



MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

President's Message – July 28, 2016

Our special July event with Lt. Col. Ralph Peters has come and gone. By all accounts, it was a rousing success. Our speaker had as many good things to say about his audience as his audience had to say about him. We issued 550 tickets with more than 475 people attending. A lot of hard work went into putting on this meeting. Special thanks to our Communications Chair, Caroline Kennedy, for her outstanding job as the chief organizer of the event. Thanks also to Joe Roney and John Kemp for their invaluable assistance.

We hosted two special guests from the Brunswick, N.C. Civil War Roundtable for the Peters presentation. Their current president and one of their founders were here to attend and also meet with some of our members. Brunswick is the largest roundtable in the nation with over 1,000 members. They had contacted us to arrange discussions as to how we might borrow current practices from each other that could help our respective organizations. There was a lot of swapping of ideas, and the Executive Committee will be considering some of them in the coming months. Thanks to Dale Conrad, Bob Waite and others for hosting our visitors while they were here.

On September 14 we begin our new program year. Our first speaker will be author Carolyn Newton Curry. Her book *"Suffer & Grow Strong: The Life of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1834-1907"* is a fascinating look at privileged life in the South before the war and the hardships after.

Please try to get your membership renewal in before the September meeting to avoid long lines at the membership table. There is a renewal form elsewhere in this newsletter.

As always, please consider volunteering your time and talent to the LCWRT. We currently have openings on the Program Committee and the Communications Committee. We are also in search of a Chair for the Hospitality Committee. Please see any member of the Executive Committee (see the roster in this newsletter) to sign up.

Regards, Gary Welsh
President, LCWRT, Inc.

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Ralph Peters Spoke to a Huge Crowd at Magnolia Hall

"I'm trying to write Civil War novels that dramatize history and that are much more accurate and realistic than books in the past." — Ralph Peters

Fascinated by our Civil War since childhood, Peters has made it a lifelong study. His novels on the subject have won numerous prizes, including the American Library Associations' Boyd Award (twice), the Herodotus Award and the Hammett Prize. He was also the 2015 recipient of the General Goodpaster Award as a distinguished American soldier-scholar.

His latest climactic novel *The Damned of Petersburg* is the fourth volume in his five-book cycle on the war in the eastern theater that began with *Cain at Gettysburg*. The other books in the series are *Hell or Richmond* and *Valley of the Shadow*.

Autographed Books Available

For those of you who missed the Ralph Peter's event, there are autographed books available at E. Shaver's Bookseller & Tea Room on Madison Square in Savannah – 326 Bull St. Also, at McIntosh Bookshoppe, 919 Bay St., Beaufort and Beaufort Bookshop, 2127 Boundary St. in Beaufort. We had a fun time at E. Shaver's in Savannah when some of his old friends came to his book signing. Beaufort Bookshop graciously hosted the book signing at the Magnolia Hall presentation. Please patronize these fine mom and pop booksellers and show your appreciation for their contribution to our program.

Veteran shines light on unsung heroes, war lessons –

Magnolia Hall filled during Civil War presentation
The Sun Today, on Wednesday, July 20th by Noelle Wiehe

To a room full of veterans, the harsh realities of war were lived firsthand and memories of unsung heroes live on in soldiers who served. What rang true in a July 13 presentation on the Civil War in Magnolia Hall was a revelation. “We're not here to fight the War again; we're here to learn about it,” said Caroline Kennedy, Communications Chairman for the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, as she introduced retired Lt. Col. Ralph Peters as part of the LCWRT series.

The LCWRT is an organization meant to remind people that the war continues to be relevant and fundamental to the understanding of America and its history, said Ron Roth, former president of the LCWRT.

Kennedy said what drew her to Peters at first was his love of Shakespeare and the Bible.

Peters, a retired U.S. Army officer and former enlisted soldier, as well as prize-winning, bestselling author is known for his appearances on FOX NEWS CHANNEL, presented “1864, Our Civil War's Savage Year,” to a room full of Sun City residents and LCWRT members.

Bonnie Dreyer, who said her son Steven, was a Civil War buff, showed up early to the event where Peters signed copies of his latest book, “The Damned of Petersburg.” “We watch the colonel all the time on FOX NEWS,” Dreyer said and jokingly added, “I warned him, 'you're in the FOX NEWS area, now.'”

Aldo Notargiacomo belonged to the LCWRT and watched Peters on FOX. As well. “I’m a big fan of the Civil War, and this is the first time I’ll hear him talk, so I’m anxious to hear him,” Notargiacomo said.

Peters did not disappoint as he spoke about 1864 as a “savage year,” but also the year warfare turned modern. He discussed actions and decisions of known leaders during the war, unknown or embraced facts surrounding the time and related it all back to modern day America.

“I will tell you, brothers and sisters fellow citizens of this greatest country on earth and greatest county in history, that America is not an end state, it is not a final destination; the United States of America, as we saw in the Civil War, is an ongoing argument about how we, the people, can best self-govern,” Peters said. “Democracy is really, really hard. It is really hard, and it requires men and women of honor and decency to work together.” - reprinted with kind permission from *Bluffton Today/The Sun Today*.

Ralph Peters Meets Paul Grassey At the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum

One of the highlights of Ralph's Lowcountry trip was meeting Paul C. Grassey the oldest living Eighth Air Force pilot during WWII who still leads museum guests on “Missions” once a week. Grassey, a former B-17 Flying Fortress bomber pilot, led us on a bombing mission. It was quite an honor being given our instructions before taking off from an airfield in England by one of the brave pilots who flew in the war. As he spoke about his book *It's Character That Counts*; tears welled in my eyes as we immersed ourselves in our mission over Germany. Paul, in his booming voice, offered his rich narration with a gripping account of his memories, the extraordinary accomplishments and the valor of his young friends that was tested time and time again in their fight for freedom. (The Eighth had the highest casualty rates of all American forces in the war.) His lessons about character and how it matters to young men and women is a great life lesson. I suggest that you buy his book and give it to your grandchildren to help develop their character. They need to know more about our “Greatest Generation.” *It's Character That Counts* may be purchased at the Eighth Air Force Museum bookstore or Amazon.com – cwk

Coming Soon to Sun City TV

Check Sun City TV (www.SunCityHiltonHead.org) for their Broadcast Schedule of Lt. Col. Ralph Peter's presentation at Magnolia Hall on Wednesday, July 13th.

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Civil War Timeline – August 1862

Civil War Timeline – August 29 – September, 1862

August 29-30 - SECOND BATTLE OF BULL RUN (Second Manassas) as the Federals under General John Pope are defeated by CSA forces combined under the proven talents of CSA Generals Lee, Jackson, and Longstreet. An attack by Union General Fitz John Porter is cleanly stopped by CSA artillery. Union General Pope has had his supply lines cut by CSA General Jackson. Pope's attacks continue with little effect. When his last attack against the CSA line fails, he is counterattacked by the greatest simultaneous assault of the war. CSA General Longstreet had reached the battlefield without the Unions immediate knowledge and will order all of his five divisions (25,000 men) to the attack. Pope will be routed, but an effective rear guard action will prevent a repeat of the Union route at Bull Run just a year before.

September 15 - Capture of Harpers Ferry . R.E. Lee divides his smaller army and outflanks McClellan gaining supplies and over 12,000 Union prisoners at Harpers Ferry, W. Virginia.

September 17 - “BATTLE OF ANTIETAM“ (Battle of Sharpsburg, Md.) America's bloodiest day in history. Over 25,000 casualties with the outcome a draw disappointing President Lincoln who wants the Army of Northern Virginia destroyed. Historians felt “Little Mac” did not commit enough reserves into the battle. Only 2/3 of Federal units were engaged . However, he did stop Lee's army which now falls back to Virginia to regroup. McClellan considers Antietam a Union victory. Watching the U.S , the British and French hold back on their planned recognition of the Confederacy.

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The 2016-2017 Program Season

September 14 – 6:45 p.m. Carolyn Newton Curry author “Suffer & Grow Strong: The Life of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1834-1907

October 12 – 6:45 p.m. Phil Leich “Trading With the Enemy: The Covert Economy During the American Civil War”

November 9 – 6:45 p.m. Lou Benfante “Fort Pulaski” (tour the following day)

2017

January 11 - 6:45 p.m. Dr. James “Bud” Robertson - best selling author and acclaimed historian

- February 08 – 6:45 p.m. Dr. William C. “Jack” Davis – Davis has been our most loyal and famous presenter since the Round Table was founded. - “Looking for Loreta”
- March 08 - 6:45 p.m. Ed Bearss, historian, author and veteran - “The Battle of Pittsburg Landing (Shiloh)”
- April 12 – 6:45 p.m. Karen Abbott, author - “Liar, Temptress, Soldier, Spy: Four Women Undercover in the Civil War.”
- May 10 - 6:45 p.m. Dr. Kyle Sinisi, professor at The Citadel, educator, author and historian - “Seeds of Seccession”

NOTE: There is a \$10 Guest/Nonmember fee for any individual lecture. Students and teachers with ID are free.

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Suffer & Grow Strong

The perseverance of Gertrude - a real, life Scarlett O'Hara was indeed remarkable!

by Carolyn Newton Curry, Ph.D.

Suffer and Grow Strong is the story of Ella Gertrude Thomas (1837-1907). Born in Augusta, Georgia, into an aristocratic family, she seemed destined to live the life of a wealthy white Southern woman. She was extremely well read and as a college graduate (Wesleyan Female College in Macon). She left home for college when she was fourteen. When she completed her undergraduate studies, it was a rare accomplishment for a woman of that time, even among the southern elite.

In 1852, the year she graduated from college, she married Princeton graduate, Jefferson Thomas. The young couple was not ready for the responsibilities of marriage. She bore him ten children, only seven survived. At age forty-one, her last child was born. They lived beyond their means which contributed to their unhappy marriage. Many of her feelings about her husband were taken from her diaries by her family. Her prestigious plantation upbringing was painful, taken away from her bit by bit after the end of the Civil War. She became an elementary school teacher to help her family to survive, something that would have been beneath her before the war. She taught from 1878-1884, but her husband's alcoholism and terrible management of money prevented the family from recovering economically.

Later Gertrude became involved with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Because of the couple's poverty, one of her sons, a prosperous physician in Atlanta, invited his parents to live with him and his family. Soon, Gertrude and Jefferson liquidated their property to clear their debts. In Atlanta, Gertrude became involved with the Georgia Women Suffrage Association, even attending their national convention in 1895, and served as its president in 1899. Susan B. Anthony publicly commended her in 1903, making her a life member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

A talented writer and an in-depth thinker, she kept a journal, from 1848-1889 that covered her early teen years, through her courtship with Jefferson and marriage, the trials and tribulations of the War, and their descent into poverty. Through the journal you can see her growth from a pioneer feminist and enjoy her commentaries of the Civil War events she witnessed. Gertrude suffered a stroke and died in 1907. She is buried in Augusta's Magnolia Cemetery.

By embracing the words of Thomas, the reader develops empathy for her emotional pain and humiliation while developing an understanding of the struggles of other groups of people, particularly women during Reconstruction in the South when much of their property was in slaves.

Carolyn Curry holds a BA in English from Agnes Scott College ('64/'66) and MA and Ph.D. degrees in History from Georgia State University. She has taught at the Westminster Schools in Atlanta and The University of Kentucky. Curry is the founder and chair of "Women Alone Together" – a nonprofit foundation created to meet the needs of women who are alone in our culture. She researched and worked on this book for 30 years or more, in the intervals of writing, she raised her family. She never lost her passion for presenting this Civil War era woman as a model for women's suffrage.

The book reads like a gripping novel when in actuality it is a well-researched account of a family through the whirlwind of the War. The diaries and scrapbooks' Thomas kept for forty-one years helped Curry recapture her determination that led to accomplishments and recognition of a great woman who fought not only for herself but the rights of all women. Curry's book presents the opportunity for *Suffer and Grow Strong* to become a major text and an excellent read for people of all different ages and backgrounds.

Curry, who lives in Atlanta, a gifted writer, has given us all a look into the mind and soul and the legacy of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas. Because of Curry's passion

helping women, she founded “Women Alone Together” an organization that offers hope no matter how they became alone and support each other

The book is a treasure. Gertrude may be the most famous diarist of the Civil War and Reconstruction years, second only to Mary Boykin Chestnut. Since her diaries were only released 60 years ago, many Southerners do not know about this strong woman. In 1957, Duke University purchased the 13 volumes that had been retained for three generations by the Thomas' family.

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This ‘n That!

Coastal Discovery Museum – Honey Horn Plantation Discovery Lecture Series

Barrier Island Ecology (Aug. 24th – 3 p.m.)

Presented by Kate Shaefer, South Coast Office Director of the Coastal Conservation League. The ecology of our barrier islands is paramount to consider when making development and shoreline management decisions. This talk will feature conversation about the special places on our barrier islands and what we can learn about our own growth patterns to minimize impact on habitat, water quality and our beachfront and maximize the health of our natural resources. - Register at <http://www.coastaldiscovery.org.event> – registration.

Lowcountry Dolphins (Aug. 31st – 3 p.m.)

Presented by Pete Schramm, Master Naturalist, Museum docent, and former Lucent Technologies Director of Engineering. Dolphins are a diverse and fascinating group, and watching them in their natural habitats can bring the patient observer considerable enjoyment. Often these brief encounters present the viewer with even more questions about the nature of dolphins. This talk will give the audience new insights into this fascinating creature. It is an excellent opportunity to acquire a broad knowledge and appreciation of the bottlenose dolphin. The talk includes an overview of dolphin anatomy, physiology, cognition, communication and social dynamics of these remarkable marine mammals. Conservation and captivity issues are also addressed. - Register (see above). Tel: 843.689.6767 – ino@coastaldiscovery.org – 70 Honey Horn Drive, Hilton Head, Island, S.C. 29926

Heritage Library – History & Ancestry Research Center

on Hilton Head Island

The Heritage Library Foundation, 852 William Hilton Parkway - 2nd Floor Suite A-2, Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29928 – 843.686.6560. (Classes are held on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. There is a \$10 fee.)

Sept. 13 – Historic Sites of Hilton Head Island: John the HL for a one and one-half hour talk about the history of Hilton Head Island and the historic sites on the island accompanied by a map that you can then use for self-guided tour by car or by bike. Hilton Head has an extensive and varied history, and much of that history can still be seen and enjoyed at a variety of sites around the island.

Sept. 20 – The Story of Santa Elena: Before Jamestown and Plymouth, there was the Spanish settlement of Santa Elena on Port Royal Sound in Beaufort County, S.C. The story of Santa Elena, founded in 1566 on Parris Island, is one of religion, geopolitics, cultural clashes, war and struggles to survive. It also is little known – even in South Carolina, where colonial European powers France and Spanish established beachheads in the New World.

Sept. 27 – Pedro Menendez, “The Last Crusader”: Known as the John Wayne of his time, Menendez was an advisor to King Phillip II of Spain and was the founder of the first lasting European settlement in North America at Santa Elena, where he served as Governor of Spanish La Florida

Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage

The Sinclair Service Station, located on Jacob Smart Boulevard (US Highway 17) in Ridgeland, South Carolina was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 13, 2015. The former service station, now owned and occupied by the Morris Center For Lowcountry Heritage, is significant as a well-preserved example of a prototypical Sinclair Service Station along a major transportation route catering to the automobile. The property owner sponsored the nomination and a consultant, Sarah Ward with Ward Architecture + Preservation, prepared the nomination materials. The building was rehabilitated to best preserve this historic integrity of the building for use as a history museum and educational center for the region.

History on Carolina Hash and Other Lowcountry Dishes

Thursday, Sept. 15, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. - by Stan Woodward

Learn about the folk heritage companion to barbecue that is a unique foodway of South Carolina – not found in neighboring states of Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia. Also study about other beloved dishes that are native to South Carolina’s Lowcountry. This program is

sponsored by The Humanities Council S.C., a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. **Lowcountry Heritage located at 10782 S. Jacob Smart Blvd, Ridgeland, S.C. 29936 – call 843.284.9227 or visit www.morrisheritagecenter.org for more information.**

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Excerpt from Louisa May Alcott's Civil War Journal
Louisa May Alcott, Her Life, Letters, and Journals

January 1863
Union Hotel Hospital, George Town, D.C.
Monday, 4th

“Till noon I trot, trot, giving out rations, cutting up food for helpless “boys”, washing faces, teaching my attendants how beds are made or floors are swept, dressing wounds, dusting tables, sewing bandages, keeping my tray tidy, rushing up and down after pillows, bed-linen, sponges, books, and directions, till it seems as if I would joyfully pay down all I possess for fifteen minutes' rest. At twelve the big bell rings, and up comes dinner for the boys, who are always ready for it and never entirely satisfied. Soup, meat, potatoes, and bread is the bill of fare. Charley Thayer, the attendant, travels up and down the room serving out the rations, saving little for himself, yet always thoughtful of his males, and patient as a woman with the helplessness. When dinner is over, some sleep, many read, and others want letters written. This I like to do, for they put in such do things, and express their ideas so comically. I have great fun intraorally, while as grave as possible extraorally. A few of the men word their paragraphs well and make excellent letters. John's was the best of all I wrote. The answering of letters from friends after some one had died is the saddest and hardest duty a nurse has to do.” (Later, Alcott wrote about her experiences at the hospital and became a well-known author. One of her most famous books is called *Little Women*.)

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LCWRT Membership Renewal

Your current LCWRT membership runs through August 31, 2016. For the 2016-2017 Program Year (September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017) we will be offering a promotion to increase LCWRT membership.

If you can enroll two new members, we will waive your membership fee for the year.

Household: Annual Membership (to Aug 31, 2017): \$45.00 _____

We always need/solicit volunteers to continue making the LCWRT successful.

Please check the area(s) for which you are volunteering:

____ Program Committee: help select topics & speakers ____ Assist in Production/Distribution of the *Minie Ball Gazette*

____ Assist on Program Night (Greeter, Collect Tickets or Guest Fees, Tally Program Attendance)

____ Historian ____ Maintain Membership Roster ____ Work at Sun City Club Fair _____
Web Site Maintenance

Mail to or leave in "lower" box: **Joseph Passiment, 62 Concession Oak Drive, Bluffton, SC 29909**

Make Check Payable to: **LCWRT Inc.** Any questions, please call **Joseph Passiment at 732-995-2102**

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2016-2017 Executive Committee

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MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

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NOTE: The website address for the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table (LCWRT) is: www.lcwrt.squarespace.com and it can be used to get current and historical LCWRT information.