



# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT DISPATCH



Summer 2003

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## BOSCOBEL G.A.R. HALL HERITAGE ALERT!

As announced at the 7 June Department Encampment: There has been an ongoing dispute regarding ownership of some of the artifacts contained in the Boscobel G.A.R. Hall. For many years, after the G.A.R. had died out in that area, the Woman's Relief Corps has cared for the many Civil War artifacts, and G.A.R., SUVCW, and WRC records and property that have been in their possession. Recently Grant County Historical Society claimed they had legal right to the various artifacts. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, Grant County filed suit against the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. This organization had been formed earlier to operate the Hall, and consists of members of the WRC, SUVCW Camp 49, and others from Boscobel and the local community.

The really scary thing about the suit filed is that it mentions no specific articles, but refers generically to "personal property described as historical memorabilia which included flags, pictures, medals, coins, military items, and books ...".

Apparently Grant County (Historical Society) views all of these as public property under their domain (?), and not as the private property of the G.A.R. and its' Allied Orders organizations. Somehow I doubt they would have taken the same measures with the Elks Club, Masons, American Legion, or VFW (etc.) – all similar groups to ours.

At the 2003 Department Encampment Bro. Gary Young did bring the issue to the attention of all present. As a result a Reso-



*New officers for 2003-2004 are: (left to right) Department Junior Vice Commander Kim Heltemes, Senior Vice Commander Alan Wambold, and Commander Lyman Elliot.*

lution was proposed and approved at the Encampment. It has been included as Commander Elliott's Dept. Order No. 2003-5 and may be read on page 3.

Page 4 of this issue contains a more detailed explanation of the events which have transpired in Grant County. It has been edited to fit into this publication, however, the entire document will be found on the Department Web site (look under "News").

The Preservationists, WRC, and Camp 49 need our help! We need to let the citizens of Grant County know that the SUVCW and the WRC are active organizations doing the work that the members of the G.A.R. intended. The SUVCW was named the legal heir to remaining G.A.R. property, and the WRC was their official Auxiliary and assumed the task of caring for G.A.R. property and records; so it would seem clear to most, but there still comes times when it is necessary to take a stand and speak up for what is right.

SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR  
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**JOB OPENING**

Help Wanted: Department Secretary PDC Ron Aronis is looking for an assistant who is willing to help with some of the duties and "learn the ropes" for possibly assuming this very important job in the future. Contact RMASUVCW@aol.com or call (262) 284-3654.

## DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS SERIES 2003

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS NO. 2003-4

REF: Ernst Von Frankenberg

It has come to my attention that Ernst Von Frankenberg, formerly of Camp 2, has cancer. Therefore I request all Brothers to keep him in your prayers. Ernst is one of those "good old boys" who kept the thought and presence of the Sons alive long before most of us were born.

In F, C and L,  
Lyman Elliott  
Dept. Commander



DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS NO. 2003-5

REF: A Resolution in Support of the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists (adopted 7 June 2003 at the Wisconsin Dept. Encampment)

Be it resolved that the Wisconsin Department, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War support the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. in their efforts to maintain and preserve Grand Army of the Republic memorabilia and the John McDermott Post #101 Grand Army of the Republic Hall.

For 75 years they, and the Woman's Relief Corps #32 of Boscobel, and the Department of Wisconsin, WRC have maintained and preserved those Civil War artifacts for American Posterity.

We condemn the efforts of other parties to deprive them of rightfully possessed and protected artifacts and records of the GAR and Woman's Relief Corps.

Therefore, we request that all Wisconsin Camps register their support for the Boscobel Preservationists, and our Sons Civil War Heritage by writing letters of support to the Grant County Independent newspaper of Lancaster, WI, and The Boscobel Dial newspaper of Boscobel, WI.

In F, C and L,  
Lyman Elliott  
Dept. Commander



### PHOTOS FROM THE 2003 DEPARTMENT ENCAMPMENT

At top left, Brother Dean Collins receives a Merit award from Council Member Andrew Bollen, recognizing his efforts at organizing the Memorial Day ceremonies at Calvary Cemetery for Camp 1.

At left, Ms. Karri Bohman of the Veteran's Museum describes the many resources available for research in the museum archives to CC Jim Johnson (Camp 2), Dick Rohan (Camp 5), PI Tom Brown (Camp 1), CC Brian Peters (Camp 8). Additional photos may be found on pages 1 and 7. Thank you to CC Fred Cook for arranging the Museum tour.

# THE UN-CIVIL WAR AND THE BOSCOBEL GAR HALL

BY GARY YOUNG, SECRETARY, L. G. ARMSTRONG CAMP #49

On 30 May 2003, Grant County, Wisconsin filed suit against the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. for the “immediate possession of, personal property described as historical memorabilia which included flags, pictures, medals, coins, military items and books of the value of One Hundred Thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).” This grew out of a demand in the summer of 2002 by the Grant County Historical Society that a First National Confederate flag reputedly captured in the first days battles at Gettysburg be returned to them.

The Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. is a small non-profit corporation formed with the primary objective of preserving and maintaining as a museum the John McDermott Post #101 Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Boscobel, Wisconsin. The GAR Hall is the last remaining GAR Hall in Wisconsin, and one of only three remaining in the Upper Midwest.

## History of Ownership

John McDermott Post #101, Grand Army of the Republic was formed in 1883, with Dr. L. G. Armstrong as its first Commander. John Stahel Camp #34, Sons of Union Veterans was organized in Boscobel, 1897 in support of the Hall. It was later reorganized as L. G. Armstrong Camp #49.

However, by the 1920's there were no active GAR members left, and participation by the Sons of Union Veterans dropped off. Fortunately John McDermott Post #101 Woman's Relief Corps #32 was strong and dedicated. As an Allied Order of the GAR, they became the conservators of the GAR property, Hall and artifacts. Those ladies and the members of the Preservationists have maintained the Hall and preserved the associated GAR artifacts for over 75 years. They have been joined by L. G. Armstrong Camp #49, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, chartered in January of 2003. This Camp is focused on the maintenance and preservation of the Hall, and

meets in the Hall monthly.

In 1888 Tom Cox Grand Army of the Republic Post #136 (re-chartered in 1895 as Post #132) was organized in Lancaster. Its auxiliary, Tom Cox Woman's Relief Corps #47 was organized in 1894. When the Lancaster



Tom Cox GAR Post collapsed due to the aging and death of its members, Tom Cox Woman's Relief Corps #47, as its auxiliary, became the conservators of all GAR artifacts and records. In July of 1942 they collaborated with the Lancaster American Legion Post and signed an agreement to display GAR artifacts and property in the County Courthouse. That agreement

specifically stated that the GAR items were to remain the property of the GAR. They provided display items and managed the display until they disbanded in 1992.

When Tom Cox WRC #47 disbanded, in accordance with their charter ownership of all properties held reverted to the state organization, the Wisconsin Department of the WRC. It was then that State Secretary Arlene Wagner, being the closest active Corps member, took an active role in the management of the display in the County Courthouse, under the auspices of the Department.

## The Hutfill Flag

One of the items of property was a Confederate First National flag captured in the first day's battle at Gettysburg, July 1, 1863 by Private Richard Hutfill, Co. F, 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry Regiment of Ellensboro, Wisconsin. He gave it to his general. General Callis brought the flag back to Lancaster from the war; the flag was given to Tom Cox Post #132. It has come to be known as the Hutfill Flag. It is of silk, hand sewn, and measures five by seven feet.

In 2000, the Wisconsin Department of the Woman's Relief Corps executed a "Deed of Gift" of the Hutfill Flag to the Boscobel GAR Hall Preservationists, Inc. who had raised local funds to build an appropriate display case that would preserve and protect that flag as

*(Continued on page 8)*

## WISCONSIN BROTHERS WHO SERVED AS NATIONAL SR. VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

By JVC-IN-CHIEF STEVE MICHAELS

During the 122 year history of the SUVCW, two brothers from Wisconsin were elected to the post of National Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief. However, neither advanced to become Commander-in-Chief.

Roy R. Lewis, a railroad switchman, joined C.K. Pier Badger Camp #1 just prior to the 1923 National Encampment in Milwaukee. He served as Camp Commander three years later. He was elected Department Commander in 1938; re-elected in 1939. At the height of World War II, the genial Lewis was elected Jr. Vice Commander-in-Chief at the 1943 National Encampment in Milwaukee. In those days, it was customary to elect the JVCinC from the host Department.

His wife Ida, who had served as National ASUVCW President in 1937, died unexpectedly in 1944 and he withdrew from Sons activities for a time.

In 1946, Lewis was elected in Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, but due to illness, did not attend the National Encampment the following year, losing his bid to become Commander-in-Chief. He ran once again for the high post in 1948, at the National Encampment in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but lost to a local man with 50 years experience in the Order.

Franklin S. Hubbard, a U.S. Postal employee, was a charter member of Kenosha's Governor Harvey Camp #34, when it was organized in 1913. He served as the Camp's Commander in 1939, 1940 and 1948. Focused and well-organized, he was elected Dept. Commander in 1947 and was re-elected in 1948. With the declining

GAR (and SUVCW) memberships, he was keenly aware of the our Order's need to change and adapt. Hubbard was appointed National Patriotic Instructor in 1948. In addition to speaking and writing responsibilities, he also oversaw the GAR Fund and the marking of the GAR Highway. In 1949, at the GAR's last National Encampment in Indianapolis, he was elected Sr. Vice Commander-in-Chief. That Fall, he was elected Central Region Commander and chose not to advance further in the National Organization.

### This publication is available electronically!

Would you be interested in receiving the Department Dispatch in electronic form? You save the Department some money in printing and mailing costs, plus the electronic version is in full color! Forty of your Brothers now receive the electronic newsletter — won't you join them? Please contact Signals Officer Kent Peterson at kapeterson@wi.rr.com or (414) 769-0681.

*from SUVCW 69th Annual Nat. Encampment Proceedings  
The Banner, July 1949*

*Kenosha County Historical Society  
Wisconsin Department Orders, 1947-1949*

## 2003 CENTRAL REGION CONFERENCE HOSTED BY DEPT. OF MICHIGAN

The 2003 Central Region conference will be hosted by the Department of Michigan and convenes October 4th at the Grand Rapids Airport Hilton.

This year's conference topic is "Understanding Robert's Rules of Order and How to Use Them." Participants will benefit from the critical thinking, problem solving and group dynamics that will be part of this topic's presentation. The presenter will be PDC Jim Pahl, National Counselor and motivational speaker on various topics.

Participants will be able to take a bus to down-town Grand Rapids and the "sacred ground," called Monument Park. There they will be part of the rededication of one of America's most historic memorials, the Kent County Civil War monument.

Rooms are available at the Airport Hilton at \$75 (king or double) plus tax, if you contact the hotel before September 12th. Call (616) 957-0100. Be sure to mention the SUVCW.

The Department of Wisconsin is scheduled to host the 2004 CRC.

See the newsletter insert for details and registration information, or visit the Dept. Web site at [suvchw-wi.org](http://suvchw-wi.org).

## Sons of Union Veterans Regroup

CAMERON McWHIRTER

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Civil War buff and northern transplant has a simple message for Georgians: The Yankees were the good guys. Eric Peterson, born and raised in Wisconsin, is launching an effort this month to revive a defunct Georgia "camp" of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

The Snellville resident wants the group to achieve what was once unthinkable rehabilitate the name of William Tecumseh Sherman, the Union general credited with burning Atlanta to the ground. "It will be a real hard sell here, and that's part of the trepidation," said Peterson, an insurance collection manager based in Duluth. "Did they do a lot of destruction? Oh yes, but I want to get the story out that this was not some ravaging devil out to burn everybody out."

Peterson -- a former camp commander of the group in Wisconsin -- has approval from the group's national headquarters to restart the James McPherson Camp 1, named for the U.S. major general killed in the Battle of Atlanta.

The first Union Veterans' camp set up in Georgia was established in 1995, but disbanded in 1999, when one of the organizing founders died. Earl Zeckman, an insurance agent in Dacula who had been the former group's treasurer, said, "I would love to see it activated again. . . . There are a bunch of us here, we are just all spread out, sort of hidden."

Peterson has names of about 30 potential members. The group will work to raise money for restoration of Union monuments and graves. It also will visit schools and public events to educate the public on the Union view of the Civil War, Peterson said. Peterson plans to have the camp up and running this year so that it can participate in commemorations next year of the 140th anniversary of Sherman's fiery legacy.

When Peterson and his family moved to Snellville about two years ago, he was shocked at how

Union troops were portrayed at historic sites, museums and re-enactments, he said. Meanwhile, his son, Max, now 15, found himself sitting through history lessons at school that presented Union troops as wanton looters.

When the national office of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War called about re-establishing a



*Eric and Max Peterson*

camp in Georgia, he quickly agreed to command the project. Peterson's efforts parallel others in the South. With so many Northerners moving to the region for jobs and better weather the Union descendants' group has seen growth in states that ancestors considered enemy territory, according to Steve Michaels, the organization's head of recruitment and retention.

In North Carolina, Douglas Elwell, who moved from Iowa, commands a camp that he helped start in Fayetteville. He said another camp has started in Charlotte and another is forming in Asheville. "We haven't gotten negative responses," he said. But the Union descendants' group has a long way to go to catch up with the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Although many more men fought for the United States than fought for the Confederate States, Confederate descendants are much more active in commemorating Civil War heritage. The Sons of Union Veterans has about 6500 members in camps in fewer than 30 states, according to Michaels. By comparison the Sons of Confederate Veterans has about 34,000 members across the country.

Peterson believes his group has fewer members because Southerners are brought up near many of the Civil War battle sites, so the history remains more immediate. "We have a bigger potential membership. . . . but there is just not that commitment in the North as there is in the South" he said. "You can see things in a museum, but it's not the same as visiting a battlefield."

Peterson's son Max had a blunter assessment for the disparity. He said Southerners join because they still are angry that "they got their butts kicked."

## Camp News and Activities

### Old Abe Camp 8

Vince Barker, Jim Waid, and Kim Heltemes installed 11 new Civil War veteran markers in four different cemeteries on one day — April 19, 2003. For Memorial day, the Camp split up, with some of the guys going to King, and others to Oshkosh to march in the parade. The turnout was huge this year. After the Memorial Day service, Camp 8 did a graveside ceremony for two CW veterans with new markers. After that Camp members enjoyed a potluck picnic down in the old GAR section of the cemetery. It is like a park down there, on the river bank, and in fact the foundation of an old gazebo is still visible. The GAR used to have picnics in the same area.

### L.G. Armstrong Camp 49

Camp 49's first Louisiana Crawfish Boil fundraiser was a great success. Patrons and Brothers enjoyed feisty mud-bugs, Louisiana style, Camp #49 made progress towards financial solvency. Work continues on the GAR Hall, including installation of a chandelier, raceway, wire and switch for the stairway, and the paint for the meeting hall floor and the entryway in time for Muskets and Memories. The Camp has been loaned a number of items by the Preservationists for use in the meeting hall including 5 officers chairs, an altar, and officers stations from the Masonic Hall. A Bible is still needed. With the help of the City Utilities a steel plate was placed over the top of the chimney to keep the squirrels out of the hall.

### MG John Gibbon Camp 4

Camp Commander Jim Johnson, David Hinkley, Bruce Laine, Brant Doty of Battery B, Jeremy Johnson & Camp Council #2 Terry Brown march in Waukesha's Memorial Day Parade (*at right*). After ceremonies at

Prairie Home Cemetery, Susan Baker, Executive Director of the W a u k e s h a Historical Society, gave an address at Prairie Home Cemetery. In



other news, Camp 4 has joined in collaboration with Ammi Hawks Auxiliary #5, which meets at the Delafield Town Hall. The Camp and Auxiliary have already teamed up to represent the

Sons and Auxiliary in the Mukwonago Summerfeste Weekend parade and activities.

### C.K. Pier Badger Camp 1 and Alonzo Cushing Camp 5

The 2003 Memorial Day program attracted a record 800 spectators, who participated in an open-air Mass led by Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Fr. Carey Lahrs. Music was provided by the Regimental Volunteer Band, and the Brothers from Cushing's Battery provided a

cannon salute. Rifle and musket salutes were provided by the 5<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Manitowoc Guard and Milwaukee Police Post 415. While Archbishop Dolan's turn at firing the cannon was a highlight of the event, we were also honored with the presence of President Lincoln (Bob Rotgers ) who



*Archbidhop Dolan receives a commemorative plaque from PDC Ron Aronis.*

addressed the crowd with the Gettysburg Address. Camp members also marched in a "Reclaiming Our Heritage" parade at the VA's Old Soldier's Home open house weekend in May and in Bay View for the South Shore Frolics parade in July.

### Henry Harden Camp 2

Members of Camp 2 worked hard to coordinate and host the recent Department Encampment in Madison on 7 June. In addition to fine accommodations at the Inn on the Park, CC Fred Cook made arrangements for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Wisconsin Veteran's Museum, including a trip through the archives. Camp 2

participated in the annual Memorial Day ceremony at Madison's historic Forest Hill Cemetery, and has w o u n d u p observances of the Camp's centennial.



*Discussions at the Encampment.*

The *Wisconsin Department Dispatch* is published three times per year for members of the Wisconsin Department, SUVCW. Articles, photos and news items may be submitted to SVC Alan Wambold at 1434 Union Ave., Sheboygan WI 53081 or awambold@powercom.net. Editorial deadlines are April, July and October 15.

Visit us on the Web at  
<http://www.suvcw-wi.org>

## DEPARTMENT EVENTS CALENDAR

8-10 August	SUVCW National Encampment, Springfield, Ill.
20-21 Sept.	Midwest Civil War Collectors Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds, Wheaton, IL
28-29 Sept.	Wade House Civil War weekend, Greenbush, WI
5 October	Central Region Conference, St. Louis, Missouri
2 November	Harvest Ball, Memorial Hall, Racine, Wis.
11 November	Veteran's Day
16 November	Remembrance Day parade and ceremonies, Gettysburg, PA

(Continued from page 4)

well as display it for historical education purposes in the GAR Hall. And that is where it rests today.



### Ownership Formally Recognized

In the June of 2002 the state president of the WRC, Doris Cruckson, was physically confronted by a member of the Grant County Historical Society who claimed that she had no right of access to the flag display case or its contents. Pres. Cruckson immediately requested clarification from the County Board as to ownership of the artifacts. The County checked its records for ownership documentation and found none. At a June 2002 County Properties Committee meeting the WRC's ownership rights were formally recognized.

### County Reverses Itself

The Grant County Historical Society took exception to this and pressed the County Properties Committee to rescind its decision. In two subsequent meetings, the GCHS was represented by attorney James Halferty who asserted that that all of the GAR property, including the Hutfill flag, actually belonged to the GCHS. The Historical Society representatives claimed that the Committee had made a mistake in June, that the County owned the flag, and it should

not have been yielded to the WRC. Not having any documentation of their own, attorney Halferty asserted the documentation presented by the WRC was irrelevant. The astonishing result was a committee resolution, crafted principally by Mr. Halferty, reversing its decision and requesting return the flag within 60 days.

The WRC president declined to this request, and insisted that it was the rightful property of the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc., and that the request had no basis in law or circumstance.

### County Files Suit

On 30 May, 2003, a pleading was filed in Grant County Circuit Court by attorneys for Grant County seeking possession of "personal property described as military memorabilia which included flags, pictures, medals, coins, military items and books of the value of One Hundred Thousand dollars (\$100,000.00)." Interestingly, the attorneys who filed the pleading were James B. Halferty and R. R. Roggensack.

For some 75 years, through the Great Depression and several wars, the ladies of the Woman's Relief Corps, working in recent years through the Boscobel Preservationists, have honored and preserved the memory of the men of the G.A.R with their own private resources and the labor of hundreds of volunteers. Now a County government seeks to deprive them of their rightfully possessed property.

Please join in supporting the Boscobel Grand Army of the Republic Hall Preservationists, Inc. as they continue to preserve and protect the memory and property of our valiant ancestors. Donations for support of this effort can be made to the treasurer of the Boscobel GAR Hall Preservationists, Loretta Hooker, 4816 Rothman Place, Monona, WI 53716-2010. Our ancestors stood up for a nation and for us. It is now time for us to stand up for them.