



# The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

## CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

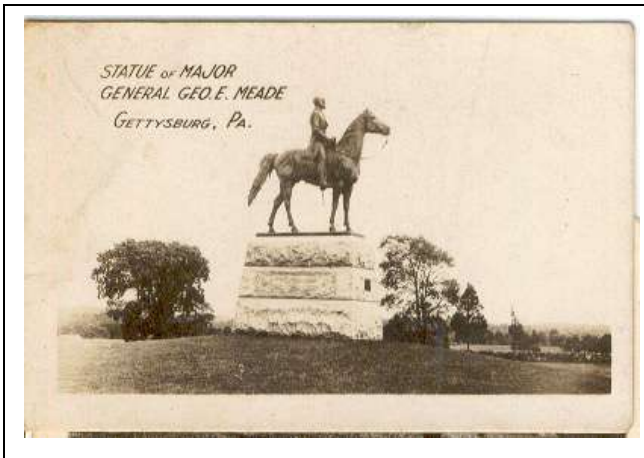
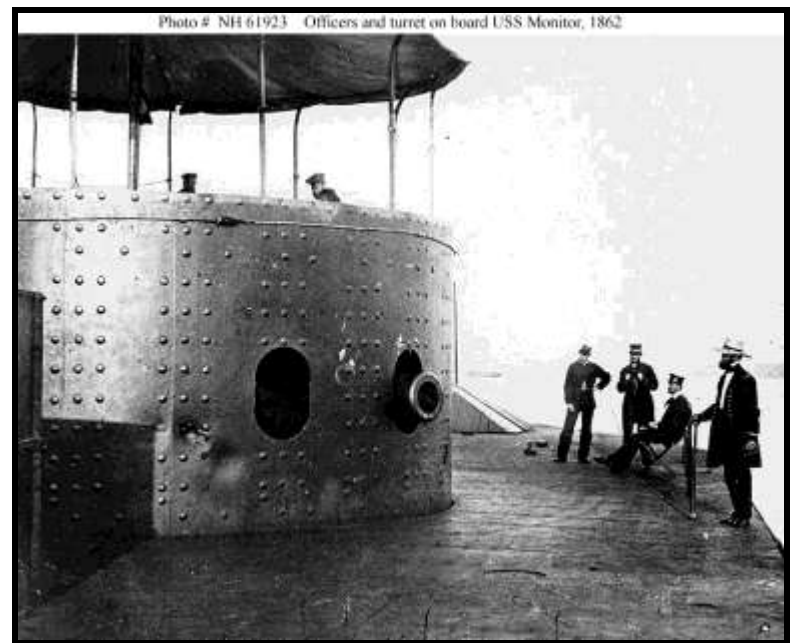
PO Box 14871 Albany, NY 12212  
[www.AlbanyCivilWar.org](http://www.AlbanyCivilWar.org)



Volume 28, Number 1

January 2011

### IT'S POTPOURRI NIGHT AT CDCWRT



**JANUARY MEETING  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2011  
WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER  
1541 BROADWAY  
WATERVLIET, NY  
POTPOURRI NIGHT**

<b>Social Hour</b>	<b>6:00 – 7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Business Meeting</b>	<b>7:00 – 7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>7:30 – 8:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>	<b>8:30 – 9:00 p.m.</b>
<b>More Socializing</b>	<b>9:00 – 10:00 p.m.</b>

**CDCWRT MEETING**

*The January meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be on Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will be held at the new trial location at the Watervliet Senior Center, 1541 Broadway in Watervliet. This is our annual Potpourri Meeting where Round Table members make short presentations on topics of their choice, or make have visual presentations of relics, images or ephemera relative to the Civil War period.*

*Our first speaker will be our Vice-President, Gene Gore. Gene will speak about the 27<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and their actions in North Carolina and Virginia.*

*Member and re-enactor, David Getty, will give us an update on Rocky II, or the Second Battle of Gettysburg versus the Casino.*

*Member and author, Steve Muller, will give us an update on the U.S.S. Monitor, including its preservation and activities with the Sesquicentennial of the engagement with the C.S.S. Virginia in 2012.*

*There will also be exhibits by June Howe on Reunions of Upton's 121<sup>st</sup> NYVI and by Carol Litrides on two letters from a soldier in the 2<sup>nd</sup> NY Cavalry.*

**DRIVING & PARKING  
DIRECTIONS TO THE  
WATERVLIET SENIOR CENTER**

**From the south:** Take Interstate 787 north from Albany to exit 8 (Watervliet & Green Island). Turn left at the light on the exit ramp onto 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Go 2 blocks to second traffic light and turn left onto Broadway. Go 0.4 miles and arrive at the Center on your right.

**From the north:** Take Interstate 787 south from Cohoes to exit 8. Turn right onto 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, In one block at light, turn left onto Broadway as listed above.

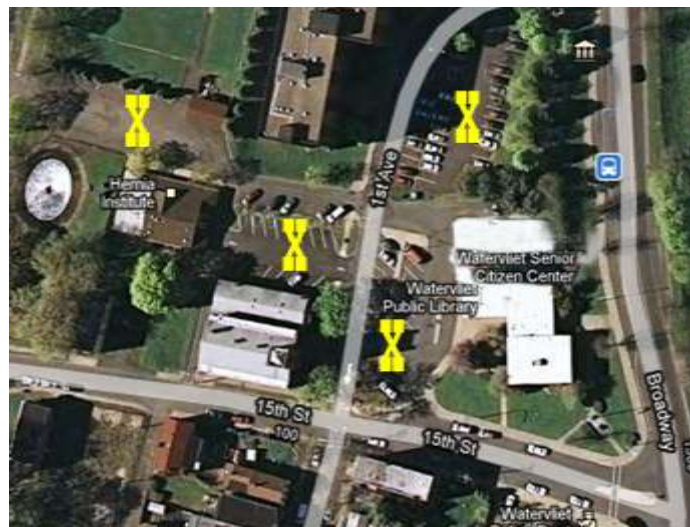
**From the west:** Take any road that intersects 787 (Interstate 90, route 378, route 155, or route 7) and follow the above directions. Or take route 2 (Troy-Schenectady Rd) which become 19<sup>th</sup> Street into Watervliet, and turn right on Broadway before going over the bridge into Troy.

**From the east:** look across the river and go.

**Parking Options for the Watervliet Senior Center.**

There are three parking lots directly behind the Center, and there's another one across 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. just north of the Center. In addition, on street parking is available on Broadway, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and 15<sup>th</sup> St. Both these directions and the map are available under the "Meetings" section on our web-site:

[Http://capitaldistrictcivilwarroundtable.club.officelive.com/default.aspx](http://capitaldistrictcivilwarroundtable.club.officelive.com/default.aspx)



## **DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!**

**This is to remind the membership that annual dues of \$25 are payable in the month of January each year.**

## **UP-COMING EVENTS**

*The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly.*

**Friday, February 11, 2011 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our speakers will be Kate Larson & Scott Christianson and they will talk about Harriet Tubman. This meeting will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center.**

**Friday, March 11, 2011 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our speaker will be Jason Emerson and the title of his presentation will be "The Dark Days of Abraham Lincoln's Widow." This meeting will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center.**

**Friday, April 8, 2011 is the regular meeting of the CDCWRT. Our Speaker will be Maj. Joseph Scott of the United States Military Academy at West Point. He will speak on the topic of Lowe's balloons and their use during the Civil War. This meeting will be held at the Watervliet Senior Center.**

**Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup> are the dates for the Civil War Heritage Days at Schuyler Flatts.**

**November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are the dates for our conference on New York in the Civil War. Mark those new calendars now, so that we can have a 90% membership attendance!**

## **BOARD MEETING**

The December Board Meeting was held on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Eleven members paid dues at the

November meeting, including one new member. A \$150 was approved for the NPS for monument repair at Gettysburg. The Sue Knost Memorial Fund has reached \$350. Donations collected by June 2011 will be donated to CWPT in her memory. The Board also decided to dedicate the November 2011 conference to her memory and a special memorial postal cancellation will take place. In addition, the annual women's seminar in Gettysburg in March will be held in honor of Sue and Becky Lyons of the NPS at Gettysburg.

The Sesquicentennial Committee met on December 11<sup>th</sup>, and a sub-committee to apply for grants and a sub-committee to write regular letters to newspapers about the sesquicentennial were established.

## **ELECTIONS IN JANUARY**

As stated in our by-laws, the Board will put forth a proposed slate of candidates for the next year. The slate will appear in two newsletters prior to the election. Since the December meeting will be busy with a guest speaker, holiday cheer and a new meeting site, the Board decided to postpone the election until the January 2011 meeting. At that meeting, any member in good standing can be nominated as a candidate for any position. The proposed slate is as follows:

President – Matt Farina

Vice-President – Gene Gore

Secretary – Mary Ellen Johnson

Treasurer – Fran McCashion

At-Large – Bob Mulligan

At-Large – J.J. Jennings

At-Large – Art Henningson

President ex-officio – Matt George

## **DECEMBER MEETING**

CDCWRT members who found their way to the Watervliet Senior Citizens Center were richly rewarded when Confederate General A.P. Hill was realistically portrayed by Patrick Falci, professional actor and historian who chronicled Hill's life and military career. Falci's appearance resembled Hill so closely that it seemed as if Hill had stepped from one of his 19<sup>th</sup> century

photographs. Covering the events of Hill's military career in such a lively manner, Falci insured none of us will forget the importance of A.P. Hill to the Confederate cause. Poignantly Falci dedicated his program to the memory of Sue Knost.

In recounting Hill's career Falci brought out several facets of Hill's life that had an influence on his military performance. One was the ill health that plagued Hill during his adult life beginning with a bout of gonorrhea acquired as the result of an adventure with a "soiled dove" encountered while he was at West Point. That illness postponed his graduation for a year, causing him to miss most of the Mexican War with its chance for recognition and promotion. What he did get there was typhoid fever. A few years later, Hill caught yellow fever while on duty in Florida. At various times during the Civil War Hill was a sick man, probably due to the long term effects of the then incurable gonorrhea.

The first day at Gettysburg found him sick in bed at the Cashtown Inn instead of being in the field with his men at a key moment when they encountered Buford. Nor was he at his best on succeeding days. The first day at the Wilderness found him unwell, but still effectively in command. He became progressively sicker during the remainder of the action and by the time of Spotsylvania, was incapacitated. Even though he returned to active duty at Cold Harbor, his health was so diminished that during the Petersburg siege, Hill took sick leave from February until April 1, 1865. He was still in pain at his return as he went out to check third Corps lines, where he encountered two Federal soldiers. Always the courageous soldier, Hill demanded their surrender, falling dead from his horse when they responded to his challenge with shots.

Just as ill health had a sometimes negative effect on his leadership in battle, another factor was personality. He was highly esteemed by his soldiers who knew that in spite of ordering them to march smartly for long distances or attack in what seemed impossible situations, when not in battle he was genuinely solicitous about their general welfare. In his personal life he was a fun loving, sociable individual. During the war his strained relations and disagreements with his corps commanders, Jackson and Longstreet, led to his arrest by each of his

superior officers at different times, and the humiliation of walking behind his division on the march to Harpers Ferry and Maryland.

Hill, who once referred to Jackson as "that old Presbyterian fool," claimed that an officer had to be a mind reader to serve under Jackson. Yet, Hill infuriated Jackson who claimed Hill had not followed his precise orders. There were demands for a court of inquiry or a court martial, and at one point Hill challenged Longstreet to a duel over newspaper articles appearing in Richmond. There was definitely coolness between the two men at Gettysburg. The distraction of dealing with these personality clashes became an additional challenge facing Lee.

Over the years Falci's mission has been to focus more attention on Hill's part in the history of the Army of Northern Virginia and to convince his audiences that Hill has been an underrated military leader who showed fine leadership and fighting spirit. His division distinguished itself with hard fighting during the Peninsula Campaign, later helping to win a Confederate victory at Cedar Mountain. Proudly known as the Light Division from their fast marches when needed for support, it was renowned for its fighting ability. After aiding Jackson to capture Harpers Ferry, the Light Division was left behind as Lee's army moved into Maryland. Getting word that Lee needed reinforcements, Hill and his veterans marched 17 miles in seven hours to Sharpsburg, arriving in time to reinforce the Army of Northern Virginia at a critical time near Burnside's Bridge.

A very effective hands-on division commander may not be as competent when placed in charge of a corps as Hill was when Lee reorganized his army after the death of Jackson, giving Hill command of the Third Corps. Historians debate Hill's ability as a corps commander, many of them claiming he was more successful when he was actually leading men into battle as he would liked to have done the third day at Gettysburg, than when he had to stand back and direct others to do the fighting. However since both Jackson and Lee called out for Hill in their dying moments, Hill must have

been a dependable, stalwart warrior, an officer who was not afraid to take a risk when the chips were down and a key support in any battle.

None of us will forget key events in Hill's life after watching Falci's lively rendition of Jackson's arrival on a horse or Hill under arrest walking dejectedly behind his division or any of Falci's other vignettes of scenes in Hill's life. Falci certainly accomplished his mission of making us more aware of Hill's role in the Army of Northern Virginia, challenging us to examine just how much Hill's contributions have been ignored. The audience loved every moment of their evening with A.P. Hill, and for the first time at a program in anyone's memory, giving our speaker a standing ovation.

## **SUE KNOST MEMORIAL**

Since the formation of the Capital District Civil War Round Table in 1984, if there has been one person who has had the greatest impact on the direction of the RT and on the legacy of the RT in the Civil War world, it has been Sue Knost. It has been through the fruition of Sue's ideas and efforts that our RT has become "the premier Round Table in the country." We need to be reminded that we did not bestow this moniker on ourselves, but rather it was given to us by no less of a Civil War living legend than Edwin C. Bearss, the Emeritus Chief Historian for the National Park Service.

I joined the CDCWRT in 1989 after I saw an announcement of a meeting in a local tabloid. Shortly thereafter I met Sue. The details are now vaguely remembered, but I believe it was at a local encampment. Sue was also involved in re-enacting in those days along with her good friends, Cindy Schechter and Joe Stracuzzi. It was several years later when I volunteered to be treasurer that I got to work more closely with Sue. She had assumed the program chair from Jeff Sauter, and members began to sample the quality trips that she arranged.

Board meetings in those days were in an upstairs room at Holmes and Watson Bar and Restaurant in

Troy. In 1994, Sue floated an idea under new business. We knew she worked for the US Postal Service in the business end – not mail delivery. Sue revealed that the USPS was issuing a 20-stamp sheet in mid-1995 in Gettysburg commemorating the Civil War. What if the RT went to Gettysburg with our own commemorative envelopes, bought stamps, got the envelopes cancelled with the First Day of Issue stamp, and then sold these to collectors and visitors?

Several on the Board were skeptical. I had collected stamps as a young lad and was still doing it until the 1980's. I thought it was a good idea, as did several others. The Board decided to pursue the proposal. Sue worked with others to design envelopes, but she also had a bigger plan. Somehow, working with her contacts in the USPS, she managed to get Albany designated as a site for release of the stamps on the first day of issue. Why? New York State provided the most men and materiel to the Union cause. Gettysburg and Richmond were the other two cities to release the stamps.

Sue then helped organize the event at the Colonie Shopping Mall using the Post Office there. There was publicity in the newspapers and TV. There were exhibits by local Civil War groups in the Mall. She organized the cancellation and the cachets for the two day event. When the smoke cleared, we had grossed over \$10,000 from the two sites. By the time of the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cycle, we were a well-oiled machine for designing and selling cachets. The 135<sup>th</sup> Antietam made \$13,000; the 135<sup>th</sup> Chancellorsville, \$5,000; the 135<sup>th</sup> Gettysburg, \$23,000. Later we added t-shirts and sweat-shirts. After expenses, the RT began donating to many preservation activities, but primarily those that bought dirt. The Board felt committed to the purchase of battlefield land before it became malls or housing tracts. Once the land was protected, there would be someplace to take our children and grandchildren to see where great deeds were done.

As of this eulogy, the CDCWRT has donated \$808,591 in actual and matching funds. Most of

this has grown from Sue's seed money. With the donations has come recognition from preservationists, historians, authors, licensed guides and park rangers.

But who was Sue Knost?

Sue sometimes described herself as a wild teenager and young woman with exotically colored hair. She later regretted the opportunity to pursue a college career. She became a fiercely independent woman and pursued a number of options that gave her jobs and skills. She cut hair. She worked on auto engines and knew what she was doing. She worked part-time for the Post Office and then became full-time. She was given increased responsibility at the USPS and handled accounts that were in excess of \$1-million in a large portion of the state. Fortunately for all of us, she became interested in history, and in particular, 19<sup>th</sup>-Century history. She also got involved in the pictorial postmark program where she excelled in teaching the fine art of hand cancelling for serious collectors and history enthusiasts. Many of our cachets appeared in postal training productions.

But all was not roses for Sue. Her first home in Schenectady had problems with regular flooding. She could not afford a new car so there was a steady stream of used, high mileage vehicles that she acquired and tried to keep running. Several became storage lockers on wheels in her driveway. And I can reveal here what many of you have suspected. Sue did have a hollow leg. When the Board began meeting in homes with a meal served, we were amazed at how much she could put away, and still have room for a dessert or two.

Like all of us, Sue also had her flaws. Some of these were minor quirks; some were humorous; some were exasperating for those who worked with her. She was meticulous in her appearance and in the appearance of the tables at an event. She would carefully align the tablecloths and the rows of cachets, and try to put out as many cachets as possible. Yet her cars were filled with boxes of cachets stacked as high as possible. There were stacks of books, papers, card stock and her personal mail. We would say it was chaos, but she said it was organized by archeological layers, and

she knew what was in each layer.

There were not enough hours in the day for Sue. I usually went to bed around 1:00am. If I sent Sue an email at that time, she would answer it at 2:30am because she was often at her office at that hour. I think she knew everyone on a first name basis on the night shift at the huge Karner Road postal facility. She needed to travel in her job to visit her postal clients. Between her travels and late night work, she was almost always late for Board meetings or even cancellation events. That was a major problem because she often had the postal cancel, the postage stamps, the new envelopes, and was the designated postal worker authorized to run the cancellation. Sometimes she was hours late, having left for Gettysburg at 4:00am, but needing to stop and sleep at some rest stop before continuing.

Many times we tried to offer her help with planning events or trips, only to have her refuse. If we pushed the issue, she would resist harder. She insisted any help would not be able to do things as effectively as she could, and then she would wind up doing it herself the second time around. After a while we would just stop trying. Even though she appeared overwhelmed at times, she would not accept help. This frustrated those around her, and isolated her somewhat from her friends.

Yet in spite of these problems, we all were the recipients of Sue's friendship. Where ever she went in her travels, she often brought back small gifts for friends - - a book, a special stamp, a cachet, a T-shirt. When asked, she would do almost anything to help a friend, even if it meant changing her own complicated schedule. If you worked a cancellation event with her, she would bring a drink or a piece of fruit or a sandwich for everyone. Probably more than anyone else, she appreciated the time and energy and money volunteers anteed-up. Sue had many friends in the Civil War community.

Her trips to battlefields were legendary. She worked to get the best guides, the best bus drivers, the best and cheapest motels (not an

easy combination), and of course, the best restaurants. And keep the costs well below any of the national organizations offering tours. Because she wanted to give all attendees the biggest “bang for their buck,” she also crammed in as much touring as possible. Sometimes this fatigued the crew, but then she got us into places that no other tour groups ever had been.

Her cancer and its treatments sapped her of energy and her self-reliance. With no energy and her poor vision due to lens problems, she could not use her computer to communicate. Likewise there was restricted phone communication because of her fatigue. She did not want visitors to see her this way. In addition to the tumor, she had multiple associated problems with her urinary tract as a complication of the cancer. She was restricted in physical activity and was embarrassed by the bags connected to her nephrostomy tubes. In effect she became isolated except for a small group of dedicated friends who kept her company, made meals, took her into their homes for respite, took her to chemo and radiation appointments, and tried to support her emotionally. Sue wanted desperately to be involved with her Round Table in the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil War. She would not see even the commemoration of South Carolina’s secession vote.

I spent an afternoon with Sue in the early fall before I went south for the winter. We talked about a variety of topics, none of which was about her disease. By early November it was evident that her final chemo protocol was not effective. I sent her a long letter thanking her for her friendship over the years. I reminded her of a conversation we had had years ago about the five people with which we would like to have a conversation in heaven. I have no doubt that she is conversing with Robert E. Lee and now knows what he truly expected Pickett’s charge to achieve. And I know she is conversing with the authors of this passage which was one of Sue’s favorites.

**“In great deeds, something abides. On great fields, something stays. Forms change and pass; bodies disappear; but spirits linger, to consecrate ground for the vision-place of souls. And reverent men and women from afar, and**

**generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart-drawn to see where and by whom great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field, to ponder and dream. And lo! The shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and the power of the vision pass into their souls.”**



**CDCWRT  
P.O. BOX 14871  
ALBANY, NY 12212-4871**

*Created in 1984, the Capital District Civil War Round Table is an incorporated non-profit educational organization. Meetings are held monthly in various locations in the Capital District. This newsletter is published eleven times per year. Annual dues are \$25. The purpose of the organization is to promote, educate, and further stimulate interest in, and discussion of, all aspects of the Civil War period.*

#### **THE OFFICERS**

President	Matt George	355-2131
Vice-President	Gene Gore	439-4569
Treasurer	Fran McCashion	459-4209
Secretary	Mary Ellen Johnson	861-8582
At-Large	Art Henningson	355-5353
At-Large	Walt Williams	688-2200
At-Large	Bob Mulligan	439-3802

#### **THE NONCOMS**

Newsletter	Matt Farina	439-8583
Program	Open	
Education	Matt George	355-2131
Refreshments	Cathy Febraio	330-0868
Membership	Mike Affinito	281-5583
Webmaster	Mike Affinito	
Historian	Fran McCashion	459-4209