

THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

"Pennsylvania Monuments Project" to Cover Emergency Fund

Feb. 12, 2003-Courtesy CWI Premium-Pennsylvania State Rep. Harry Readshaw, D-Allegheny, wants to establish a "disaster insurance" fund to guarantee preservation of the 143 Pennsylvania Regimental monuments and markers on the Battlefield at Gettysburg, and he believes a specialty state license plate would provide the financial resources.

Through his Gettysburg Monuments Project, Readshaw has drawn in hundreds of thousands of dollars in private donations to meet the current restoration and maintenance needs of the monuments, and has endowed perpetual trusts for 75 of them to ensure their continued maintenance.

However, once the currently funded restoration is complete, the trust funds would address natural wear and tear in the decades ahead, but they would not cover catastrophic damage such as that inflicted by vandals, lightning or falling trees.

"In just a couple minutes, someone with a hammer or pry-bar can cause thousands, even tens of thousands of dollars damage to a monument," Readshaw said.

At the height of his Gettysburg Monuments Project fund drive, vandals struck the monument to the 90th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Monument on Doubleday Avenue.

The granite monument represents the base of a large oak tree that was on the regiment's line of battle in the three-day long engagement in July 1863. Near its top is a bronze bird nest with a mother and baby birds. Legend has it that as the regiment defended its position against attacking Confederates, a bird's nest was knocked out of the tree and, under heavy fire, a soldier climbed the tree and replaced it.

In 1999, vandals tore bronze ornamentation off the granite shaft, including a knapsack and rifle. Through the Gettysburg Monuments Project, students at James Byrd Elementary School in Shippensburg raised enough money to have an artisan repair the damage. The students traveled to Gettysburg in May of 2000 for a check presentation ceremony at the monument. Readshaw turned the funds over to the Gettysburg National Military Park to make the repairs.

"We were fortunate in that the vandalism occurred in the middle of our campaign and we were able to respond to it quickly," Readshaw said, "but other monuments on the battlefield that have been seriously damaged by the elements or human action sometimes must wait years for repair funding to be allocated by the National Park Service or be donated by private organizations. Some have even waited decades."

Under Readshaw's legislation, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation would design a plate incorporating a representation of the



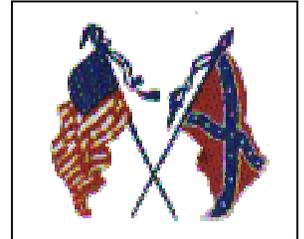
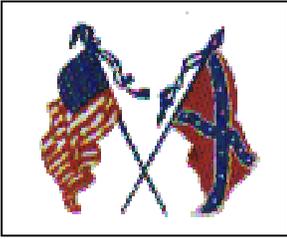
90th Pennsylvania Infantry Monument, Gettysburg

battlefield's Pennsylvania Memorial and the phrase, "Gettysburg 1863". A portion of the annual registration fee for the special plate would go into the Pennsylvania Monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park Fund. Readshaw expects to introduce the bill later this month.

Bone Study Suggests Women Soldiers Died at Wilsons Creek

Feb. 19, 2003--A bone study conducted at Chico State University for the National Park Service suggests a woman or women may have been among those killed at the second major battle of the Civil War, the first large-scale military action in the Trans-Mississippi theater of the war.

A presentation made by Patrick Willey, an anthropology professor, and two graduate students, Dan Tyree and Nicole Cavales, said bones found at the Wilson's Creek Civil War Battlefield in southwestern Missouri appear to be female. The battle at Wilson's Creek, which took place Aug. 10, 1861, was



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

relatively small compared to epic struggles, like the battle of Gettysburg two years later, but 235 Union and 265 Confederate troops were killed in the fighting, Willey told a small audience gathered Thursday in Ayers Hall on campus to hear the presentation.

The professor explained the Confederates, who won the battle, buried their own dead, but dumped the Union bodies "into any declivity that was handy." The Union bodies were tossed into wells and other places, including a site that became known as "the sinkhole." Theoretically, all of the Union bodies were exhumed from where they were dumped and reburied in a national cemetery in Springfield, Mo. However, Willey said an archeological dig conducted under the direction of the National Park Service, which manages the battlefield, found additional remains in the "sinkhole."

Tyree said a box containing 10 plastic bags full of human bones, and some small artifacts, was delivered to Chico State last July. The artifacts were shipped elsewhere, but the bones were studied on campus. The analysis was not easy. Tyree explained that the bones discovered did not include any skulls or long bones, such as those from the leg, which give the most direct indication of identifying factors such as height. The small bones were carefully inspected to determine what could be found out about the age, stature and nature of diseases or injuries suffered by the individuals, and to determine the sex.

Without the skulls, long bones or pelvis bones, stature and sex of the individuals had to be estimated based on the size of certain bones of the hands and the feet. Tyree said, while

the evidence wasn't conclusive, there were indications that two of the bones they inspected could have come from women.

Cavales said there is an abundance of historical evidence that some women did fight and die as Civil War combatants. Women were officially prohibited from being in the armies at that time, but there are records of women who disguised themselves as men to fight.

One woman, who lived and fought under the name "Alfred Luther," is known to have taken part in the battle of Wilson's Creek, but it is equally well known that the bones found in the "sinkhole" could not be hers. She survived this fight and was not discovered to be a woman until she was killed in a later battle. Cavales said because of the bones they were using for sex identification, their evidence is equivocal and the bones could have come from a petite male. However, they could also be evidence of a woman who fought and died in this early stage of the Civil War.

Following the conclusion of the study, the bones were returned to the Park Service and were buried in the Springfield National Cemetery.

Correction

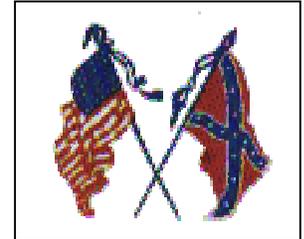
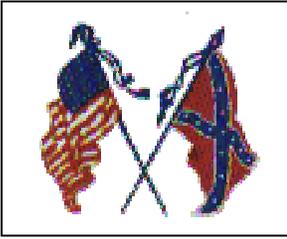
Last month's Newsletter carried an article about the new shuttle service planned for Gettysburg, PA. ("Springtime for Shuttles in Gettysburg") The article stated that the shuttle could begin operation as soon as this April. I have been informed by Ms. Kate Lawhon, Public Affairs Specialist at Gettysburg NMP that "the tentative date for an operating shuttle system at Gettysburg is 2005 or 2006 and that depends greatly on funding -both federal transportation funds and the required local matching funds. - Ed.

Civil War Cannons Ruined My Marriage, Lawsuit Claims

Feb. 17, 2003--Two California men are suing a number of persons and groups involved in putting on a demonstration of Civil War cannon fire at an event in July of 2001, claiming that they suffered damage to their hearing from being exposed to the sound of the guns. The lawsuits also claim the injuries have deprived Donald Stahl, 68, and Fred Rosenlind, 77, of the means to communicate with their wives and the ability to maintain and manage their homes.

The lawsuits stem from a mock battle staged as part of a McHenry Museum Civil War exhibit, the Modesto Bee reports. Stahl, a Civil War buff, was attending the event, said his attorney, Stephen Ringhoff.

Re-enactors from the Richmond Fayette Artillery Brigade fired black powder charges from the Civil War-era cannon as Confederate soldiers charged from the museum lawn. The cannon was in the center of I Street, flanked by buildings. That positioning caused the noise to reverberate rather than dissipate, Ringhoff said. "Normally these things are shot in an open field," Ringhoff said. "The acoustic effect was a sound wave that caused hearing damage." The event was held by the Stanislaus Civil War Association of Modesto, CA, in association with the McHenry Museum, also of Stanislaus County, which was one of the sponsors. They are also named in the lawsuit, as is current District Attorney James Brazelton and his wife, both members



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

of the association. Donald Stahl was Brazelton's predecessor in the DA's office, serving for 24 years before retiring in 1996, local media sources report. The lawsuit argues that because the sound bounced off the buildings, it constituted a "sound amplification process" and therefore should have been required to get a city noise permit of the sort normally reserved for loud rock and roll bands. "Downtown Modesto is no place to be discharging artillery," said Jack Revvill, Rosenlind's attorney. "If they'd been in an open field, the sound would just keep traveling. Here, the sound bounced off a building and just whacked them." Stahl and Rosenlind suffered severe long-term hearing losses, their attorneys said. Both require hearing aids, which provide limited help, they said.

As for the effect on the marriage, "Mrs. Rosenlind was just really emotional and distraught about the changes in the way these two communicate," Revvill said. "These are two essentially retired people who spend their days together. You wouldn't really think about it until they open up and talk about it. It has really affected their marriage." In an answer to Stahl's complaint, Jacobson said Brazelton and his wife denied Stahl sustained the damages alleged. The response also maintains that Stahl's recklessness and negligence contributed to any damages or injuries he may have sustained.

The dispute is scheduled for Stanislaus County Superior Court later this year. Both plaintiffs are seeking unspecified monetary damages.

Hunley Wallet Has Disappointing Contents

Feb. 24, 2003--A string of surprising discoveries among the personal belongings of crewmen on the ill-fated Confederate submarine *Hunley* has come to an end with the examination of a wallet found on board the boat and presumed to belong to one of the crew. The contents, although said by scientists to be "organically rich," were pretty much the same decomposed bits of nothing that many of us find in our own wallets every day.

Nor did the item, which was made of leather and measured three by five inches in size, hold any clues as to the identity or occupation of its owner. It was found near the middle of the area where the crewmen sat to turn the hand-cranked handle that turned the *Hunley's* propeller.

"We found inside sediment that could be organically rich as though it came from decomposing paper," said Bob Neyland, the *Hunley* project manager. "Some of it seemed to have some thin gray lines to it." Neyland told the press conference that samples of the sediment inside the wallet would be sent to Clemson University for further analysis to determine whether it is indeed paper, or at least was at one time. The task will be complicated by the fact that paper money in the 1860s was not standardized as national currency is today, but was produced by a vast number of individual banks to their own specifications.

In other news on the *Hunley* front, Neyland said that work is progressing on the task of identifying the crewmen whose remains were removed from

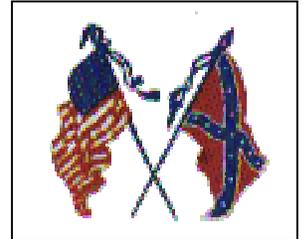
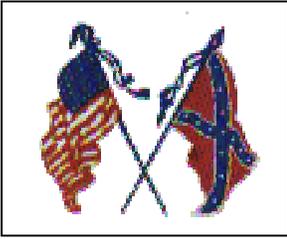
the boat. The only person positively identified so far is Lt. George Dixon, commander of the *Hunley*. His were confirmed both by the fact that he stood in the forwardmost part of the ship, as the commander had to do by its design, as well as a number of artifacts found in the clothing that surrounded those remains. One, a severely dented gold coin engraved with the words "My Life Preserver, Shiloh 1862" confirmed a legend that had lasted a century and a half that Dixon had carried such a thing as a lucky piece.

Said to be a gift from his girlfriend Queenie Bennet, it was damaged when hit by a musket ball at that Tennessee battle, saving Dixon's leg at least and probably his life. Further examination of Dixon's clothing later revealed two pieces of jewelry as well as his pocket watch with a Masonic fob.

Scientists are also attempting facial reconstructions on the skulls of the other *Hunley* crew members, some of whose names are not even known with certainty. Records from the period which claim to identify the *Hunley's* final crew do not always agree with each other and in some cases list only last names. "There are some thoughts about some of the other individuals, but at this point we have not positively assigned a name to the other crew members," Neyland said.

The wallet with the disintegrated contents was the only one found aboard the submarine, to the disappointment of researchers and historians hoping more personal items would be found to help in the identification process.

In the exploration of the recently recovered turret of the ironclad gunboat *USS Monitor*, workers found silverware engraved with initials that



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

could be traced to individual crewmen, some of whom survived the ship' s sinking and others who did not. Naval historians note that besides serving a practical function as eating utensils, the silver objects also represented easily portable financial assets in a time when bank accounts were rare and banks themselves often unstable.

"You can make a contrast between George Dixon and the rest of the crew," Neyland said, noting Dixon' s possession of the \$20 gold piece, watch and jewelry.

"The rest of the seven men in the crew, by contrast, have really nothing, except the clothes on their backs, their pipes and a few possessions such as the wallet," Neyland said. The next project on the list, Neyland said, is the opening of Dixon' s gold watch.

"I know there is a lot of anticipation (about) if the hands of the watch are still there, what time they stopped at," Neyland said.

Richmond Council Votes Support for Lincoln Statue at Tredegar

Feb. 27, 2003--The Richmond City Council has voted to give both moral and practical support to a project to place a statue of Abraham Lincoln in the city near the Richmond National Battlefield Park, calling it "a symbol of unity and reconciliation." At the same meeting they voted to contribute up to \$45,000 for construction of a granite plaza on which the monument will sit. The proposal has generated a certain amount of controversy, with opponents claiming that the monument will in fact be more divisive than unifying in a town that

was once the capital of the Confederacy and is still graced with an abundance of statues to Confederate leaders.

The statue will depict Abraham Lincoln sitting on a bench along with his young son Tad. The symbolism represents the visit paid by Lincoln to Richmond immediately after the capture of the town by Union forces, and the departure of Jefferson Davis and the other members of the Confederate government and army. "Lincoln is just the beginning," Vice Mayor Delores L. McQuinn told the Richmond Times-Dispatch after the vote. "For those of you who don' t think other statues should be here except for the Confederacy, then you haven' t seen anything yet. I am going to go out of my way to try and diversify the statues."

Mayor Rudolph C. McCallum Jr. agreed, saying that the addition of the Lincoln statue to the Confederate pantheon would boost tourism in the city.

The funds would be "the best \$45,000 this city has ever spent," McCallum said. "If we spent forty-five thousand dollars like this every day, the returns would be phenomenal, and we couldn' t have enough progress in this city."

The Lincoln monument is a project of the United States Historical Society, a nonprofit group that works with other institutions to raise funds by the sale of collectible and decorative objects such as plates and dolls in historic costumes.

The society hopes to dedicate the statue on April 5, the 138th anniversary of the visit of Lincoln and his son to Richmond. Throngs of Richmond residents surrounded his carriage on the occasion, thanking him for liberating them from slavery. Among the few willing to be quoted in

opposition to the council' s vote was Ron Doggett, president of the Virginia chapter of the European American Unity and Rights Organization, described as an opponent of affirmative action and anti-white discrimination.

"He is known as the great emancipator," Doggett told the Times-Dispatch, "but he emancipated no one. A far better term would be the great segregator."

Another, Walter Ring of Henrico County, was described as a longtime "pro-white" activist.

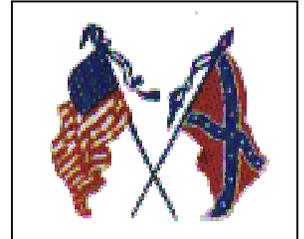
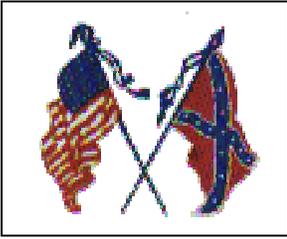
"Lincoln waged war on unarmed civilians, namely the women and children of the Confederate States of America," Ring said. "For this and other atrocities that Lincoln and the Union Army inflicted upon the South, I am against the placement of the Lincoln statue anywhere in Richmond."



Proposed Statue of Abraham Lincoln and his son Tad.

Another Correction

In last month' s Newsletter, the dates on the flyer for the Maryland Arms Collectors Assn. Antique Arms Show at the MD State Fairgrounds Cow Palace in Timonium were incorrect. The show will be held Saturday, March 15 from 9 – 5 and Sunday, March 16 from 9 – 3. Somehow last



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

year's flyer found its way into the
Newsletter. Mea Culpa. – Ed.