



# GENERAL ORDERS

The Newsletter of the  
**Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.**  
**Our 60th Year**  
and The Iron Brigade Association



*Even with all the sorrow that hangs, and will forever hang over so many households; even while war still rages; even while there are serious questions yet to be settled – ought it not to be, and is it not, a merry Christmas? Harper's Weekly, December 26, 1863*

## CHRISTMAS GALA



*The honor of your company is requested at the Wisconsin Club  
Sunday Afternoon, 16 December 2007.  
Join us as we continue our 60th Anniversary celebration.*

**4:15 p.m**

**COCKTAILS & SILENT AUCTION**

**5:45 p.m.**

**DINNER**

*North Woods Salad • Skillet Beef and Chicken Served with Fried Corn  
"Oysters," Buttered Cabbage and Rashed Potato Balls • Classic Baked Alaska*

**7:00 p.m.**

**PROGRAM OF CIVIL WAR & HOLIDAY MUSIC**  
*by the Garth Neustadter Trio*

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., will celebrate its Second Annual Christmas Gala on Sunday afternoon, 16 December 2007.

The afternoon will begin with cocktails and a silent auction followed by dinner. A program of Civil War and holiday music by the Garth Neustadter Trio will put the finishing touches on what promises to be a day filled with fellowship and good cheer.

Civil War attire is encouraged but not required. See page 7 for reservation details.

### GENERAL ORDERS NO. 07-12 DECEMBER 2007

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#### DECEMBER GALA AT A GLANCE

December 16, 2007

Christmas Gala

Music by Garth Neustadter Trio

Wisconsin Club

9th & Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee

(Civil War attire encouraged.)

Jackets required for dining room.)

4:15 p.m. – Cocktails & Silent Auction

5:45 p.m. – Dinner

7:00 p.m. – Musical Program

Dinner – \$23 by reservation

Deadline: December 7

See page 7.

## CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE NEWS

### Klement Scholarship Contribution

Patricia Lynch, representing the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., presented a check for \$750 to Dr. James Marten, chair of the Marquette University Graduate School History Department, at the annual Frank L. Klement Lecture on November 14, 2007. This contribution for the Annual Klement Scholarship Award enables deserving graduate students to attend Civil War conferences and seminars. Dr. Marten announced that, beginning next year, the scope of the Klement Lecture would expand to cover other areas of American history.

### Donations for Camp Randall Guns

The Awards and Donations Committee is asking members to consider making their Civil War-related donations to the Camp Randall Guns Fund. "The project is local, the effects are real, and we're grabbing a piece of history," John Beatty has said. "One of these guns was captured at Shiloh. Can't get much more authentic than that."

Sadly neglected over the years, the old artillery pieces are literally disintegrating in place. Think of the Camp Randall guns next time you want to give of your hard-earned money. To make a donation, contact John Beatty, Awards and Donations Committee chair, at [jdbeatty@amcivwar.com](mailto:jdbeatty@amcivwar.com).

## MEMBER NEWS

### Belle City Rifles

The Belle City Rifles were awarded an Adopt-a-Position certificate for their work in the Volunteers-in-Parks program. If you are interested in joining the Belle City Rifles in their activities at Gettysburg and 2008 volunteer dates, please contact Charlie Jarvis at: [tanuki@milwpc.com](mailto:tanuki@milwpc.com).



### West Side Soldiers Aid Society, Inc.

As part of Remembrance Day activities in Gettysburg, members of the West Side Soldiers Aid Society participated in a demonstration of support for the preservation of a parcel of the Camp Letterman site in Straban Township. Target Corporation has proposed moving the Camp Letterman marker on the York Pike to a location behind its proposed store. For information on efforts to keep this site visible and accessible, visit [www.gbpa.org](http://www.gbpa.org).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS • EVENTS • MEETINGS

### December 10, 2007

Manitowoc County Civil War Round Table Annual Christmas Party  
Manitowoc County Historical Society Heritage Center

### December 11, 2007 • 7 p.m.

Waukesha Civil War Round Table  
Speaker: Lance Herdegen

### December 17, 2007 • 7 p.m.

West Side Soldiers Aid Society Meeting  
Wadsworth Library, VA Grounds  
2nd Annual Christmas Potpourri / Open Forum

### December 18, 2007 • 7 p.m.

Prairieville Irregulars Civil War Meeting  
Student Center Building, Carroll College  
Speaker: Lance Herdegen

### January 8, 2008 • 7 p.m.

Waukesha Civil War Round Table

### January 15, 2008 • 7 p.m.

Prairieville Irregulars Civil War Meeting  
Student Center Building, Carroll College

### January 28, 2008 • 7 p.m.

West Side Soldiers Aid Society Meeting  
Wadsworth Library, VA Grounds  
Speaker: Becky Osborne, "Homespun Remedies"

### February 2, 2008 • 12:30 p.m.

38th Annual Patriotic Luncheon  
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War  
Information: 414-425-4648



Richard Gross  
Oconomowoc, WI

Roger Hamburg  
South Bend, IN

Carl Liebert  
Rhineland, WI

Patrick M. Vance  
Salem, OR

Where have your Civil War wanderings taken you? Have you visited a battlefield or other historic site? Share your reflections in the *General Orders*. Send submissions to **Donna Agnelly, Editor**, 420 Racine St., Unit 110, Waterford, WI 53185 or email to [dagnelly@tds.net](mailto:dagnelly@tds.net).



Like many of you, I have walked the battlefield of Antietam. I have walked the Sunken Road and thought what an incredible shooting gallery it became. I've stood at the Cornfield and remembered the Iron Brigade. I've walked across Burnside's Bridge and shook my head. We all have a battlefield that for a myriad of reasons we hold special. Antietam is mine. There is a sense of timelessness here as well as a deep and profound sadness for what occurred.

If you have not added Antietam to the battlefields you have visited, you should. You can walk the battlefield on a self-guided tour. It's a "good stretch of the leg." Do take the time to stop at the Visitor's Center and listen to the park ranger's description of the battle. It is about 45 minutes long and if the weather is good, you are outside with a commanding view of the grounds. It is well worth it.

But this isn't what this "Wanderings" is about. I would like to tell you about the annual Memorial Illumination at Sharpsburg. I have a daughter who is not really "into" history. When she graduated college back in 2000, she joined the Teach for America program. She called me one day in late April to tell me where she had been placed – Baltimore, Maryland. As you may well imagine, I rubbed my hands in glee! Now I had free lodgings and a base of operation for some Civil War wanderings! So, as a birthday gift that year I asked her to take me to Antietam for the annual illumination.

The illumination is generally held the first Saturday in December with the second Saturday reserved in case of inclement weather. Since I was flying in, I hoped and prayed that the weather would oblige. It did.

For those of you not familiar with this event let me give you some details. Luminaries are lit for every soldier killed, wounded or missing during this single bloodiest day in our history. It takes a volunteer force of about 1,400 people to help with the illumination. The candles are placed in cups and then in sand at the bottom of brown paper bags. The sight is truly unforgettable. The park closes at 3 p.m. that day to allow for preparations. The illumination officially opens at 6 p.m. and, according to the park's chief ranger, "whoever's still in line at midnight will get in." The driving tour through the park is about five miles. Visitors on foot are discouraged. This year's event is on December 1.

On December 2, 2000, my daughter and I arrived at Antietam. We were early and had a few hours to wait before the event started. As we were sitting in her car she, being the practical person she is, said, "So let me get this straight. We're going to drive around this battlefield and look at a bunch of candles in paper bags." (I told you she was practical). I told her that was one way of looking at it.

Finally, 6 p.m. rolled around and cars started to enter the battlefield. As we crested over the first hill the field below us was alight

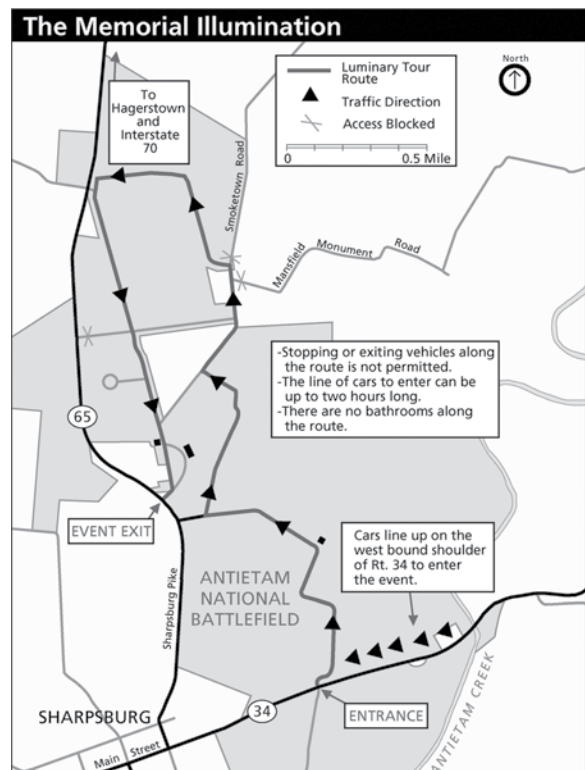
with luminaries. It took my breath away and all I was able to say was, "Oh my," as I grabbed my daughter's arm. She had become very quiet. We drove the five mile route in silence as we viewed the lit candles spread across acres of battlefield. It was truly one of the most moving experiences I have ever had. My daughter also gained a new appreciation and respect for this hallowed ground.

On our way out of the battlefield park, we passed car after car patiently waiting their turn to view the illumination. My daughter told me that when we passed the final car waiting we had covered 3½ miles.

We didn't do a lot of talking on the way home but did talk the next day. She was glad we had shared the experience, and I was glad that we had this special time together.

So, somewhere in your future wanderings put the Antietam Memorial Illumination on your calendar. I promise it will change and enrich you and give you an even deeper understanding for the events that transpired that day.

*Submitted by: Donna Agnelly*



More on the Antietam Illumination: <http://www.nps.gov/anti/planyourvisit/luminary.htm> and <http://valleystudio.net/>



# CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

❧ 1861 ❧

Winslow Homer drew the first Christmas illustration for *Harper's Weekly* magazine. The Christmas cover was a drawing of soldiers enjoying the contents of boxes sent from home.

John Haley of the 17th Maine worked with a road crew the day before Christmas and wrote:

*It is rumored that there are sundry boxes and mysterious parcels over at Stoneman's Station directed to us. We retire to sleep with feelings akin to those of children expecting Santa Claus. We have become very childish in some matters — grub being one of them.*

For many of the men this was their first Christmas away from home and family. Robert Gould Shaw, then a 2nd lieutenant, was on guard duty in Frederick, Maryland, and wrote to his mother:

*It began to snow about midnight, and I suppose no one had a better chance of seeing Santa Claus; but, as I had my stockings on, he probably thought it not worth his while to come down to the guard tent.*

*It is Christmas morning and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, though it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in a merry humor.*

1861 saw the soldiers still in good spirits, still fairly well fed and equipped. They looked forward to Christmas boxes from home. The men would engage in greased pig catching, footraces and jumping matches for entertainment. Small trees would be decorated with hardtack and pork.

Christmas trees were introduced in the 1850s and by the 1860s were starting to be decorated. The decorations would be homemade and simple — dried fruit, popcorn balls, string, colored paper, wax ribbon, spun glass and silver foil. Ornaments would be doll faces, angels, the Christ child and animals.

Sources:  
 Fort Ward Historic Site  
*We Were Marching on Christmas Day* by Kevin Rawlings

## ❧ 1862 ❧

The war was in full force with battles at Shiloh, Bull Run and Antietam and with campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley and the Peninsula.

Thomas Nast drew his first Christmas illustration for *Harper's Weekly*. His first Santa was dressed in patriotic stars and stripes and was pictured visiting soldiers in camp to distribute gifts from

his sleigh. It is an elaborate drawing with a lot of activity going on in the background including soldiers chasing a greased pig while other soldiers can be seen climbing a greased pole to reach a cash purse at the top. Other soldiers in the picture are playing football and still others are preparing the Christmas meal. There is a fort on the hilltop firing a salute to Santa's arrival.

## ❧ 1863 ❧

This year saw the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Thomas Nast portrayed Santa in a patriotic uniform (Union, of course). Parents in the South were preparing their children with the news that Santa might not get through the blockade to deliver presents.

To be home for Christmas was a soldier's burning desire. Sgt. A. R. Small wrote:

*Applications for furloughs have been frequent of late. Sergeant-Major Maxfield sent up his application based on Deuteronomy, 20th chapter, seventh verse: "And what man is there that betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle and another man take her." If approved, he says he shall ask for an extension referring to Deuteronomy, 24th chapter, fifth verse: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go*

*to war, neither shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken."*

To his surprise, Sgt. Small was granted leave while two applications by officers were rejected.

Homesickness was incapacitating. Philip H. Power, Confederate army, wrote his wife:

*I do not care to celebrate Christmas until I can do so with my children and my wife — when will this holiday come...? I hope the children enjoyed themselves yesterday. I thought of them when I first awakened, and their stockings. Fortunate for them they were in Richmond where something could be had from Santa Claus.*

## ❧ 1864 ❧

The Confederacy was floundering; they were besieged at Petersburg and Richmond. Sherman presented the city of Savannah to President Lincoln as a Christmas gift. In Savannah with Sherman, some 90 Michigan soldiers and their captain loaded several wagons with food and other supplies and distributed them in the devastated Georgia countryside.

In Richmond, President Jefferson Davis, his wife Varina and their children hosted a gathering of children at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Alice West, then 11, wrote:

*The tree was a lovely holly laden with homemade candles*

*and dolls made out of hickory nuts and cotton flannel; then there were cotton and Canton flannel rabbits, dogs and cats, and numerous other presents all homemade, as was everything on the supper table — homemade coffee, tea, sugar and everything. I never saw anything that looked so pretty to me.*

Johnny Green of the 4th Kentucky Orphan's Brigade wrote:

*Peace on earth, good will to men should prevail. We certainly would preserve the peace if they would go home and leave us alone.*

## ❧ 1865 ❧

The country was starting to reunite. This December brought the first peacetime Christmas in 5 years.

*Harper's Weekly* printed a poem, "By the Christmas Hearth." The last verse reads:

*Bring holly, rich with berries red,  
And bring the sacred mistletoe;*

*Fill high each glass, and let hearts  
With kindest feelings flow;  
So sweet it seems at home once more  
To sit with those we hold most dear,  
And keep absence once again  
To keep the Merry Christmas here.*

## THOMAS NAST

### The man who created the modern image of Santa Claus

His pen gave this country the donkey and the elephant, symbols that, to this day, define the Democratic and Republican parties. He also created the enduring image of Santa Claus. His engravings graced the sheets of *Harper's Weekly* throughout the Civil War. Thomas Nast, through his wood engravings, helped to shape customs not only here but throughout the world.

Nast was born on September 27, 1840, in Landau, Germany, immigrating to America with his sister and mother in 1846; his father followed four years later. Nast found adjusting to a public school education difficult and spent hours drawing instead of doing his school work. When he was 12, his school master persuaded his parents to take him out of public school and enroll him in an art school. Three years later, at the age of 15, Nast quit the school due to financial problems.

Finding a job at the age of 15 was difficult for Nast. He could neither read nor write and his stature ruled out manual labor. Nast was determined to get a job with *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. In jest, Leslie gave Thomas an "assignment." He was to go down to the Christopher Street Ferry House in lower Manhattan during rush hour and draw a picture of a crowd boarding a ferry. Nast returned the next morning with the completed drawing and was hired on the spot. It was while working at Frank Leslie's, from 1855 to 1858, that Nast learned the art of wood engraving. Nast was laid off in 1858 due, once again, to financial problems.

In 1859 Nast tried his hand at political cartooning and rendered a drawing depicting the police scandal that was going on in the New York City police department. The drawing appeared in *Harper's Weekly* where Nast worked for about a year before the *New York Illustrated News* offered him twice the salary.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Nast wanted to enlist but was convinced by friends that he could do more by covering the war as an illustrator. Nast returned to *Harper's Weekly* seeking a job and was rehired. For the duration of the war Nast spent his time illustrating battles and scenes from the war. In total, Nast did 55 signed engravings for *Harper's Weekly* between 1862 and 1865.

Nast became best known for his Christmas drawings with the first appearing in *Harper's Weekly* in 1862. His Christmas drawings mark the first appearance of Santa Claus as we know him today. In the next 24 years, Nast produced 76 Christmas engravings that were signed and published. He was the first to establish Santa's home in the North Pole "so no nation can claim him as their own." Santa's workshop and the elves as helpers were also Nast's idea. Nast conceived the idea that bad children didn't get gifts from Santa. The custom of sending Santa a letter was also due to Thomas Nast.

In Europe, Christmas was observed for centuries on January 6. By the late 1800's when Nast's Santa gained popularity, Christmas Day was legally established as December 25 in all states and territories of the United States. In addition, an extended school vacation during Christmas became a custom.



***Nast was the first to establish Santa's home in the North Pole "so no nation can claim him as their own."***

Nast was a great friend of Grant and Twain. The three would meet at one of the grand hotels of the time and spend the entire afternoon in conversation.

Nast's influence on America didn't stop with his Christmas drawings. His engravings chronicled the American scene from the Civil War to the turn of the century, highlighting every major national event and issue.

*Harper's Weekly* never put restrictions on Nast's work. Circulation increased as a result of Nast's engravings so he was neither edited nor censored. Following the death of Fletcher Harper, however, the new editor, George W. Curtis, adopted a more conservative policy which resulted in disagreements between Curtis and Nast on particular drawings. Nast's engravings began appearing less frequently and never on the cover. His last two engravings were published in the Christmas issue of *Harper's Weekly* in 1886.

In 1890, Thomas Nast published his own newspaper under the title *Nast's Weekly*. In 1902 he accepted the post as an ambassador to Ecuador and died six months later, on December 7, 1902, of yellow fever. In Nast's obituary *Harper's Weekly* stated, "He has been called, perhaps not with accuracy, but with substantial justice, the Father of American Caricature."

## THE GREAT SNOWBALL FIGHT

**Date: March 22, 1864**

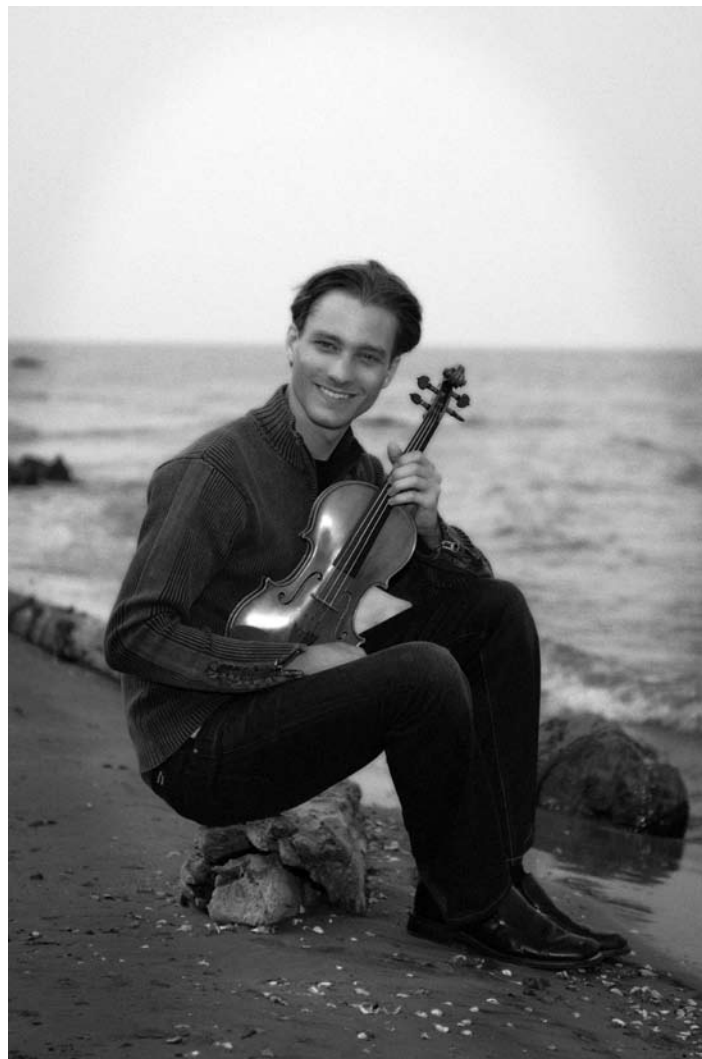
**Place: Confederate Winter Quarters**

Unlike the typical Civil War battle pitting Union forces against Confederate, this battle pitted two Confederate brigades of General Patrick Cleburne's division — Brigadier General Daniel Govan's brigade and General Lucius Polk's brigade — against each other.

Four inches of fresh new snow graced the field. Brig. Gen. Govan's brigade engaged Polk's brigade. General Cleburne also got involved, placing himself at the head of his old brigade and leading an attack on Govan's campsite.

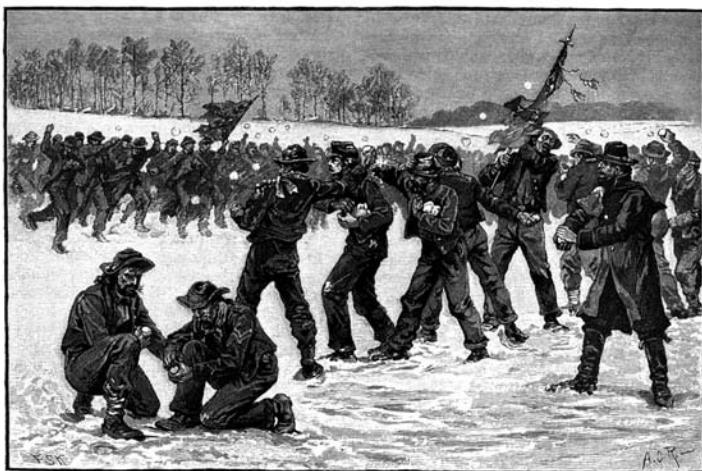
Govan's men were the worse for wear when they launched a counter-attack. The brigade charged forward when Cleburne found himself a prisoner of war. After some tongue-in-cheek deliberation, Cleburne's captors decided to parole their commander and he was released.

The fight continued and Cleburne once again entered the fray — he was captured for a second time! This time his captors confronted him about his "violation of parole." According to one veteran, "Some called for a drumhead court martial and others demanded a sound dunking in a nearby creek." Still others, knowing Cleburne's reputation as a stern disciplinarian, insisted that the general be meted out his own customary punishment. The brigade caught on to this idea and took up the refrain, "Arrest that soldier and make him carry a fence rail!" Cooler heads prevailed. Cleburne was once again paroled. When the snowball fight was over, Cleburne authorized a ration of whiskey to the troops.



### Garth Neustadter Trio

The December Gala will feature 21-year-old Garth Neustadter on violin, saxophone and vocals. Garth is accompanied by his father Gary on percussion, vocals and trombone and his mother Kristen on keyboard. Garth was featured in a 2005 *USA Today* article on 20 of the most accomplished young men in America and was awarded first-prize honors in the international film scoring competition sponsored by Turner Classic Movies. The competition drew from more than 800 participants. The youngest of the five finalists, Garth was awarded a laptop and software worth approximately \$4,000.00 and received a job from a Nashville producer.



## Civil War Round Table Dinner Reservation for December 16, 2007

Mail your reservations by December 7 to:  
Paul Eilbes  
1809 Washington Ave.  
Cedarburg, WI 53012-9730

ALSO, call in reservations to:  
(262) 376-0568

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (meal price \$23.00 per person) for \_\_\_\_\_ reservations for the Christmas Gala of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee. (Please make checks payable to the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc.)

Name of Member \_\_\_\_\_

*General Orders*, the official publication of the Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., is produced September through May and upon request of the Board of Directors.

Send submissions to **Donna Agnelly, Editor**, 420 Racine St., Unit 110, Waterford, WI 53185 or email to **dagnelly@tds.net** with "Civil War Round Table" in the subject line of your message. All submissions must be received by the Editor no later than the 10th of the month prior to the next issue. The Editor reserves the right to select articles and to edit submissions for style and length.

All address changes or problems receiving your *General Orders* should be directed through Membership Chairman Paul Eilbes.

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Yearly memberships available: Individual (\$35), Family (\$45), and Non-Resident (\$20).

Contact Paul Eilbes for information: (262) 376-0568.

The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Inc., admits members of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges and activities of the Round Table.

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## **CWRT of Milwaukee, Inc. • 2008 Meetings**

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January 10, 2008

TBA

February 7, 2008

David Long — TBA

March 13, 2008

Brian Wills — Civil War in Cinema

April 10, 2008

Jennifer Weber — TBA

May 8, 2008

Stephen Engle — TBA

Period dress welcome

May 2008

60th Anniversary Celebration—Part II

Opening of "Trial by Fire," the Civil War Museum in Kenosha

**Speaker Schedule Subject to change. In case of inclement weather, listen to WTMJ or WISN radio.**