placed.

The CWRT of Mid-Ohio Valley Historical Research Initiative grant allowed their CWRT to create a Marietta Militia Historical Marker in honor of the Battle of Buffington Island on July 19, 1863. Together with other organizations, a memorial service was held along with the dedication ceremony on July 18, 2026. The CWRT deemed it a great success with more than 170 guests in attendance.

There are two CWRTs with projects still in the works.

The Knoxville CWRT continues to research and plan for the developing of the Battlefield Loop of Armstrong Hill, the battle occurring in November 1863. Although the City of Knoxville is stalled regarding funding for the project, the KCWRT has put together a team of volunteers so that they might present the city the option of allowing them to start developing the site while they wait for funding to improve roads, create adequate drainage capabilities, and other site and safety improvements.

The KCWRT team includes other civic organizations that can tap into manpower resources to build rifle pits, clear site lines, construct paths to sites/signage, etc.

The Inland Empire CWRT is continuing to raise funds, and here is their report from President Mike Hoover:

I am happy to share an updated report on our grant-award fundraising effort. As you know, this event benefits the Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association (WLMA), which administers the Lincoln Memorial Shrine and Research Center in Redlands, California. The funds raised will help us acquire historical artifacts for the Shrine, the only museum west of the Mississippi dedicated solely to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

We are incredibly moved by the generosity shown so far. As of October 1st, total donations have exceeded $3,400. We plan to promote this event again starting in November, offering a free ticket to our 40th Anniversary and Symposium and one year of free membership for a donation of $500 or more. Not only have our members contributed to the fundraiser. but several of our past presenters and other Civil War Round Tables have, too. With three months remaining before we present these donations in January 2027, we want to build on this momentum and reach our $5,000 goal. If you haven't had a chance to contribute yet, we would love your support as we work toward this milestone. You can donate easily by visiting our homepage at inlandempirecwrt.org.

The Inland Empire Civil War Round Table remains deeply grateful to the CWRT Congress for the grant seed money that jump-started this effort. Thank you to everyone who has helped us support future generations' education.



As with every year, we are sharing 50% of all contributions with the American Battlefield Trust for their activities in interpretation and restoration. Please donate generously and often. It's up to us to preserve battlefields AND Civil War Round Tables.



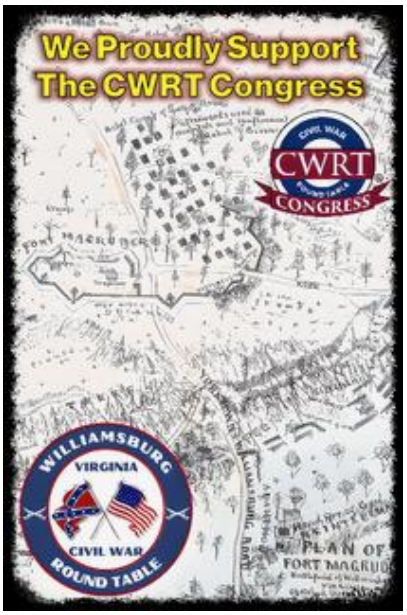
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The CWRT Congress thanks our sponsors—Georgia Battlefields Association, Williamsburg CWRT, Tennessee Valley CWRT, Bull Run CWRT, Scottsdale CWRT, Knoxville CWRT, Civil War Institute—Gettysburg College, Woodbury Historic Tours, and Central Virginia Battlefield Trust as well as Terry Pierce, Ross Heller, and Dr. Curt Fields.







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- Building Public Awareness

Bull Run Civil War Round Table
Please visit our website or Facebook page for details, including membership information and meetings at the Centreville, Virginia Regional Library
www.brcwrt.org
www.facebook.com/bullruncwrt

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Established 1993

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Oremia (Remy) Caimi (l) and Vicky Fike (r), both directors on the board of the Wilmington DC CWRT, participated with the National Park Service at Gettysburg National Military Park recently. “We used the opportunity to promote our RT and visitors about CWRTs in general. We're on Little Round Top,” shared Remy.

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