

MARCHING ALONG

21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Co. H

February 2011

www.21stmichigan.org

Volume 6 Issue 2

from the President, Tom Giorlando

Friends, soldiers, civilians, lend me your ears:

Thank you for your votes and your confidence in me as your new president. I, along with the other members of the board, will work hard to make the 2011 reenacting year “the best ever”! Please have some patience as some of us are learning the ropes here and it will take a little bit of time to adjust to the new changes.

On with the show!

My first priority is recruiting. My goal as president is to make sure our military grows stronger in number. We have lost some well-groomed soldiers over the past few years and they have yet to be replaced. Our military numbers are dropping. We need soldiers. Nothing is more frustrating than showing up to an event like Greenfield Village and having to fall in with another company because only 5 or 6 military were present. It's especially frustrating because of all the groups I've drilled with, I have yet to see soldiers as well trained and efficient as those in the 21st. We pride ourselves in being among the best, so let's build a company of men to be envied in quality and in quantity. I am hoping to have a recruiting station set up at the events we attend in order to promote those who may be interested to join the best group out there.

We need to get a good mix of younger and more...experienced soldiers in our ranks if we're going to take down the rebellion, so please, do your part! Recruit!

President - Tom Giorlando
Secretary - Carrie Graber
Treasurer - Jim Cary

Military Commander - JR Schroeder
Civilian Coordinator - Ken Giorlando
Newsletter Editor - Jim Cary

Civilian Corner

By Ken Giorlando

I would like to begin this month's column by thanking you for re-electing me as your Civilian Coordinator. I am honored of your trust in me to be voted in for a 6th year. Either you all like what I do or there's no one else out there nuts enough to take it on!

Seriously, I truly enjoy this position, and now it is a *board* position as well (along with Military Commander). I really like the mix of the elected board members we have: male, female, civilian, military, youth, and older than youth! I see great things ahead for the 21st Michigan.

I would like to also take a moment to thank a very special person and friend for leading the 21st Michigan (out front and heroically, I might add) through some very tumultuous times, as well as during some very wonderful times. I'm speaking, of course, of Mike Gillett who, after four years has stepped down from his role as President of our unit. I feel under his leadership the 21st Michigan has improved ten-fold, and, because he set a clear and high standard, I see this improvement continuing on under the new President, Tom Giorlando.

Huzzah and hurrah to the 21st Michigan!

'Einstein said that our ideas about time are largely mistaken. He meant that we're mistaken in our conception of what the past, present, and future really are. We think the past is gone, the future hasn't happened, and that only the present exists. Because the present is all we can see. It's only natural. He said we're like people in a boat without oars drifting along a winding river. Around us we see only the present. We can't see the past, back in the bends and curves behind us. But, it's there.

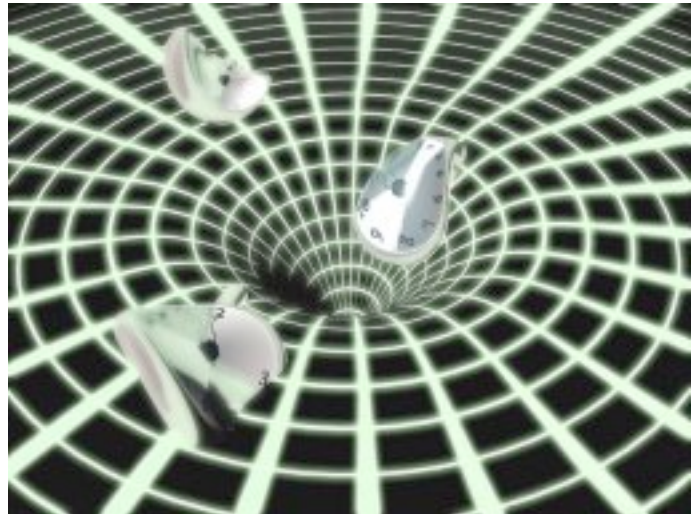
You know the year, the day, and the month for literally millions of reasons: because the blanket you woke up under this morning may have been at least partly synthetic; because there is probably a box in your home with a switch; click that switch, and the faces of

living human beings will appear on a glass screen in the face of that box and speak nonsense to you. Because red and green lights signaled when you might cross a street; because teenage children you saw were dressed as they were, because the front page of the local newspaper looked precisely as it did this morning and as it never will again or ever has before.

You can see yesterday; most of it is left. Most of the 20th century is still here as well. (And) there are fragments of still earlier days. Single buildings. Sometimes several together. Those places are fragments still remaining, of days which once lay out there as real as the day lying out there now, still surviving fragments of a clear April morning of 1871, a gray winter afternoon of 1840, a rainy dawn of 1793.

Picture one of those structures standing empty for two months in the summer of 1863. Picture our arranging to sublet that very building for those identical months for the coming summer. If Albert Einstein is right - as he is - then hard as it may be to comprehend, the summer of 1863 still exists. That silent empty house exists back in that summer precisely as it exists in the summer that is coming. Unaltered and unchanged, identical in each, and existing in each. I believe it may be possible, you understand, for a man to walk out of that unchanged structure and into that other summer.

But, the uncountable millions of invisible threads that exist in here would bind him to this current summer of 2011, no matter how unaltered the home around him. ...It occurred to me that just possibly there is a way to dissolve those threads...'



(Taken – with some modification – from Jack Finney’s novel “Time and Again”)

Pretty interesting stuff, eh? This is exactly how I look at my time during a reenactment. Dissolving those threads that connect me to our present time is always at the forefront of my mind while I am at an event, even with the modern patrons about. I can see **through** these reminders of the 21st century, so-to-speak. I’m not ignorant of them, of course, but I can over-look the fact that the patrons are wearing modern clothing, or an airplane is flying overhead, or a Model T ride has just gone by. I bring my mind to a level in which time-travel (mind-travel?) is at hand. Actually, I have a much harder time with the **reenactor farbs** more than the ‘outside’ modern intrusions.

This is what I believe we need to work on as living historians. Oh, I realize this is a hobby and all. But, just like many hobbyists, I take my fun seriously. None of us would spend the money and time we do on this if we didn’t take it seriously, right? Just as a classic car enthusiast will spend thousands to restore a 1941 Ford, a **Beatles** collector will spend \$1500 on the **Butcher Cover** of the **Yesterday and Today** album, or a stamp collector will spend thousands for that one rare stamp, reenactors / living historians also spend large amounts of hard-earned money (yes, *thousands* in some cases) recreating the past. So why *shouldn’t* we do our best to present ourselves in the correct manner and try to travel through time, even if it is only *mind*-travel?



There are numerous ways this can be done, and I hope you will join me in learning more about how to do it at the March **Civilian Meeting**: This year’s civilian meeting will take place on Saturday March 5, 2011, beginning at 1:00 pm and ending sometime in the early evening. There will be two topics: I will do a talk on **Bringing Your Presentation to Life**, which will, hopefully, help those of you who are looking to continue raising your living history bar even higher. We will also have a guest speaker this year, Mrs. Sandra Root. Mrs. Root has been reenacting since she...well...since before birth! She is truly one to look to for authenticity and accuracy. At our meeting she will speak on two subjects that can help ease the pain of reenacting: **What to Bring & What Not to Bring to a Reenactment**, and **How to De-farb Your Campsite**.

I hope you can make it - please let me know as soon as you can whether you will be coming or not. My dear wife plans to make a luncheon/dinner for everyone and she needs to know how much to make. Also, if any of you can bring a snack/munchie (period correct if possible – peanuts, ginger snaps, cake, rolls, lemonade, root beer/sarsaparilla) or a dessert, it would be greatly appreciated.

The meeting will be held at my house in Eastpointe, located just north of Detroit - - I-94 to 9 Mile Rd. then head west on 9 Mile about 1 mile (we are almost directly centered between Gratiot and Kelly --- while on 9 Mile heading west, you will drive past Wendy’s, McDonald’s, and Taco Bell (on your right) - - be in the left lane to turn onto my street - - left onto Saxony, drive all the way down to nearly the end of the second block – we’re on your right. Park wherever you can find a spot. My address is 22023 Saxony, Eastpointe, MI 48021 and my phone is 586-863-6346 and e-mail historicalken@giorlando.net.

If we find that we have a larger than expected group show up then we may move the meeting down the road to the old schoolhouse (where we had the Christmas party).

And, if you have (and can get to) your Civil War eating and drinking utensils, bring ‘em along. We have some here, but I just don’t know if we have enough for everyone.



By the way, I wrote a feature article for the latest issue of **Citizens' Companion** (Jan./Feb. 2011) about our period dress meetings. Yes, some of you are in the photos that accompany it.

See you March 5th!!

from the Drill Team, Tom Giorlando

To Drill or Not to Drill...

It's not really a question is it? It's true that the majority of us are familiar with the commands and the manual of arms and all that jazz, but how familiar are we after a winter without practice? Some may be just as fine tuned as when they last left the battlefield...others I fear are less than ready to take on Johnny Reb and live to tell the tale!

Gents, we need to drill. That means everyone, vets and fish alike. I have seen us looking absolutely fantastic in formation only to have men fall in throughout the day who have not drilled all season. Boys, it shows. It doesn't get much more embarrassing than hearing the Captain or myself shouting commands and seeing them either being unheard or taken as the opposite. When you're facing left at shoulder arms and the rest of the company is facing right at support arms, it doesn't exactly look good.

If you plan on attending any events this season, please drill with us. We need you, we want you, but if you're safe, well trained, and on time, we need and want you more!

Company drills will be coming in spring, dates to be determined. I hope we have a good turn out (and I hope I'm well enough to march alongside you all!). Please, if you have a preference as to what days are best for you, send me an email and we'll try to work around your scheduling conflicts.

See you on the field!

from the President Emeritus, Mike Gillett

Pards and Pardesses,

I wanted to thank you all again for the opportunity and the privilege to serve as your president these last four years... and for the great honor of being named "President Emeritus" at our recent business meeting!

We now have a new, larger board with a new president. Tom Giorlando is a terrific young man and I know we will all support him as he leads us. Too, I have every reason to expect that 2011 will be the "best season ever"!

The 21st does *many* things well... both as a unit and individually. If we stay our course and continue to work as we have, I think the 21st will become the unit that all the others would hope to be!

I would encourage you all to continue to keep two things in mind: respect and responsibility.

Respect those whom we strive to present and represent. Respect those who've come out to see "us". And respect other reenactors. Don't spoil the moment for the public or for other reenactors. If you don't want to "do" first person, that is fine. But keep silent and farb-free. And respect the campsites - the *homes* - of those you visit. Remember, you are guests.

And be responsible. We are a wonderful family (in every positive sense). We are more than happy to help one another. That is one of those many things we do very well. But we do need to each be responsible in reading our emails and every issue of "*Marching Along*". Check the 21st's website and facebook page. Information is put there for a reason. Make yourselves aware of it.

One Sunday, when I was pastoring in Ohio, I was making announcements from the pulpit. I made mention of an upcoming event the church was having. One of my parishioners interrupts and asks, "Why haven't I heard about this before!?" "Chuck," I said, "I've announced it every Sunday for six or seven weeks. It's been printed in the bulletin for at least as long. There are fliers on the back table that you have to walk by every Sunday. There are posters hanging up in the back, in the Sunday School classrooms, the Fellowship Hall and on every door in the church."

"Well," he said after a moment of silence, having cleared this throat, "*I want to be invited personally!*".

I told him that wasn't going to happen, that he needed to take responsibility as a member of the church to make himself aware of the information that was out there.

The same can, and should, be said of us. Make yourselves aware of what we (as a unit and as individuals) have committed to. Respond when asked to RSVP and be men and women of our word.

If we are respectful and responsible, events will certainly be even more enjoyable and easier... making them all "the best event ever".

- Mike

Welcome New Members:

Matthew & Stefani Geyman
and son Spencer

Roger & Carole McMann
and children: Sean, Karena, Jenny, Justin and Scott

Jason & Christy Monarch
and 3 children (sorry, I don't know names yet)

Heidi Niederer

Patrick & Christina Rice

from the Treasurer, Jim Cary

Just a reminder, your annual dues (\$10.00 for an individual, \$20.00 for a family) are due by February 15. This is in order for us to have an accurate roster to turn in to Greenfield Village at the beginning of March. If you have already paid your dues, we thank you. If you have not, please be sure to get them to me by the 15th.

***Thank you,
Jim Cary, Treasurer***