THE CHARGER



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

September 2023 Vol. 48, No. 2

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MEETING – September 13, 2023

PROGRAM – "An Evening with President Lincoln (Lincoln Speaks at Ford's Theatre)"



SPEAKER: Past CCWRT President Mel Maurer as President Abraham Lincoln

LOCATION: The Holiday Inn Independence at 6001 Rockside Road, Independence, Ohio 44131, off US Interstate 77

TIME: Social Hour at 6:00 PM and Presentation at 7:00 PM

For reservations email:

<u>ccwrtreserve@gmail.com</u>. To ensure a dinner is reserved for you, the reservation must be made by Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Website:

http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com

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President's Message

Fellow Roundtable Members:

"It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all of our lives."

Abraham Lincoln's speech to the One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment, August 22, 1864.

"Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest among us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House, yet there is as good a chance for your children as there was for my father's."

Abraham Lincoln's speech to the One Hundred Forty-eighth Ohio Regiment, August 31, 1864.

Abraham Lincoln has always been my favorite president as I'm sure he is for many of our members. He was the right man at the right time. I've enjoyed studying his presidency and his life. I've visited his birthplace, his boyhood homes, and his adult home in Springfield, Illinois. I've seen where he was shot, where he died, and where he was buried. I've seen where he drafted the Emancipation Proclamation and where he delivered the Gettysburg Address. Now I have the privilege of introducing him at our next meeting on Wednesday, September 13th at the Holiday Inn in Independence, Ohio where we can all spend "An Evening with President Lincoln."

I am very much looking forward to this presentation by former president and long-time member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, Mel Maurer. Mr. Lincoln will take questions from the audience after his remarks. It should be a great evening.

On another note, I wanted to give a quick report about the sustainability conference presented by the CWRT Congress that Steve Pettyjohn and I attended in Gettysburg. The mission of the CWRT Congress is to inspire Civil War Round Table leaders to adapt, adopt, and maintain strategies for sustainability. I think we already do many of the things that they suggest and did not hear any earth-shattering new ideas, however, the weekend did provide an opportunity to meet other roundtable leaders around the country and create new friendships. It also provided an opportunity to conduct a reconnaissance of our next field trip site where we are in talks with a group of Pennsylvanians and North Carolinians to conduct a joint field trip. More to come...

We planted sustainability seeds at the Hale Farm Civil War weekend and with the display at Westlake Porter Library that are starting to germinate as we will have three new visitors at our meeting that met us at Hale Farm and two that saw the display at Westlake Porter Library. Thank you to Paul Siedel, Rosemary Brazauskas, and Judge Vodrey for helping out at our information table at Hale Farm and to Steve Pettyjohn and Rich Hronek for putting together a great display about our roundtable at the Westlake Library. In addition to these five new individuals that will be joining us, we will have as of now four other guests at our meeting. The next step in our sustainability journey lies with all of us to make them feel

welcome in our organization. Please make an effort to meet some of these new visitors and get them to want to come back.

Thanks,

Bob Pence

The Editor's Desk



When I was a junior in high school, I told my parents that I wanted to attend Lincoln Memorial University. I was, therefore, quite interested in reading the Dick Crews article recently sent to our members via email. My plan at the time was to major in history, and I had read that Lincoln Memorial University had a strong program in Civil War history. It is interesting how we all came to our passion for the study of the Civil War. My obsession began more than sixty years ago during the Civil War centennial years. Books, TV shows, movies, documentaries were everywhere. We were closer to the war in time, then, and the nightly news brought home just how much unfinished business was left by the war as I was exposed to broadcasts featuring Martin Luther King, civil rights marches in the South and in Washington, D.C., and President Lyndon Johnson signing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. My mother's family were Republicans (my uncle was county chairman for the Party) and my father's family were Democrats. I therefore witnessed quite a few interesting discussions at the dinner table. Mom and Dad made their own compromises, but my generation could not escape discussions about the War and its ultimate meaning.

One of the first books I remember seeing on my mother's shelves at home was a copy of Carl Sandburg's condensed biography of Lincoln. It had red bindings and always attracted my attention when I was three or four years old. I have a copy of the same book in my library now. In addition, my mother had several talks with our relatives about a series of books written by a writer named Bruce Catton. They were especially interested in a book titled A Stillness at Appomattox. I was not able to read at the time, but Catton became a household name for our family. Around 1967, I discovered that my brother-in-law had Catton's books in his library, and I eventually read them all. As a teenager, I became involved in Civil War reenacting. I learned a great deal from the men and women I met through the The "Captain" of our battery hobby. Battery, Pennsylvania (Knap's Artillery) had been a member of a Civil War Round Table in California. That is when I first learned about the existence of this organization of Civil War students.

I eventually attended college as a history major. It was not, however, Lincoln Memorial University. My parents knew nothing about the institution, and it was decided, for expenses sake, that I would attend our local school, Waynesburg College. Since then, I added an MA in history from Duquesne University and a law degree from Pitt. A few decades later, I

found time to write and publish a couple books on my home county (Greene County, Pennsylvania) during the Civil War era. A copy of one book was sold to a library of a Civil War Round Table in Australia. As I look back, I am grateful for the time and place in which I was raised. I have experienced a great deal of pleasure in my

Civil War journey; and, in the process, I have met some great people, including the members of CCWRT. As this new meeting year continues, I look forward to meeting many more of you and your guests and hearing the story of your Civil War journeys.

--Kent Fonner



September 21-24, 2023

Annual Field Trip – Manassas, Virginia: First and Second Battles of Bull Run
The 2023 field trip is to Manassas, Virginia where we will study the Battles of
First and Second Manassas (Bull Run), Kettle Run, and, as a bonus, Bristoe
Station. Dates include travel time.

More information about the 2023 field trip is available on the Roundtable's website as a <u>downloadable PDF</u>.



Ohio Defends Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg

By Dennis Keating

In the history of the successful Union defense at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania against Robert E. Lee's second invasion of the North, much attention on the second day (July 2, 1863) has been paid to Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine and it defense of Little Round Top at the Eastern end of the Union line. Much less has been paid to the equally heroic defense of Culp's Hill at the Western end of the Union line on July 2 and 3. Of the thirteen Ohio infantry regiments in the Army of the Potomac which were engaged at Gettysburg, several played important roles in the defense of Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill – the 4th, 5th, 7th, 25th, 29th, 66th, 75th, and 107th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

After the retreat of the 1st and 11th Corps of the Union Army at the end of July1, 1863, a key decision of Richard Ewell, succeeding Stonewall Jackson killed at the battle of Chancellorsville, was made that evening. Instructed by Lee to attack the Union forces then defending Cemetery and Culp's Hills "if practicable", that evening Ewell made the decision against renewing the Confederate offensive, despite the emphatic advice of Generals Jubal Early and Isaac Trimble that he should send troops to occupy Culp's Hill. Lee later met with Ewell (and Early and Robert Rodes) to discuss an attack early the next morning. They advised Lee to attack instead the Union left flank. Lee would take their advice, leaving Ewell's corps to make only a diversionary movement against Culp's Hill.

Meanwhile, on Culp's Hill, General George "Pop" Greene, commander of the Third Brigade, Second Division, Twelfth Corps – known as the "New York" Brigade being composed of five New York regiments, had his small force entrench their position in the early hours of July 2, despite Division commander John Geary's objection. Aligned adjacent to Greene's troops was the Corps' First Brigade commanded by Charles Candy (of the 66th OVI), which included four

Ohio regiments among its six: the 5th (the "Cincinnati" regiment), 7th (the "Roosters" from Cleveland), the 29th, and the 66th. Greene's ordered breastworks would play a key part of the successful Union defense of Culp's Hill. Clevelander Sherman Norris of the 7th recalled:

"[The Rebel formations in front] melted away before our volleys, and after they had been broken, numbers of the enemy took refuge behind trees and rocks. We put in the time while waiting for the next charge sharp shooting at them. A spot of gray showing from behind a tree, or a hat above a rock, was sure to draw the fire of a dozen muskets." (Baumgartner, p. 139)

On Cemetery Hill, three more Ohio regiments were critical to its defense: the 25th, 75th (commanded by Andrew L. Harris, who in 1906 became the last of Ohio's Civil War veteran governors) and 107th Ohio Volunteer Infantry of the Second Brigade (known as the "Ohio Brigade") of the First Division (commanded by Adelbert Ames of Maine, who previously commanded the 20th Maine) of the Eleventh Corps.

Instead of an early morning July 2 demonstration by Edward "Alleghany" Johnson's division, due to the delay by James Longstreet in organizing and placing his corps' attack against the Union left, Ewell did not order an attack against Culp's Hill to begin until about 6 PM. This delay allowed the Union defenders to further strengthen their position. However, while facing the Confederate attack, Union commander George Meade ordered the 12th Corps troops to move to reinforce the Union left. Due to command confusion this included Geary's division except that Pop Greene's brigade of 1,350 stayed on Culp's Hill to face the advance of Johnson's 4,000 Confederates.

As darkness covered the hills, Greene's entrenched soldiers fought off Johnson's attacks. The Confederates charged Greene's trenches four times. At one point, they were unknowingly within only 500 yards past Greene's line to the Baltimore Pike, the lifeline of the Union army.

Likewise, on Cemetery Hill, the Union defenders successfully fought the attack by Early's division, including that of Harry Hays' Louisiana "Tigers" brigade. Pfantz recounted:

"Sgt. George S. Clements of the 25th Ohio remembered the Johnnies charging down the hill from the left and toward him. 'They 'put their big feet on the stone wall and went over like deer, over the heads of the whole regiment, the grade being steep and the wall not more than 20 inches high' '.' (p. 257)

The 107th Ohio fell back to the top of Cemetery Hill. Pfantz recounted:

"When Lt. Peter F. Young, its adjutant, reached there, he saw some Louisianans who had gotten around the regiment's right and were already at [a Union battery], 'yelling like demons at the supposed capture'. Young saw that it was of the utmost importance that they be driven back and feared that the day would be lost if they captured and held the gun position. At this time, St. Frederick Nussbaum called Young's attention to a Louisiana color-bearer...who was waving a flag near the battery while several soldiers rallied around him. Young ordered the Ohioans near him to fire at the knot of Confederates, and they did so, scattering them and wounding the color-bearer, who dropped to one knee while still holding the flag. Wanting to inspire the men of the

107th Ohio, Young rushed forward, shot the man with his revolver, and sprang for the 'vile rag'. At this time, a Louisianan...seized the flag but fell back to the ground with it. Young wrestled the flag from the Confederate. Then, with the flag in one hand and his revolver in the other, Young turned back toward his men. The Confederates shot him in the shoulder, but he was able to stumble to the safety of the 107th's line, where a sergeant caught him and kept him from falling. A rebel lieutenant followed Young with a drawn sword, seeming intent on getting the colors back, Lt. Fernando C. Suhner intercepted the Confederate and downed him with a sword cut to the shoulder. The colors of the 8th Louisiana remained in Federal hands." (H. Pfantz, p. 271)

Reinforcing the 11th Corps regiments came the First Brigade (the "Gibraltar" Brigade) of the Third Division of the Second Corps commanded by Sam Carroll. It included the 4th and 8th Ohio regiments. It charged through the Evergreen Cemetery and sent Early's attackers back down Cemetery Hill.

At the end of this unusual battle in the darkness, a full moon arose over the battlefield.

The next morning, Ewell renewed his corps' attacks on Culp's Hill. In addition to Candy's Brigade, Thomas Kane's Second Brigade of Geary's Division joined to fill the gap between Greene's position and the Baltimore Pike. This was supposed to coincide with Longstreet's attack on the Union center but that did not begin until later after the massive Confederate artillery bombardment that preceded the Pickett-Pettigrew charge. The Confederates attacked Greene's line three times. At his left was the 66th Ohio at the summit of Culp's Hill.

Also joining his New Yorkers during the fight were the 7th Ohio and the 29th Ohio, also from Candy's Brigade. Pfantz recounted:

"The 7th Ohio, sent from Candy's brigade earlier in the morning, was also in Green's rifle pits when the Stonewall Brigade attacked. They watched the Virginians, formed in more than one line as they saw it, begin their charge from far down the slope. The men of the 7th held their fire until the first line was well within their range. Col. William R. Creighton ordered them to open, firing by rank, first the front rank, then the rear. The gray line melted away before their solid valleys, many Confederates taking cover behind the numerous rocks and trees on the slope." (p. 323)

During the Confederates' last assault, Marylanders of the Southern 1st Maryland Battalion fought the Union Marylanders of the 1st Maryland, Eastern Shore regiment.

As some of the Stonewall Brigade signaled surrender, William Creighton, commander of the 7th Ohio, wrote:

"At the time the white flag was raised, a rebel officer (Major B. Watkins Leigh, Assistant Adjutant-General to General Johnson) was seen to come forward and endeavor to stop the surrender, when he was fired upon by my men and instantly killed." (H. Pfantz, p. 326)

At the end of Ewell's July 3 assaults on Culp's Hill, 78 Confederates surrendered to the 7^{th} Ohio and five to the 29^{th} Ohio. Harry Pfantz recounts (pp. 356-357):

"At about midnight, a Confederate sergeant stole up to the position of the 7th Ohio Regiment and approached its colors, which were propped against the works. The sergeant was downslope and could not reach over the head log, so he attempted to capture the colors by reaching through the slot beneath the log and raising the flag until it was high enough to topple over the parapet and into his arms. The Confederate awakened the sleeping color sergeant, who shot and killed him. The shot aroused other sleeping Buckeyes who assumed that there was attack and blazed away into the darkness. At daybreak of 4 July, the men of the 7th found that they had been alarmed by only one man."

Pop Greene's small Brigade had 67 killed, 212 wounded, and 24 missing (a casualty rate of 21.3 percent). John Cox argued (p. 153):

"Brigadier General George Sears Greene and his men...won the battle of Gettysburg on the evening of July 2, 1863, at Culp's Hill. The heroic defense of the right flank by Greene and his men saved Major General George C. Meade from his biggest mistake of the battle, the consequences of which would have been disaster. Greene's defense not only secured the right flank, but also the safety of Cemetery Hill and the Baltimore Pike. The loss of Culp's Hill would have caused a complete and total collapse of the Army of the Potomac's position at Gettysburg. The possible loss of the army's position, due to the failure to maintain control of Culp's Hill, could have lost the army's ammunition trains and artillery reserve, not to mention its best line of retreat. Summarily, without Greene's gallant and bold stand, the battle of Gettysburg would have been more than a defeat for Union arms, but rather a horrific catastrophe. These observations, however, are needless, because Green and his men did their duty."

Ohio's forces at Gettysburg totaled 4,400, of whom 1,271 became casualties. The 25th Ohio had 220 men at the beginning of the battle. After the first day's battle at Blocher's Knoll, it had fewer than 60 left to fight. After its defense of Cemetery Hill, the 25th had suffered a total casualty rate of 84 percent.

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Mackowski, Chris, Kristopher D. White, and Daniel T. Davis. *Stay and Fight It Out: The Second Day at Gettysburg, July 2, 1863, Culp's Hill and the North End of the* Battlefield. Savas Beatie, 2023.

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Some of Colonel Ellis' "Bullfrogs," Company H, 124th New York Infantry

A Ribbiting Order: "Squat My Bullfrogs"

© Brian D. Kowell, March 2023

On the march north towards Gettysburg, the temperature on June 19th was stifling. It was worse for the troops in the rear of the long III Corps column as the dust clouds produced by the foot pounders was almost suffocating. As soldiers would do on the march in extreme heat, they lightened their loads, discarding such heavy things like overcoats and blankets.

As the "Orange Blossoms" of the 124th New York Infantry, Ward's Brigade, Birney's Division, marched that day, the weather began to change near day's end. "The mercury fell thirty or forty degrees," one III Corps soldier wrote, "followed by a cold thunderstorm" causing much

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"suffering among the troops," especially those who "now need[ed] the overcoats and woolen blankets they had thrown away" many miles back.

"The rain poured down in torrents" as they marched through the night north to Gum Springs, Virginia. "It was pitch-dark" as the Orange Blossoms "floundered in the now muddy roads, stumbling over stumps and fallen trees...tumbling here and there." Well after midnight, the order to halt was given in what turned out to be a swampy meadow.ⁱⁱ

The regiment's "Colonel [Van Horne] Ellis tumbled with his horse into a ditch, but fortunately escaped with no greater injury than an extra coating of Virginia mud," remembered Captain Charles H. Weygant of the 124th. Regaining his feet, "Ellis shouted at the top of his voice, partly, I have no doubt, for the benefit of his new brigade and division commanders – whose headquarters he supposed to be within hearing distance – the rather unique military order, 'Squat, my bullfrogs."

The rain continued to pour down and "the damp night air chilled us. Very few of our number had blankets, but we made the best of our unavoidably uncomfortable situation and, squatting or lying down with our shelter tents about or under us, nearly all managed to get a little sleep." iv

Weygant, Charles H., History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Regiment. New York State Volunteers. Newburgh, NY, 1877. pp.163-164.



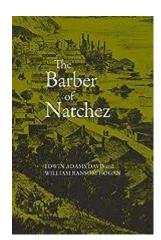
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¹ Bartlett, Asa W., History of the Twelfth Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, Concord, NH, 1897. p. 114

^{II} Rauscher, Frank. *Music on the March, 1862-'65, with the Army of the Potomac, 114th Regt. P.V., Collis' Zouaves,* Philadelphia, 1892. pp. 76-77



BOOK REVIEWS



William Johnson, *The Barber of Natchez*; compiled by William Hogan and Edwin Davis. Louisiana State University Press:1954, 1973, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1954 and 1973 (ISBN 0-8071 0212-1, Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 54-10885)

If one wanders up the Mississippi River from New Orleans via Rt. 61 on the east bank of that river they will pass a myriad of small southern towns: St. Francisville, Louisiana; Woodville, Mississippi; Natchez and Vicksburg, Mississippi, among others. One of the more interesting places is Natchez, Mississippi. Here the antebellum south seems to come alive. Many large mansions can be seen and for a week in April many of them are open to the public on Pilgrimage Week. Natchez was once the

wealthiest city in the U.S. as one can easily see. All this prosperity of course was built upon the labor of enslaved African-American men and women. When I say ALL I say that with the realization that there are exceptions to every rule including this one. Such an exception was William Johnson. Johnson was an enslaved individual who lived from 1809-1851 in Mississippi. In 1814 William Johnson, a white man, made a formal declaration that he intended to emancipate his slave Amy. Amy settled in Natchez and kept a small store. In 1820 William Johnson (white) again petitioned the Mississippi Legislature to emancipate Amy's son, William, the enslaved having taken the name of his emancipator and who may have been his father. William who had been educated soon began to keep a diary of his daily activities and business accounts. He became a barber, businessman, investor and yes slave holder. The diaries bring to light the fact

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that although a free African-American in the antebellum south could and did become successful and wealthy they could not of course vote, bear witness against a white person in court or serve in the military. Down through the years William Johnson left a very accurate account of life for a free African-American in the antebellum south.

The diary was held by the family who released its contents to the public in 1951 and was published in 1954. Historian Alan Nevins thought "Johnson's diary one of the most interesting of American diaries." Bell Wiley noted that "there is nothing like it in American historical literature." And Hodding Carter concluded that "it is no overstatement to say that this is the most unusual record ever kept in the United States."

There is no reference in the diaries as to who William's father was however it is assumed that it was his emancipator whose name he took. Following his training he eventually purchased three barber shops and a bath house in the city, and he eventually purchased several farms and businesses in the Natchez area. Johnson eventually built a large brick building in Natchez where he raised a family of ten children. That building still stands today.

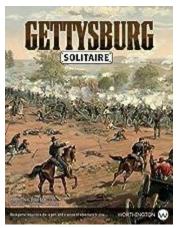
Some excerpts from Johnson's diary include his comments on social conditions, visits by famous personages of the time, comments on business conditions and of people in town, and always being careful not to become controversial or critical of his neighbors. He entered many business transactions with white people and carried on business with several other free black men who lived in the area at that time. As was the law at that time people of color could not ride in public or private conveyances with white people or sit with them at public gatherings so he wrote in his diary one day: "Went to the Methodist Church and listened on the Out Side of it at Mr. Maffit preaching" He had comments on the annexation of Texas, and General Jackson's visit to Natchez. He records the many fights and duels that took place in Natchez at that time. One newspaper recorded that "...we will merely record the fact that such an array took place, that blood was shed and probably loss of life will follow, and at the same time declare that such a disaster could never have occurred but for the abominable practice of carrying arms!" Seems that the more things change the more they stay the same.

Johnson met his end in the most unfortunate of circumstances. He entered a dispute with a fellow landowner. The man waited while Johnson and two farm hands were on their way along a deserted country road. Johnson was shot and died shortly afterwards. The trial revolved upon whether the perpetrator was white or of mixed race. The two witnesses who were riding with Johnson were black, and saw the perpetrator, the law stated that a black person could not bear witness against a white person in court. The trial revolved upon whether the defendant was white or of mixed race. If he was white, there were no witnesses according to the law and it could not be proven that he was of mixed race, so the trial ended in an acquittal. William Johnson's family never experienced justice in this case. His descendants continued to occupy his home at Canal and State Streets until 1990 when the National Park Service purchased the home and today it is open to the public. It is a must see on any trip to Natchez as is a stay on one of the antebellum mansions that serve as a B & B.

A plaque on the Johnson House is inscribed: "This house was built by a man of character and high community standing, a man who was the diarist of antebellum Natchez, but his murder was avenged by law no more than if he had been a common slave."

Contact Information:
Natchez National Historical Park
William Johnson House
210 State Street
Natchez, Mississippi 39120

--Paul Siedel



Grant Wylie, Sean Cooke, and Mike Wylie, *Gettysburg Solitaire: An Original Bookgame.* Worthington Publishing, 2022.

Gettysburg Solitaire, as the subtitle indicates, is a wargame in book form designed to be played solo. The authors provide four pages of rules/instructions for playing the game, a page outlining the conditions of victory, a page of detailed sample play, and twenty-four game maps for twelve games reconstructing the July 1st action north and west of Gettysburg and on Cemetery Hill and twelve games revolving around the action on the Union left flank at the

Peach Orchard and Round Tops on July 2^{nd} . To play the game, one only needs a pencil or pen, a six-sided die, and the maps and instructions in the book.

As a solo player, the reader plans tactical moves for the Confederate side, picking one of seven "Actions." The Union side responds by a role of the die that corresponds to one of six "Union Actions" and/or six "Random Events." The Union response must be played on the map first. The Confederate Action cannot be changed, but it must be played out regardless of the effects of the Union Actions or Random Events. This can make the game challenging. For example, on July 1, a random event that may occur is a Union calvary charge by Buford's forces against a Confederate flank that results in the destruction of a Confederate brigade. In another random event, Lee issues an order not to bring on a general engagement, cancelling all planned Confederate assaults. Depending on the relative strengths of the opposing forces, a random Union Action may include assaults or counterattacks on the Confederate forces. These actions are controlled by the die cast.

The forces depicted on the maps are named for the division commanders. Each division has several blocks drawn in position representing the brigades. While not as much fun as a

multiplayer game, *Gettysburg Solitaire* offers some interesting challenges for the solo player, and the rules can be used to work out some interesting "what if" scenarios.

--Kent Fonner



This year we want to attract more members to the CCWRT. Displays like this (from the Hale Farms Civil War Days in August) will be appearing in various libraries and public spots throughout the area. Steve Pettyjohn and Rich Hronek had a very successful display at the Westlake Porter Library. Any ideas you have to help grow our membership are appreciated.

FINIS!