

Sumter to Appomattox

The Official Newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of
The American Civil War Round Table of Australia

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A Message from the Chairman –

May I take this opportunity to welcome our members to our 2003 program of Civil War activities and trust that you all had a restful break over the Christmas/New Year holidays.

As you will have seen from the Supplement to this Newsletter, this year's program is an exciting one and builds on our successes of last year. You will note that it has been necessary to change the dates of some of the meetings the program issued with the last Newsletter. Your Committee is seeking, also, to engage some high profile speakers for a small number of special meetings throughout the year. The total program, including these special meetings and our conference in July, gives strong indications that 2003 is going to be a great year for the Chapter.

As has been previously advised, our meeting night has been changed from the first Monday to now be the first or second Wednesday of each second month. This change, which was deftly negotiated by Brendan O'Connell, means that we now can have the individually ordered bistro meals before our meeting – something that most members have wanted but were unable to obtain last year when Mondays were the chef's "night off". Well-done Brendan, the drinks are on us!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank publicly John Cook and his charming wife Helen for extending the invitation to us to use their home for our most successful Christmas function. Whilst a number of us missed the opportunity to do some clay pigeon shooting as we did in 2001 at Roger and Elaine's property at Pokolbin, the function was a relaxed affair. What was really good about the day was the opportunity to meet and socialise with members' partners who generally do not share our passion for matters Civil War. I would like to thank, also, those people who donated prizes for our giant raffle that helped defray costs for the function and, in particular, to Jennifer Kirkby's parents for their \$50 book voucher. This gesture was greatly appreciated, particularly by Tony Kovacevic who won the prize!

Paul Kensey

Next Month's Meeting

Our first scheduled meeting for this year is to be held at our normal venue, the **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, Pacific Highway, Roseville**, on the evening of **Wednesday, February 5, 2003** with the meeting's proceedings to commence at **7pm**.

Members will be able to meet at the Club from 6pm for a bistro style meal – a welcome return to earlier times!

The presentation planned for this meeting is something really special with **Margaret Lee, President, ACWRTA** from Melbourne to speak to the topic:

“What Were the Women Doing When the Men Were Fighting?”

Margaret, a librarian by profession, has undertaken some quite innovative research of Civil War history where she has combined established library cataloguing techniques with leading edge computer technology. Her focus has been on largely untapped areas of the unfortunately named “Sanitary Commission” and the activities initiated by women (and subsequently taken over by some opportunistic men) that supported the Union's war-effort during the critical 1861 - 1865 period. Margaret will explain the various fund-raising “Sanitary Fairs” involving some 13 major fairs, 80+ medium sized fairs and thousands of small local fairs. These events involved some 10,000 women's groups and raised over \$14,000,000 for humanitarian aid for the North. Margaret's research has provided an ideal knowledge base which, when coupled with her passion for the subject, make for a great presentation.

You may be assured of a most interesting, informative and thought provoking presentation on a subject that members would have great difficulty in exploring through the normal Civil War references and sources.

It is proposed that a question and answer/comment session will follow Margaret's presentation and a copy of Margaret's paper will be included with the “mail-out” of next Newsletter to our “Country Members”.