



# Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Have you recently checked out the technology the BCWRT has to offer? If not you might be in for a surprise. We have a daily historical Civil War fact on Facebook. You can watch any of our previous Zoom meetings on our YouTube channel from the comfort of your easy chair. You can register online for our live meetings and avoid the lines. If you cannot attend our meetings in person, you can do so by Zoom, seeing the presentation just like the audience in Hatch sees it. In addition to all of this technology, you get the meeting announcements and the *Call to Arms* newsletter electronically. We even send you an email to remind you when your dues are due. Isn't nice of us, LOL. Of course, if you have changed your email address recently, please send us that new address.

I did not forget to mention our **website**. Currently it's under construction. The Board formed a task force (E. Gifford Stack, Chuck Roedema, Ann Birdsall and Woody Petchel) that is working on an updated design of the website with a new look, feel and features. It will be ready later this year, so in the meantime, we will use Facebook and the newsletter and emails to keep you informed. If you want

to help with this interesting project call me.

If you have not used our **Facebook page**, <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable>, give it a try.

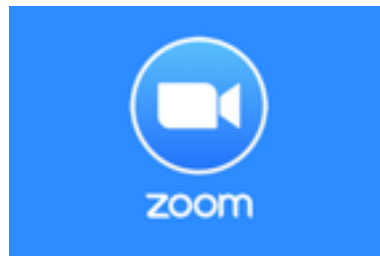
Ann Birdsall is the administrator and posts a daily CW historical fact. We also post BCWRT items of interest.



Do you want to make your life easier when you come to a meeting? Then I suggest you use the online **pre-registration** process. You must be a current member and know your email address. When the meeting announcement is sent out twice prior to the monthly meeting, or in the newsletter,

just go to the link provided for online pre-registration. You click on the link, enter your email address and follow the prompts. If you are registering for both people in a family, you must print the first ticket and then follow the prompts to go back and register the second

person. Member Len Trizinsky designed the system, similar to an online ticket system, so if you forget to print your ticket or want to go back later and print one, you cannot do so in order to prevent duplicate tickets and counting. You come to the meeting, enter the door marked online registration (always the door on the right) and drop off your ticket. If you forgot your ticket, then see the person at that same desk because they have a list of all persons who pre-registered. (Continued on page 10)



## Civil War POWs' Escape Escapades Elucidated

Daring prison escapes. Thwarted attempts to bust out. Psychological impediments to leaving your fellow prisoners. All of these topics will be presented by our Tuesday, April 5 speaker, Angela Zombek, Ph.D., whose presentation, "The Duty of the Prisoner to Escape: POWs' Escape Attempts, Plots, and Ideological Flight" is sure to enlighten us on a seldom discussed facet of the Civil War.

We know that prisoners of war withstood unsanitary conditions, rampaging disease, inadequate shelter and clothing, outright starvation, boredom, threats of harsh punishment for disobedience, swarming vermin, and the psychological stigma of imprisonment. These circumstances made many soldiers think of only one thing: escape. We'll learn what went right - and wrong - with soldiers' attempts at mass escapes, tunneling, and individual ingenuity.

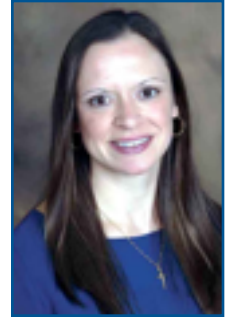
The POW statistics are sobering: 347,000 men became prisoners; more than 49,000 died in captivity (at least 26,000 Confederates



and almost 23,000 Union); and the overall mortality rate was 14 percent - 12 percent for the South and 18 percent for Union captives.

Angela is well qualified to address this topic. She is author of the well regarded book *Penitentiaries, Punishment, and Military Prisons: Familiar Responses to an Extraordinary Crisis during the American Civil*

*War*. Additionally, she has published several articles on Civil War prisons, both Union and Confederate. She is currently Associate Professor of Civil War History at UNCW. She previously worked at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Parks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park.



You are encouraged to attend the meeting either via Zoom or in person. If participating via Zoom, simply use the following:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88181060327?pwd=L2xGaGloNFE3RmxtTXlQK09qdXFmQT09>  
**Meeting ID - 881 8106 0327 Passcode - 45583**

If attending in person, we encourage you to pre-register. If you used this convenient process for any of our first seven meetings this program year, you must pre-register again as a meeting ticket is only good that (one) month. Starting Friday, March 25, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, April 5, current members may log into the system - <https://olr.bcwr-nc.org/> - to print a ticket (one each for yourself and your spouse) showing you've registered. Bring the ticket(s) to Hatch and enter through the special door on the far right. (Please do not go to the registration tables.) When you use the online system it will clearly show if you are current (dues paid)...and what to do if you are not up to date. It's that simple! The Tuesday, April 5 meeting takes place at Hatch Auditorium on the grounds of Fort Caswell. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. and the program starts promptly at 7 p.m. The guest admission fee is \$10, and can be applied toward the \$25 annual membership dues.

Please note: Wearing a mask while inside Hatch Auditorium is OPTIONAL. Masks and hand sanitizer are available for those who might want them.

# CLOSING DOWN THE KINGDOM: THE WILMINGTON CAMPAIGN

A review of Chris Fonvielle's March Presentation

By Jim Medeiros

Was Wilmington the most important city in the Confederacy in 1864? On March 1, Chris Fonvielle tried to convince us of it. Beginning the war as the largest city in North Carolina, Wilmington became one of a dozen southern



ports blocked by the Union. Although porous at best, the blockade ended the war

holding the South in a stranglehold, all but the port of Wilmington. Along the Cape Fear, 80 percent of the runners steadily broke free. By war's end after the closing of Mobile Bay (8/64), Wilmington offered the Army of Northern Virginia Lee's only lifeline.

Wilmington presents a special study in a successful port. It sits on the only North Carolina river emptying directly into the sea. As such, Wilmington also lay miles beyond the reach of Union ships. Along a good stretch of the Cape Fear, the Confederacy built a line of fortifications to the river mouth. Not only did the fort guns keep blockaders at arm's length, but they protected blockade runners racing to the sea under the embrasures.

The summit of Wilmington's pinnacle of primacy came from nature - dual navigable outlets to the sea. Because of the mouth of the Cape Fear and the New Inlet carved before the Revolution, the distance from one debouchment to the other via the ocean amounted to over sixty miles. Even steam gunboats could not support one another when a blockade runner left via the

more distant opening. Finally, Wilmington anchored two railroads providing easy transshipment of munitions *into* and cotton *out* of the country. The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad ("Lifeline of the Confederacy") connected with further railroads at Goldsboro to supply either western North Carolina or Richmond.

By 1864, with Richmond struggling against the tenacious Grant, Lee declared of Wilmington, "If the city falls, I cannot maintain my army." Even the oft-fractionious Union Navy and War Departments agreed Wilmington's time had come. However, in war, politics prevail. Jefferson Davis replaced General Whiting with his choice of Braxton Bragg ("best Confederate general in the Union army") while General



Benjamin Butler usurped the Union general's command from his subordinate at the First Battle of

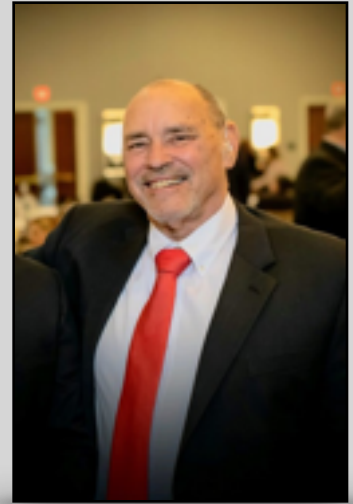
Fort Fisher. (Of the fleet commander - Admiral Porter - Butler said, "David Porter hates me like the devil hates Holy water.") This lovefest on each side led Butler to lose the First Battle of Fort Fisher and then, with General Terry's success at Second Fort Fisher and march on Wilmington during Bragg's absence (reorganizing staff in Richmond), the Confederacy abandoned Wilmington. Forty-six days after the loss of the most important city in the South, Lee surrendered. Certainly, in the end, it was *his* most important city.

## Gary Krupp, BCWRT's Treasurer Passes

On February 21 our round table unexpectedly lost a dedicated member and volunteer, Gary Krupp. He was a BCWRT member since 2011, and our treasurer for the past several years who, according to President John Butler, was devoted to his officer position. "Once Gary drove through a nasty snowstorm on his way back to Brunswick County to be at a meeting in time to handle his treasury duties," John told members at our March meeting.

Gary moved to the county after retiring from a 40-plus year career with Unisys (Sperry). He was also an active volunteer for other organizations in Brunswick County.

The Board made a \$250 contribution in Gary's name to the National Park Foundation. Our condolences to his wife, children, and grandchildren. Gary will be missed. RIP.



## Only a few spots left on Ft. Caswell Tours

**I**mmediately preceding both the April and May BCWRT meetings, Jim McKee will lead tours of historic Fort Caswell, which is located next to Hatch Auditorium.

By the time you read this, the April tour may be full; there are just a few spots open for the May 3 tour!

As you'll recall, at our December 2021 meeting, Jim spoke on the construction, importance and history of the fort, a Confederate stronghold which was captured by Union forces in 1865. He is THE expert on Fort Caswell and in prior years has led this tour for our members several times, garnering rave reviews.

Here are the details:

- Sign up for either the April 5 or May 3 tour by sending an email or text to John Walsh at [jdwalsh1@gmail.com](mailto:jdwalsh1@gmail.com) or cell 609 651-7719, including names and number of attendees and contact phone numbers.
- Arrive at Hatch Auditorium by 5 p.m. and pay the tour fee of \$10 per person, either by check made out to BCWRT or cash.
- Wear sturdy walking shoes and appropriate clothing for this outdoor tour – you'll be traversing some uneven ground.
- The tour will conclude by 6:30 p.m., in time to attend the night's BCWRT meeting.
- Each tour is limited to 40 attendees and both, as mentioned, are nearly sold out!



# IT'S ALL RELATIVE

(Editor's note: Under the direction of Bob Hagerman, BCWRT relates the history of members' ancestors who served in the Civil War. This month features Rick Mitchell's relative. For assistance in telling your story, please contact Bob at [b\\_hagerman@msn.com](mailto:b_hagerman@msn.com).)

## Sergeant Atlas Crocker Mitchell 47<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry, Company F "Sons of Liberty"

Atlas Crocker Mitchel is the great-grandfather of BCWRT member Rick Atlas Mitchell. Atlas was born in Franklin County, and he enrolled for active duty on April 19, 1862, as a private. He was later promoted to sergeant prior to August 1, 1862. He served in the 47<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry and was part of Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg, where he was wounded. On July 3 the 47<sup>th</sup> took its place on the left side of Major General George Pickett's Division for a direct attack on the center of the Federal lines. On the evening of July 3, the 47<sup>th</sup> returned to its starting point...a skeleton of its former self.

On July 4 the Army of Northern Virginia slowly made its way back toward Richmond

engaging in numerous battles along the way. At Spotsylvania Courthouse sergeant Mitchell was wounded in the hand. At Burgess Mill, Va. he was captured on Oct. 27, 1864, and sent to a POW camp at Point Lookout, Md. On March 28, 1865, he was paroled and exchanged in a POW exchange. He was received at Boulware's Wharf, James River, Va., on March 30, 1865, for exchange.

He died on March 1, 1918, and was buried in Youngsville, NC in an unmarked Confederate grave. In 1933 a Confederate grave stone was ordered from the Georgia Marble Company in Tate, Georgia and placed on his grave.



BCWRT member Rick Atlas looks over his great-grandfather's Certificate of Confederate Service (on far right). The center photo is a copy an application for a headstone for military veterans buried in non-federal cemeteries. Inexplicably, it took 15 years for the grave marker to be placed.

## Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

*This is a continuation of last month's article on soiled doves in the American frontier from 1865-90.*

The work force in the frontier following the Civil War consisted mainly of men. Unless women had a substantial capital investment, she could not purchase a commercial building to start her own business. Salaries for teachers were so low and local restrictions so severe that women could not survive. In Wyoming two teachers agreed to work for fifty dollars a month for three months, then asked for seventy-five dollars a month. Many teachers earned \$450 to \$650 a year. Domestic workers earned \$250 to \$650 a year.

Additional jobs, such as theater girls, waitresses, actresses, laundresses, and abortionists were not considered respectable. Communities used their services but castigated them for their ignorance.

Ethnic and racial backgrounds varied according to the urban locality. The hierarchy within the soiled doves included: Anglos, Blacks, Mexican and Asians (not so many in this group). The Mexican women occupied the lowest rung on the ladder. Later in the century there were fewer Mexicans showing up in the arrest records in the Southwest. By the 1870s, Chinese soiled doves began appearing in the mountain states. J. P. C. Poulton, future editor of the *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, claimed that a

Chinese agent brought groups of women to some of the Western states for the purpose of being soiled doves. After each girl paid the agent \$400, they were released. Rumor has it these numbers were greatly inflated.

The soiled doves were found on farm ranches and near outlying military bases, those establishments were known as hog ranches because they protected families and society from any association with the girls. Many Indian women, who were half-starved

and half-clothed because of poverty, ended up selling themselves for money.

All of the groups of women came from a pre-industrial experienced where women were accustomed to hard work, few comforts and no future. They became part of the sexual marketplace.

These are the

women from immigrants, indentured servants, a controlling hierarchy, and basically the women thrust into a society where they had no education, skills or a legitimate means of earning a living. Most had no matrimonial protection, for them this was their means of survival.

Prime ages of the doves were from fifteen to thirty but a few were over forty. They were victims of disease, abuse and injuries. There were isolated cases of bizarre of bodily and mental harm inflicted on the young women. *(Continued next month)*



**Soiled doves of a Junction City, Kansas, brothel.**

# CIVIL WAR COLLECTOR

**By Joe Kaczvinsky**

I have been fascinated by the Civil War ever since learning about it in elementary school. Later in life I also became interested in antiques (I guess I just like history) and collecting items related to the war has allowed me to combine these two interests. My main passion is in coins and currency from the Civil War period but I collect other items as well (mostly smalls, out of respect for both my wallet and my wife's sanity). Joining the BCWRT after moving to North Carolina has allowed me to further expand my knowledge and meet nice people who share my interest in this defining event for our country.

I also assumed I wasn't the only roundtable member who collects Civil War memorabilia. I thought sharing these items would be a great way for members to more deeply experience the Civil War period by seeing and touching actual items from that time, as well as learning from the research done by the collectors. So, with the Board's blessing, I am trying to organize periodic displays of member's Civil War memorabilia before and after our monthly meetings. If you have items that you are willing to display and share your knowledge with other members, please contact me at [jkaczvinsky@gmail.com](mailto:jkaczvinsky@gmail.com). If there is enough interest, I will work with the Board to set up a schedule. Thanks.



**Member Joe Kaczvinsky displayed a portion of his Civil War money and memorabilia collection at the March meeting. He is seeking other members who are also collectors.**



## **Civil War Trivia**

In the United States there are more than twenty federal historic sites, fifty museums, and seventy national cemeteries dedicated to the Civil War.

Of the three million soldiers in the Civil War, approximately one percent were regular army, nine percent were draftees or substitutes, and the rest were volunteers.

From *The History Buffs Guide to the Civil War*, by Thomas Flagel, Cumberland House, 2010.







## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - (Continued from page 1)

Give it a try, it is fast and easy. We average over 70 people at each meeting using the online system.

If you can't make a meeting in person due to family or medical issues, bad weather, being remote, or that easy chair and adult beverages are too hard to resist, we have an alternative. Use our **Hybrid Zoom System**. Member Pat de Barros and the A/V crew at Hatch Auditorium are responsible for making the Zoom and video process work so well. It might interest you to know we have remote members in Az, Fla, Va, Pa, Ma, Ohio, SC, Ill, Ga, and western NC who use Zoom. We film the meeting with two video cameras in the balcony and transmit the whole presentation over Zoom. You can get the direct link to the Zoom meeting from the meeting announcements or the newsletter. In addition we give you the meeting ID and password if you want to access the meeting through the application. The link and password change for each meeting. We average 75 logins to each Zoom presentation. Live meetings are best, but this is a great alternative.

If you couldn't make a meeting or use Zoom for a particular presentation you now have a third way of seeing our guest

speakers. We have a YouTube Brunswick Civil War Round Table Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC20v0sUjVnovXdQb6iBqBEw>. We post the video of the presentation seven days after the presentation. We currently have 12 videos posted. They start with Peter Carmichael's presentation in March 2021 and go through Chris Fonvielle's presentation in March 2022. Brian Wills' presentation on General George Thomas has had 952 views. Once our website is updated and back online you will also be able to find the videos there.

The other technology item members do not see is our database. It was designed by Len Trizinsky several years ago. We use it to track members, attendance, dues, email addresses for mailing of meeting announcement, newsletters, etc. There is a host of people keeping the information up to date in the system including personnel at the registration tables to the "Leland Gang" who do the data entry.

Just thought you ought to know of some of the benefits you have available and the behind the scenes effort by the volunteers who make the BCWRT so successful.

*John*

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## Help Requested

Advisor Wade Sokolosky needs our help. There is a proposed Kinston Bypass designed by the NC Dept of Transportation, as now aligned, that would virtually wipe out the Wyse (Wise's) Forks Battlefield...and cost more than alternative routes! Wade is asking we each take a moment and write to our STATE Senator and Representative, urging them to select the much less costly alternative, which also saves 100% of the battlefield! For more information, [see this Facebook page](#), or contact Wade at [sokolosky@aol.com](mailto:sokolosky@aol.com). He's drafted a letter that we can use to communicate our concern. Wyse Forks Battlefield is much too important to lose! Thanks.

# A Balanced Look at Robert E. Lee

A Review of Allen Guelzo's Book - **By Bruce Jordan**

Biographers face an incredible challenge. How do you accurately portray a person without your own biases creeping into your story? Robert E. Lee has had a wide range of biographers. Douglas Southall Freeman wrote a four volume Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Lee, casting Lee as a demigod walking amongst men. The other extreme was Thomas Connolly's *The Marble Man*, stretching Lee's faults in order to show him as a very flawed man. Allen Guelzo's *Robert E. Lee - A Life* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2021) wrote a wonderfully balanced nuanced story of Lee's life, showing a man of both strengths and weaknesses.

Guelzo writes a true biography, focusing more on the man than on the battles and his generalship. Battles get only a quick summary and a map, whereas Lee the person is brought to life through constant quotations from his letters, written reports to his superiors, and observations of those around Lee. For Guelzo, Lee's personality oscillated between three poles: perfection, independence and security. Lee, the father, the general, the engineer emerges more vividly than Lee, the husband, the moral person. In Guelzo's eyes, Lee didn't lack convictions, but more that he turned a blind eye to some things.

The first eight chapters trace Lee's life from his birth in 1807 up to the start of the Civil War. Chapters Nine through Eighteen follow Lee through the Civil War. Chapters Nineteen and Twenty follow Lee during the post war years up until his death in 1870. An epilogue gives a wonderful summation of Lee's life, character and his important biographies. The

book ends with 82 pages of notes and 36 pages of bibliography, illustrating the depth of Guelzo's research. There are excellent photographs and maps illustrating the book.

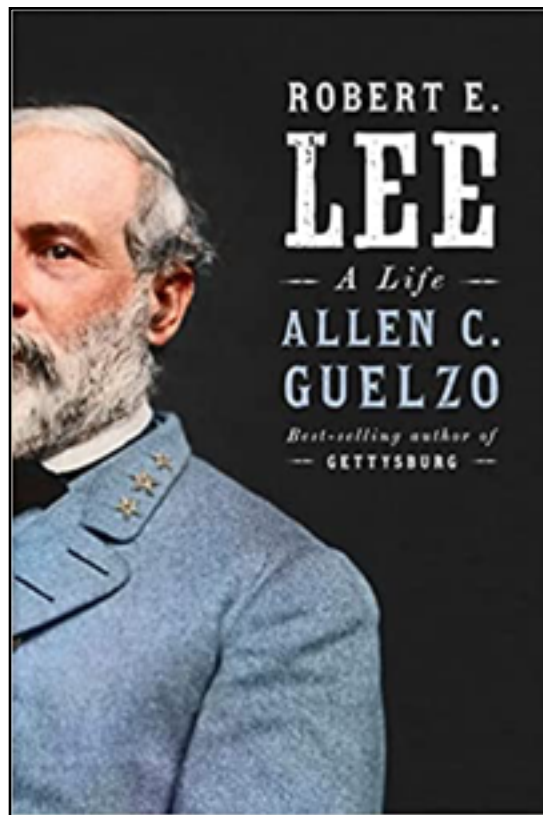
One of the more fascinating chapters is Chapter Nine "The Decisions." The popular story is that Lee couldn't fight against his native state Virginia. Guelzo lays out all of Lee's letters and interviews both at the moment and after the war explaining why Lee did what he did. Guelzo shows Lee couldn't fight against all his Virginia relatives (who had supported

him and his family through the years), his children (who would have had their lands confiscated by Confederate officials), and his home (at Arlington) - rather than for the state itself. It raised the question of "how do you make a decision when everything around you is spinning out of your control and yet you're forced to do something?"

There are many interesting factual ideas sprinkled throughout this book. I was amazed at the constant parade of death throughout; his family, relatives, friends young and old. I never knew Lee had a series of heart attacks: one in 1860, two in 1863, one in 1867 and the last in 1869. The first in 1863 and the 1869 attacks were very

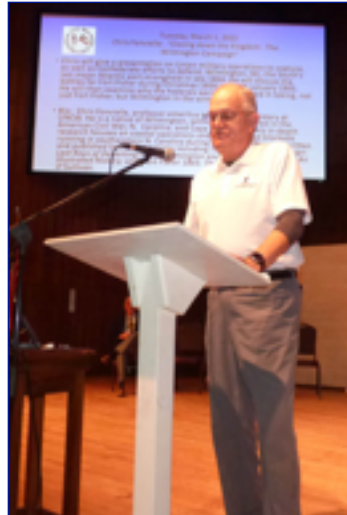
severe. Guelzo uses portraits of Lee to show the impact of those attacks.

A one page review can't do justice to this wonderfully written, detailed examination of Robert E. Lee's life. I learned so much through reading this biography that I didn't know before. If Lee fascinates you, I highly urge you to read this excellent biography.



# Pictured at our March Meeting

Speaker Chris Fonvielle and 254 attendees (including 19 new memberships and 11 guests!) were present for our March 1 meeting. Some of the happy attendees, including the winner of \$123 from the 50/50 drawing, paused for our camera. Another 70 members attended the meeting via Zoom! (Photos by Chuck Roedema and E. Gifford Stack)



# Pictured at our March Meeting - Continued



(1. C - New Bern; 2. B - Salisbury; 3. C - Charlotte; 4. A - Zebulon Vance)

# **MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES**

The April BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, April 5, 2022. The meeting will be held at Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC. See page 2 for details to attend via Zoom.

Registration begins at 6:15 p.m., and the meeting starts promptly at 7 p.m.

BCWRT is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, co-founded by Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel, and organized in May 2010.

Our Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>.  
The YouTube BCWRT site is located at: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=brunswick+civil+war+round+table](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=brunswick+civil+war+round+table).  
Contact us at [brunswickcwrt@gmail.com](mailto:brunswickcwrt@gmail.com).

Mail Dues Checks to: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461 (Please include your current phone number and email address.)

## **2022 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND ADVISORS**

John Butler: President & Director  
(Vacant): VP & Director  
Gar Dowell: VP & Director  
Jim Kane: Secretary & Director  
Tom Kehoe: Treasurer & Director  
Ann Birdsall Director  
Bruce Jordan: Director  
Chuck Roedema: Director  
E. Gifford Stack: Director  
Peter Carmichael: Advisor  
Jack Carpenter: Advisor

Jim Dunn: Advisor  
Charen Fink: Advisor  
Chris Fonvielle: Advisor  
Jim McKee: Advisor  
Chris Mackowski: Advisor  
Kathy O'Donnell: Advisor  
Roy Pender: Advisor  
Woody Petchel: Advisor  
Wally Rueckel: Advisor  
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor  
Peter Whelan: Advisor

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