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General Orders

Harrington's Brigade

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

By Mike Harrington

Ordinarily, our May meeting concludes the annual campaign of the Houston Civil War Round Table on a high note. We elect directors at that meeting for the upcoming campaign. We generally present our annual Frank E. Vandiver Award of Merit to a distinguished speaker in May. And we bid one another adieu until the next September.

Well, none of that is going to happen in this extraordinary month and year. We have received formal notice from the HESS Club that it is being shut down permanently and legally dissolved. Coincidentally, just before we received this sad notice, **the Board of Directors had elected to cancel our meeting this month**, believing that even if the HESS Club were open, many of our members would not feel comfortable attending a large dinner meeting.

The Board will shortly begin the process of selecting a new venue for our monthly meetings. We expect to finalize that process prior to our

meeting on September 17, 2020, and we will let you know, of course, when the selection has occurred.

In accord with the HCWRT Bylaws, the current Directors and Officers will remain in place until our annual meeting in May 2021. Likewise, Chairpersons of HCWRT committees will remain pretty much the same for the 2020-2021 campaign. The persons currently holding these positions are as follows:

Officers

- President** - Mike Harrington
- Vice President** - Eugene Boisaubin
- Secretary** - John Stevens
- Treasurer** - Barry Brueggeman
- Past President** - Jim Godlove

Directors

- Keith Altavilla - Roland Bienvenu
- Scott Wilkey

Chairpersons

- Quizmaster** - Jim Godlove
- Programs Chair** - Gary Chandler
- Book Raffle Chair** - Donnie Stowe
- Membership Chair** - Keith Altavilla
- Membership Vice Chair** - Walker Agnew
- Communications Chair** - Scott Wilkey
- Facilities Chair** - Barry Brueggeman
- Newsletter Editor** - Roland Bienvenu

Don Zuckero stepped down from the Board recently; the remaining Directors expect to fill this vacancy by electing Walker Agnew to the Board prior to next September. Don has done a very commendable job for our Round Table over a long span of years and in several different capacities. While we will miss him on the Board, we are thankful that we will continue to enjoy Don's fellowship and presence at our meetings.

No change to the current Officer lineup is contemplated. Speaking for myself, I am

honored to continue to serve as your President for one more year.

As for the current Chairpersons, Gary Chandler is stepping down as Programs Chair, and Keith Altavilla will succeed him. As many of you are aware, Gary is dealing with a health issue. Although Gary will not be our Programs Chair during the next campaign, we fully expect him to remain a valuable resource to our Round Table for years to come. Also, Walker Agnew will step up to Membership Committee Chair from his current position as Vice Chair.

Looking back on this campaign, the disruptions to our meetings have been truly unprecedented. A record rainfall scotched our kickoff meeting last September. Fallout from the dreaded COVID-19 virus has sidelined us for the final three months of this campaign.

Looking forward, however, sunnier skies beckon for HCWRT. We have lined up some terrific speakers for the next campaign. **Dr. Brian Steel Wills, who was scheduled to address us this May, will speak to us on November 19.** At that time, we will present him with the **2020 Vandiver Award of Merit.**

Until we gather again, stay safe, my friends.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Keith Altavilla

I hope this newsletter finds you safe and healthy. Like all of you, I am disappointed in missing out on the final meeting of the year, hanging out with the Round Table and listening to what was sure to be an interesting and informative talk. I hope those memories of what we have missed stick with everyone over the summer, and inspire you to come back in September. Take a look at the list of speakers for next year if you need a little something to whet your appetite for Civil War scholarship.

With the year ending, everyone's focus is turned to the coming campaign, and for everyone that means it's time to consider **renewing your membership.** I know money is tight for some people, so this would be a good time to start saving for that annual dues check. Once you have that, fill out the renewal form and send it in. We have one on the website, or one on page 5 of this newsletter which you can print out and mail. Once we receive it, you are all set for 2020-2021.

Your dues help us in so many ways. They help set up our location (wherever that might be) and bring in the speakers. Without them, there is no Round Table, and doesn't the third Thursday of the month feel just a little too quiet now that we don't have it? Of course, you will also get the newsletter link e-mailed directly to you, containing speaker information, schedules, opportunities, and the quiz question. Plus, the newsletter keeps you up to date on not just when we are meeting, but where. Do you want a friendly reminder and to know where to come in September? Get those dues in!

Sooner is better than later, and June 1 is a great target for taking care of your dues. We certainly can wait, but we really need those by the first meeting in September. While there is a short grace period, after that you won't receive the newsletter any longer; that's one additional reminder we can all use.

Even if you cannot make every meeting, your continued membership allows us to continue bringing in great speakers, communing with one another, and keeping alive the history of our nation's great Civil War. Without your support, that cannot happen. I hope to see everyone, old friends and new, again in September!

Sadly, we note the passing of **Col. (retired) J.E.B. Stuart IV**, who spoke to our Round Table on a couple of occasions. The great-grandson of Confederate Major General J.E.B. Stuart, Col. Stuart served in the U. S. Army for 27 years and passed away on April 17, 2020 in Richmond, Virginia, where he resided. Col. Stuart was 84 years old. His survivors include J.E.B. Stuart V, M.D.

INTEREST OF A LIFETIME

By Roland Bienvenu

Many times since joining the HCWRT in 1996, I have engaged other members in discussion regarding how each of us came to develop an interest in the American Civil War. There have been many interesting stories told by other members. I then related my personal story, which I'd like to share here (a somewhat lengthier version!).

I was born in 1951 near Washington, D. C. My father was a U. S. Naval officer who had various assignments throughout his 24-year career, and served at the Pentagon at different times before and after my birth.

During fourth grade, I became very interested in "Civil War trading cards" that were similar to baseball trading cards. Each one featured a personality, incident, or battle from the Civil War along with a description. I didn't care too much about baseball cards, but sure loved those! Also, during fourth grade history class, we began learning about the Civil War.

When I was ten years old, my dad took me to the centennial re-enactment of First Manassas/Bull Run on a very hot July day in 1961. Hundreds of re-enactors participated at this historical location. Attending this re-enactment piqued my interest even more! My dad did his best to address all my questions during our ride back home to Falls Church, Virginia. Later, my mother patiently did the same; she was a former school teacher and was fairly well versed on this subject.

Later that summer, one of my Louisiana cousins came to visit us in Falls Church. Of course, we took him sightseeing. One of the places we visited was Gettysburg. Cousin Mike and I took a helicopter tour of the battlefield; it doesn't get much better than that for a ten-year old budding Civil War enthusiast!

I was briefly a member of the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table in 1975 and greatly enjoyed their meetings and speakers.

A few years later, I found myself joining up with a Union re-enactment group, the 12th U. S. Infantry (yes, even a Louisiana boy can portray a Yankee!). It was fun drilling, participating in parades and battles, and educating the public

about the experiences of the common Civil War soldier.

After being an active HCWRT member for five years, I was honored to serve as Vice-President and then as President. I've really enjoyed the HCWRT over the past 24 years, and am looking forward to the upcoming 2020–2021 campaign. I hope to see each of you in September!

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

May 1, 1863 – Battle of Port Gibson, Mississippi

May 3, 1861 – Lincoln calls for volunteers to join the Union Army for a three-year term

May 5, 1862 – Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia

May 5, 1864 – Battle of the Wilderness, Virginia begins

May 7, 1864 – Union General Sherman begins his Atlanta campaign

May 10, 1863 – Death of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson

May 10, 1865 – Confederate President Jefferson Davis captured by U. S. troops at Irwinville, Georgia

May 12 & 13, 1865 – Skirmish at Palmito Ranch, Texas – the last land engagement of the Civil War

May 13, 1861 – U. S. troops occupy Baltimore, Maryland

May 15, 1864 – Battle of New Market, Virginia

May 19, 1863 – First assault on Vicksburg, Mississippi

May 22, 1863 – Siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana begins

May 31, 1861 – Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks), Virginia begins



REVISED 2020 - 2021 SPEAKERS SCHEDULE

By Gary Chandler, Programs Chair

Since our April newsletter was posted, COVID-19 continued to wreak havoc on HCWRT's future programming and calendar, no different than thousands of other organizations around the country. With the recent cancellation of the May 21 HCWRT meeting, an unprecedented number of meetings during this campaign were canceled due to severe flooding (September), and in March, April, and May, due to COVID-19.

The good news is that all speakers displaced in current 2019-2020 have been accommodated in either the 2020-2021 campaign starting September 17, 2020 or the subsequent 2021-2022 campaign. Many thanks to the speakers displaced in the ripple effects of meeting cancellations and the others who graciously switched dates to accommodate fellow speakers.

Like the original 2020-2021 schedule published in the April newsletter, all three major theaters of war (East, West, Trans-Mississippi) are represented in the revised schedule, yet still with a distinct "Western flavor" in this new campaign beginning September 17, 2020. The talks will still cover various "sides" of the war, military, home-front, and other interesting topics—including a naval topic. All presentations will be made by a distinguished cadre of historians, authors, and historic preservationists. Some are past speakers and familiar faces, and some are new to our group. As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we are honored that one of the HCWRT's best friends and supporters for decades, **Brian Wills**, will receive the 2020 Frank E. Vandiver Award of Merit on November 19.

As my role coordinating seven annual speakers' campaigns comes to an end with this campaign due to my health issues, this clearly has been the most challenging program year of all. I'm especially grateful for the chance to work with our officers, directors, and members for years, but I especially thank President **Mike Harrington** for our work together to schedule and reschedule speakers this year and its most

recent weeks. Our programs will be in great hands with VP **Eugene Boisubin** and new Programs Chair **Keith Altavilla!**

Please see the last page of this newsletter for a revised 2020-2021 Speakers Schedule.

Finally, there are two speakers who have been rescheduled from our 2020-2021 schedule to 2021-2022. The speakers and their topics are as follows:

Nov. 18, 2021 William MacKinnon: *"Before Fort Sumter: The Utah War Experiences of Union and Confederate Leaders"*

Dec. 16, 2021 Jeffrey Hunt: *"Meade and Lee at Bristoe Station: The Problems of Command and Strategy After Gettysburg"* (NOTE: 3rd Thursday instead of usual 2nd Thursday of December)

ADDITIONAL CIVIL WAR WEB RESOURCES

Recognizing the available time that HCWRT members may have during this pandemic, we listed some "virtual" resources in last month's newsletter. Here are others we'd like to share:

The Civil War Round Table Congress has a virtual lecture series featuring speakers covering various topics. Upcoming speakers include Scott Mingus, John Scales, David Dixon, and John C. Fazio. All speakers were nominated by round tables as their "5-star speakers." These are free, but donations are welcome. Go to cwrtingress.org/lectures.html

History buffs may enjoy the site dubbed "The Portal to Texas History." It is useful for genealogical and Civil War research, and has a good search engine. texashistory.unt.edu/

If you're interested in Civil War forums covering many topics, go to civilwartalk.com

Also, check out blueandgrayeducation.org (the Blue & Gray Education Society). They offer historical tours and have interesting articles.

The Gettysburg Foundation offers an online "Virtual Gettysburg" which includes vistas of the battlefields, the cyclorama, and museum. gettysburgfoundation.org/virtual-gettysburg

Finally, Ford's Theatre National Park site offers a virtual tour of the theater, museum, and the Petersen house. fords.org/visit/virtual-tour/



HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Houston Civil War Round Table is dedicated to the study of the civilian, military, and cultural aspects of United States history during the period of 1861 – 1865 and to the preservation of historical sites and artifacts. For additional copies of this form please go to www.HoustonCivilWar.com

Membership Type

(CHECK ONE BOX ONLY.)

- \$50 – Individual
- \$60 – Family
- \$25 – Student/Faculty or Out-of-Town
- Existing Member - Address / Information Update Only

JOINING BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MAY 31

NON-RENEWING members joining in the months of January through May will automatically be enrolled as members for the current and following year's speaker series ("campaign").

Name: _____
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Address: _____

City: _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell Home Work

Email Address: _____

In which format would you like to receive your newsletter?

- Email (PDF) U.S. Postal Service (Printed)

How did you learn about us? _____

FOR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY

Family Member Name: _____
(FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Home Work

Email Address: _____

Note: For memberships or subscriptions outside the U.S., extra cost of postage to mail the newsletter may be added. Cost will vary; please write or email to inquire.

Mail your completed application and dues to: Houston Civil War Round Table
C/O Barry G. Brueggeman
3706 Lonniewood Drive
Houston, TX 77059

2020 - 2021 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

- Sept. 17, 2020 Thomas E. Parson: *"Work for Giants: The Campaign and Battle of Tupelo/Harrisburg"*
- Oct. 15, 2020 Eric J. Wittenberg: *"Holding the Line on the River of Death: Union Mounted Forces at Chickamauga"*
- Nov. 19, 2020 Brian Steel Wills: *"Inglorious Passages: Noncombat Deaths in the American Civil War"* (2020 Vandiver Award Recipient - rescheduled from May 21, 2020)
- Dec. 10, 2020 Stephen Davis: *"Hood's Great Attack East of Atlanta, July 22, 1864 (Or, Why Jackson's Flank Attack at Chancellorsville Succeeded and Hood's Did Not)"*
- Jan. 21, 2021 Danny Sessums: *"Arkansas Post"*
- Feb. 18, 2021 Lorien Foote: *"The Dogs of War"* (rescheduled from April 16, 2020)
- Mar. 18, 2021 Timothy B. Smith: *"The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid Through Mississippi"*
- Apr. 15, 2021 Stephen Kinnaman: *"Merrimack: Biography of a Steam Frigate"* (rescheduled from March 19, 2020)
- May 20, 2021 Don Frazier: *"Tempest Over Texas"*

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