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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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President's Message

Greetings One and All,

Ah Spring!

Give me the splendid silent sun
With all his beams full-dazzling.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Whitman wrote these words in the Spring of 1864. He, along with the rest of the nation at that time, was ever more horrified as the Civil War ground on. As we know now, the War would rage ferociously for another full year with mind-boggling casualties, misery, and devastation. Each side fought with desperate tenacity as the future of our country hung in the balance. Whitman's words were his prayer of longing for peace. The year 1864 is arguably the most dynamic year in our history.

This month our featured speaker is George Beitzel. He is a devoted Civil War Round Table participant and has been the President of the Elk Grove CWRT for many years. He's a graduate of UC Davis and has a military background. George is married to the lovely Joan, and will be speaking on the topic of General Robert E. Lee. What a treat for us to have such an insightful presentation of an iconic figure!

Delrae Pope, Promotion and Events Director of Gibson Ranch, has contacted me to assess the number of shirts she will have to order for this year's Civil War School Days. The date is May 2. If you haven't signed up or are still considering whether to participate, let me assure that this event is actually one of the most lively and fun activities we have. Join us. (Oh, it's easy.)

Hats off to our 2014 West Coast Conference Committee! Our team has worked nonstop to orchestrate this Conference with some of the discipline's most popular and varied speakers. I've had the chance to view the venue at the Crowne Plaza in Sacramento. It really is fantastic, open, and modern. We will have a separate room for lectures with theater seating. I've already booked my room. We ask our members to please commit as early as you can, so that we can get an accurate picture of our numbers.

From time to time, I get requests from Civil War aficionados around the country advertising trips, books, or projects. I've decided to include a recent notification for your consideration. It seems a fifth grade teacher in Reynoldsburg, Ohio took his students to Chickamauga National Military Park and found the monument of the troops who stormed Missionary Ridge badly damaged. His students are garnering support to help get the monument fixed. They have partnered with the National Parks Service to get this monument repaired. I can't think of a better way to interest young people in the Civil War than to support the efforts of these children. Here is the link to their endeavor:

<http://www.chattanooga.com/2014/2/4/268867/Ohio-Students-Leading-The-Way-In.aspx>

They are asking us to spread their story. I'm inspired!

Happy April,

Anne Peasley, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, March 12, 2014
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 39

MEMBERS – 32: Anne M. Peasley, President, Donald J. Hayden, Vice President, George W. Foxworth, Treasurer, Paul Ruud, Secretary, Silver Williams, Program Director, James M. Armstrong, George Beitzel, Joan Beitzel, Roy Bishop, Fred Bohmfalk, Harvey Cain, Alice Corley, Monica Foxworth, Alan Geiken, Irene Grenier, Robert E. Hanley, IPP, Jim Harper, Scottie Hayden, Nina Henley, MAL, Wayne Henley, MAL, Marsha Jutovsky, Dennis Kohlmann, Arnold Kunst, Barbara Leone, Rick A. Peasley, John Rice, Nancy Samuelson, Roxanne E. Spizzirri, Bob Williams, Susan Williams, John V. Zasso, Vivian Zasso

GUESTS – 7: Ester Boeck, Wade Chandler, Adam Miller, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri, Ray Valdez, Don A. Zajic

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley.
2. President Peasley led the Pledge of Allegiance and introduced the guests.
3. President Peasley encouraged members to participate in the Gibson Ranch Civil War re-enactment to be held May 2-4, 2014. Sign-up lists were circulated for Friday student escort roles as well as staffing for the SCWRT booth on Saturday and Sunday.
4. President Peasley announced the Board decision for the SCWRT to host the 2014 West Coast Civil War Conference. It will be held Nov 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Sacramento.
5. President Peasley urged the membership to give our November conference publicity – tell your friends and neighbors.
6. President Peasley then introduced the speakers, our own Nina and Wayne Henley. Their subject would be Joshua Chamberlain from his early years through the Battle of Fredericksburg.
 - A. The Henleys' interest in Chamberlain originated from travels through Maine and visiting the Chamberlain House in Brunswick, across the street from Bowdoin College. The Chamberlain house has quite a history – occupied in its early days by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, several renovations, as well as rooms for rent.
 - B. On August 8, 1862, Chamberlain was commissioned in a local Maine regiment. His first horse in the service of his country was named "Prince."
 - C. The night before Chamberlain departed for military service was spent in a tent with his wife, Fanny, and his father. From there to the train station with the 20th Maine which had recruited volunteers from throughout the state as opposed to the common practice of recruiting only from a particular city or region.
 - D. The 20th Maine first went to Alexandria, VA, near Washington DC where they were issued rifles and ammo. The 20th was commanded by Adelbert Ames in its first couple years of existence.
 - E. In the Battle of Fredericksburg, the 20th Maine went across the Rappanock toward Marye's Heights and the "Stone Wall," and ultimately retreated successfully back to their earlier safe position. The 20th Maine lost only 4 members at Fredericksburg, but the big picture casualties were much larger on both sides.
 - F. Following Fredericksburg, the 20th Maine spent the next six months in winter camp.
6. President Peasley thanked the Henleys for their excellent presentation and Wayne accepted the bottle of Shiloh Chardonnay as a token of Round Table appreciation.
7. John Zasso sold additional raffle tickets and read the numbers. Nina Henley was appropriately the first winner.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.
9. The April Board Meeting will be Wednesday, April 9, 2014, 10:00 AM, at Brookfield's Restaurant.

Paul Ruud, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the March 12, 2014 meeting was \$4,110.15. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$55.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2014 and 2015

Date	Speaker	Topic
April 9 th	George Beitzel	“General Robert Edward Lee”
May 14 th	John Greer	“150 th Gettysburg Re-Enactment”
June 11 th	Don Hayden	“Battlefield Medicine”
July 9 th	Ted Savas	To Be Determined
August 13 th	Nicholas Scivoletto	“General Joseph E. Johnston”
September 10 th	Dennis Kohlmann	To Be Determined
October 8 th	Tad Smith	“The Coins and Currency of the Confederacy”
November 12 th	Tom Lubas	“Chicago, That Toddlin Civil War Town”
December 10 th	Tim & Ginny Karlberg	“Captain John Groetsch”
January 14 th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
February 11 th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
March 11 th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

Walt Bittle, long-time member, former Sacramento CWRT Secretary, and current Honorary Member, is in the hospital (near Saint Louis, Missouri) where he underwent mitral valve replacement surgery in mid-March. Walt is out of intensive care and has been moved to a monitored hospital room. His recovery will take a few weeks and he expects to be transferred next to a rehabilitation facility before returning home. Walt’s son, Joel, and family visit him and pick up his mail. Cards can be sent to **Walt** at

21296 West Spruce Drive, Warrenton, MO 63383.

2014 Membership

The 2014 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2014. The dues are \$20.00 and you can renew at a monthly meeting or send to the Treasurer through the mail. For all checks, make them payable to the “**Sacramento Civil War Round Table**” and send them to

George W. Foxworth
 9463 Salishan Court
 Sacramento, CA 95826-5233

Remember, you can also pay at a monthly meeting.

NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1st of each month for that month’s Battle Cry. Submit your items in Microsoft Word or regular email to:

gwofforth@sbcglobal.net

The Battle Cry is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Submissions are subject to availability of space and size limitations. Submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization or the Editor. The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702.
<http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check the web for past newsletter editions and information about the group.



Fort Sumter and the Union Campaign against Charleston

Fort Sumter was a pentagonal “Third System” Fort of brick construction built on an artificial island in the middle of Charleston’s main ship channel. It was about 300 by 350 feet in size, with walls 40 feet high and 12 feet thick. It was built to augment the older Fort Moultrie on Sullivan Island for the City’s protection after the War of 1812; but it was not yet quite completed. Only 48 of the prescribed 140 guns were installed at the time of the Rebel attack on Major Robert Anderson’s skeleton force and his surrender and departure 14 April 1861.

The Confederates under command of General P.G.T Beauregard immediately began augmenting and extending their defense systems with new batteries of large long range guns on Sullivan, Morris, Folly, and James Island. (See First Graphics Page.) Chief among these was Fort Wagner, and its extension Battery Gregg, on Morris Island. They were the closest to Sumter being only 1.5 and 2 miles distance.

The Union military leaders did not consider Charleston to be particularly significant in the overall strategy for winning the War, although it was, early on, a major blockade running port. The latter subsequently progressively became a lesser problem, however, as the Union blockade fleet was increased and became more efficient; and the deterrent factor was taking hold. Notwithstanding, the fact that the Rebels had captured a major Federal fort, and that South Carolina was the birthplace of the rebellion was a major irritant to both the Federal political and military leadership.

The first Union attack was a Navy only affair, commanded by Admiral Samuel Du Pont on 7 April 1863, with eight second generation monitors of the Passaic Class and the ironclad battleship *New Ironsides*. This attack was an absolute failure through no fault of the Admiral. It should not have been made, but it yielded new thinking as to the limitations of monitors against heavy rifled artillery on shore locations. (This failed attack and its ramifications on the usefulness of the monitors are discussed in a *Battle Cry* article of April 2005.)

On 1 June 1863 MG Quincy A. Gillmore became army commander of the Dept. of the South, which included Union affairs dealing with Charleston. He had gained considerable fame in being the engineer who formulated and conducted the artillery bombardment against Fort Pulaski, near Savannah, GA. On 10-11 April 1862, which returned that captured Third System Fort to the Union. Moreover, during his early career, he had been a member of Chief Engineer Joseph Totten’s fort and harbor building cadre; so he arrived to his new assignment as a person with fine experience. Additionally, RAdm John A. Dahlgren became fleet commander replacing Adm. DuPont in July 1863. Dahlgren was an ordinance officer who had invented the rifled cannon bearing his name. He had also served as Chief of the Washington Naval Yard during which time he became a confidant of the President. But in this incidence the Army was to take the lead.

Gillmore’s early challenge was to acquire a land based location where he could install large bore rifled artillery which could readily fire at Fort Sumter and perhaps even into the lower reaches of the City of Charleston proper. The site should also be accessible to the Navy for delivery of supplies and equipment. For these reasons it is believed he selected the rebels’ Fort Wagner on Morris Island. (Old Fort Johnson on James Island was a bit closer in, but its access to both the Army and Navy would be very tedious.) The first order of business was to capture Fort Wagner; reverse its configuration to fire north and northwest and its embankments and protective walls; and install the heaviest available rifled artillery pieces. Defended by 1,500 troops and several heavy guns, the earthen Fort was a formidable obstacle despite its small size and isolated location. A special problem was that due to beach erosion the southerly approach to the Fort was narrower than the width of the Fort itself.

By 10 July, Gillmore was ready to test his strategy. A brigade of 10th Corps under BG George Strong moved towards Morris from the Army operations base on Folly Island, 400 yards to the Southwest. Under heavy firing from the Navy, rebels in the south of Morris fled towards the Fort allowing Strong to establish a beachhead without difficulty. This may have made him overconfident?

Fort Wagner was now some 1,300 yards north. At dawn on 11 July, Strong made a frontal attack on the Fort over this distance with only *four* companies of which only some 196 men were

engaged. A few did get as far as the parapets below the Fort's 40 long range cannon and siege mortars; but were forced to retreat with the lost of 108 casualties to the Rebel's 12. On 18 July, two additional frontal attacks were made using a total of 6,000 infantry. The first assault was commanded by BG Truman Seymour, who was severely wounded; and the second by Strong, who was mortally wounded. Most regimental commanders were also killed, including Colonel Robert G. Shaw, whose black troops of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment spearheaded one of the assaults. 1,300 yards, nearly three quarter of a mile is an unheard of distance for frontal attacks. Should not Gillmore or at least his senior infantry officers have known better? Notwithstanding, the total casualties were: *only* 1,515 Union of 5,400 engaged and 174 Confederates.

After the failed Union assaults on Fort Wagner, Gillmore directed that a battery be constructed in the marsh land between Morris and James Islands. Initially, it was believed that it would be impossible to construct a battery position in the soggy ground that could hold a 12-ton, 8-inch (200-pounder) Parrott rifle, with a range of over five miles. Eventually an ingenious platform made of logs, 18,000 sandbags, and packed sand was constructed allowing the Union to bombard the City of Charleston in late August 1863. Known as the "Swamp Angel," this gun fired only 36 times before it burst. Apparent reason was that sand blown into the barrel caused excessive chamber back pressure and rupture. Other Marsh batteries were built and the bombardment of the City was continued in force, using the steeple of Saint Michael's Church as a main aiming point.

The Fort Wagner capturing strategy then shifted to a sapping* operation which continued over the next seven weeks, coupled with the continued shelling by both the Army and Navy. By 6 Sept, the sap rollers had reached the Forts outer parameter ditches close enough for a successful attack. (See Second Graphics Page.) Late that evening, however, the garrison evacuated by boat across the harbor; ending what one disgusted Federal called, "The most fatal and fruitless campaign of the entire War." But these operations and the continued heavy firing against Fort Sumter during this period left the whole of Morris Island in Union possession and the Fort in ruins and destitute of guns. The Rebels had withdrawn the artillery garrison and replaced it with infantry. On 8 Sept, Dahlgren sent a boat party of about 400 marines to capture the Fort by surprise; but

after a loss of 125, the Navy withdrew and abandoned its hopes of capturing the Fort and Charleston. By then, the Fort had almost totally been reduced to rubble. The City had also been badly damaged. Not so much by the shelling proper as from the resulting fires.

One final attempt was made to take Sumter. On 1 July 1864, MG Gillmore was reassigned to command a Corps in the Army of the James, under MG Ben Butler. Some say this was recommended by Chief of Staff Henry Halleck to backdrop political General Butler, who possessed limited military technical knowledge, with a competent analytical advisor. Gillmore was replaced by MG John G. Foster. Foster ordered and conducted a two-month sustained bombardment of the City and Fort, but failed to dislodge the latter's 300-man infantry garrison. He was then ordered to send most of his regiments of troops and supplies north to aid Grant's overland campaign in Virginia. Although in total ruins the Fort continued to be held by the Confederates until Charleston was cut off on the land side by Sherman's march through the Carolinas. Rebel forces evacuated the City and Fort on 17 Feb 1865, and the Union finally got its Fort back in millions of pieces. On 14 April 1865, *BG* Anderson raised the same flag over this shapeless mass of debris that *Major* Anderson had lowered 48 months earlier over the then magnificent structure.

The Federal government had destroyed its own Fort. What a way to punish South Carolina. And the affair contributed essentially nothing to the Union's overall efforts for winning the War.

Your thoughts?

*Sapping is a term used in [siege operations](#). Any straight or zigzag trench excavated under defensive rifle or artillery fire that was intended to advance a besieging army's position in relation to the works of an attacked fortification was referred to as a sap.

References: "The Siege of Charleston 1861-65" by E, Milby Burton, 1970
"Battles and Leaders" Volume VI Part I, 1888 "Civil War Dictionary" by Mark Boatner, 1988
"Encyclopedia of the Civil War" by Faust, 1986
"Civil War Atlas" by J. M McPherson, 2010 "Official Records" Volume XXVIII
"Official Records Navy" Volume XI V

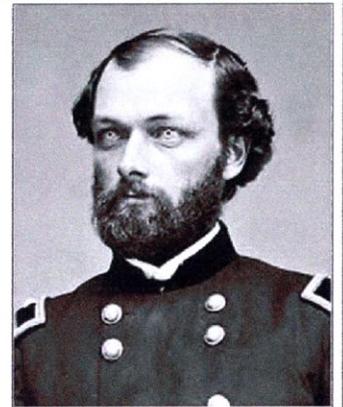
Bob Williams; 8 March 2014

The Campaign Against Charleston

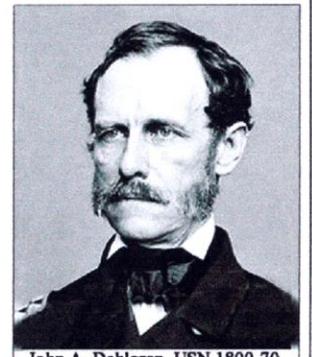
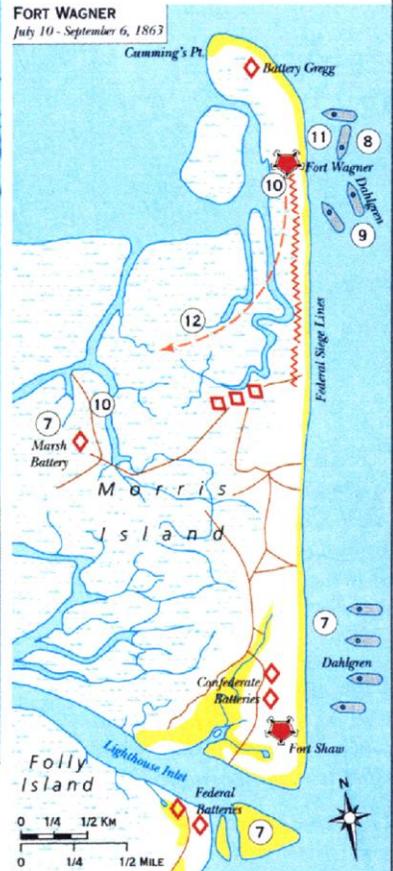
Graphics Page One



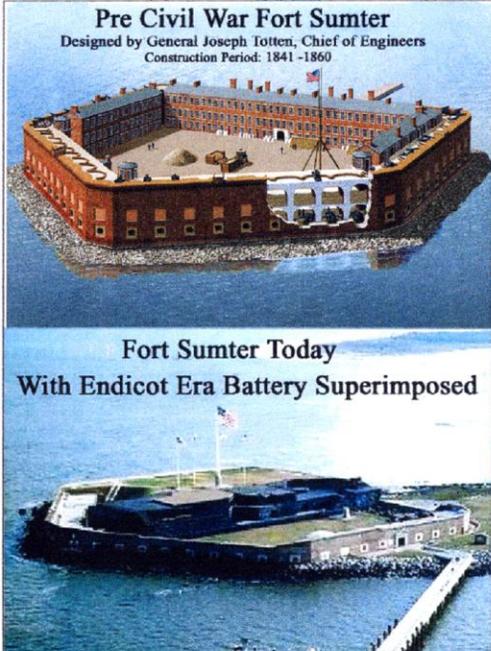
John G. Foster, USA 1823-74
USMA 1846 (4-59 Engineers)



Quincy A. Gillmore, USA 1825-88
USMA 1849 (1-43 Engineers)

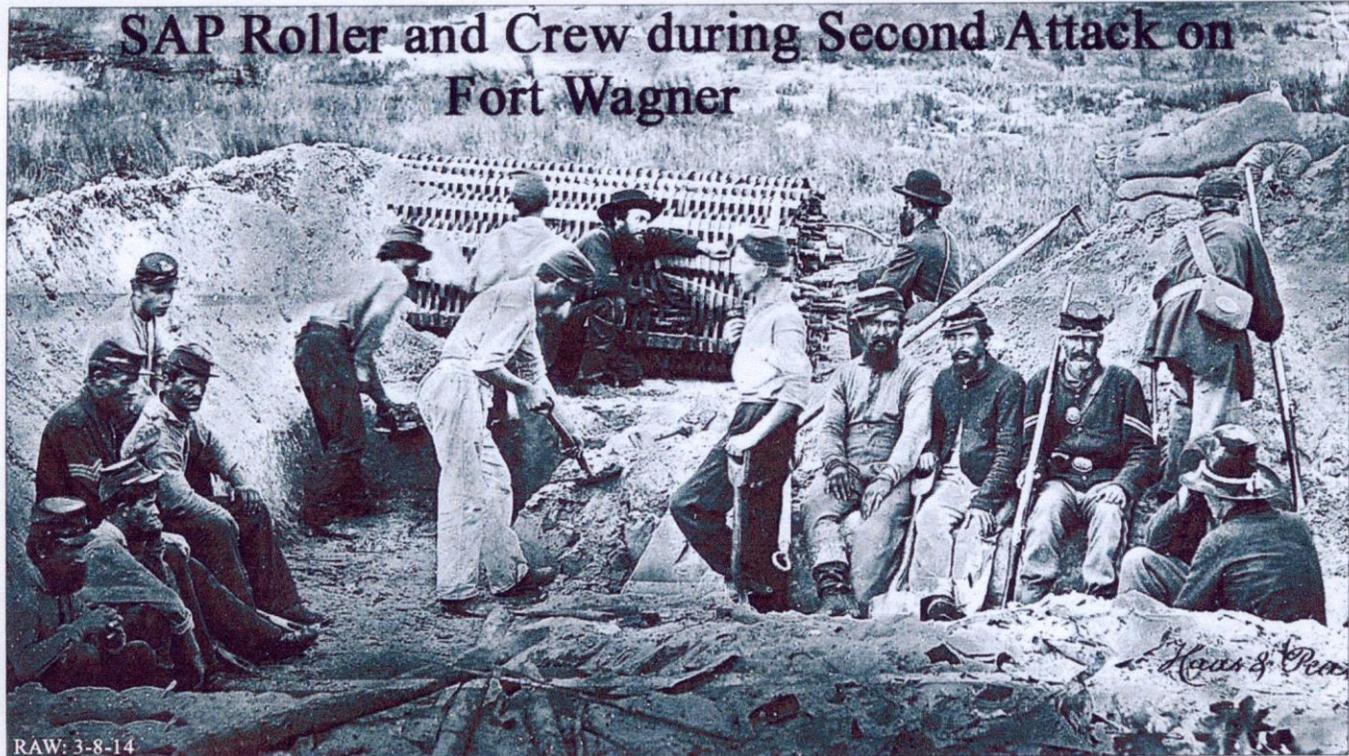


John A. Dahlgren, USN 1809-70
Midshipman 1826 (Ordinace)



The Campaign Against Charleston

Graphics Page Two





2014 West Coast Civil War Conference

Sponsored by Sacramento Civil War Round Table

1864

November 7 - 9, 2014, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Sacramento

Our Speakers are:

Craig L. Symonds: Joined the United States Naval Academy faculty in 1976. He served as chairman of the history department in 1988-1992 and was appointed professor emeritus on his retirement.

Harold Holzer: Is a leading national authority on Abraham Lincoln and the political culture of the Civil War. A writer, lecturer, frequent television guest, and chairman of The Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation.

Thomas Cartwright: Is a leading authority and author on the Battle of Franklin who conducted tours of Western Theater battlefields for 20 years. Appeared on many TV shows and is a frequent CWRT speaker.

Jim Stanbery: Professor of Political Science and History at Los Angeles Harbor College, speaker at The West Coast Civil War Conference for more than twenty years.

Theodore Savas: Is an attorney, adjunct college instructor, award-winning author, partner and managing director of Savas Beatie LLC. He specializes in military history and the American Civil War.

The conference cost is \$195 per person which includes Friday dinner, Saturday lunch and dinner, as well as all sessions. A full breakfast buffet is included for guests staying at the hotel.

Partial day attendance: Friday only \$50, Saturday only \$95, Saturday dinner only \$50, Sunday only \$50. There will be a no-host bar set-up Friday and Saturday evenings for your enjoyment before dinner.

For more information, contact Paul Ruud at 530-886-8806 or by contacting www.sacramentocwrt.com where information and registration forms will be available.

Room reservations are available by calling Crowne Plaza directly 877-270-1393 or www.crowneplaza.com
Crowne Plaza Hotel has rooms set aside for us at \$99 per night, plus tax. Please mention the conference.

Please print this page, fill it out, and return the form with your check for your registration. Make checks payable to:

Sacramento CWRT and mail to: George W. Foxworth, 9463 Salishan Court, Sacramento, CA 95826-5233.

Name / Organization as you want it on your badge

Organization: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Day phone () _____ Other phone _____

Email _____