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THE COURIER



Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table



Tuesday April 12th, 2011 Meeting #116 Canteen: 6:00 pm Dinner: 6:50 pm Dino's Restaurant at I90 & State Rt. 306 Willoughby, Ohio Guest Speaker: Keith Rocco Topic: American Civil War Art Reservations required Guests are Welcome Please call Steve Abbey Phone 440 255 8375 e-Mail: abbeysr@yahoo.com

In style, subject matter, quality and inspiration, **Keith Rocco's** work evokes the masters of narrative, historical art: Meissonier, de Neuville and Pyle. An American painter and storyteller, Rocco has continued their legacy, creating visually stunning works which capture the drama of history, recording with care and nuance the details of his vision. It is a vision that has moved him through a lifetime to become one of the country's most sought after narrative painters today.



Rocco's passion for history and art began early. At the age of nine, for Christmas he talked his parents into getting him *The Golden Book of the Civil War* that he had seen in a local five & ten store. The book, filled with photos and drawings, inspired the budding, young artist to meticulously copy the pictures. At that time in life, he knew little of the traditions of historical art; research accuracy, emotion and artistic vision, yet instinctively as a child, he practiced the tenents of the craft as if he knew that someday it would be his future.

A love of history and a passion for art saw Rocco through the usual turmoil of adolescence, when he sold his first works, copies of the masters, to his high school teacher. At age 14 he began what today has become a solid collection of Civil War and Napoleonic artifacts along with an eclectic mix of costuming from a variety of periods. A cavalry saber, his first buy, still sits beside a cabinet crammed with the fruits of years of acquisitions. It is these small and seemingly insignificant artifacts that tell most heavily

upon Rocco's imagination. They provide the textual substance that bonds his readings and research with life. "For example, it's by being familiar with the type of cloth used on a garment from a specific period that the artist comes to understand how it will hang or fold. It's knowing the manufacturing processes and available materials of a period that are most crucial to visually recreate the essence of an era." says Rocco.

The work that goes into one of Rocco's canvasses is prodigious. Because he never puts brush to canvas without exhaustive research, he finds he must often begin his planning months before he starts a painting. This work often requires the help of professional historians and museum curators worldwide. They often help in unusual ways. For instance, the small cup of earth on his studio shelf was sent to confirm the color of the soil at Jamestown Colonial site.

The result of this dedication has been world-wide recognition for Rocco's art. In 1985 Rocco was proclaimed by the French magazine *Uniformes*, as an "artist in the tradition of Remington and Detaille." His works currently hang in every major collection of historical art in the United States and several countries abroad. These include the Andrew Mellon

Foundation, the Pentagon, and the Atlanta Historical Society, the House of Representatives, Gettysburg National Park, the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, the National Guard Heritage Collection, the U.S. Army War College and numerous private collections.

In 1992, Rocco set about producing the largest paintings of his career to date with a commission to create 3 murals for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison which opened in June of 1993. Yet this project was dwarfed in scale by the 1999 completion of Pamplin Historical Park for which he created over 4,000 square feet of murals divided among six individual paintings. In 2003, he designed the centerpiece mural "Gettysburg", for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. *Below: Through the Cornfield*

In 2010, Rocco was commissioned by the Province of Alessandria, Italy to create seven paintings for the newly renovated Marengo Museum.

The University of Illinois Press, University of Georgia Press, Chapel Hill, Military History, American History illustrated, Soldats Napoleoniens, Le Livre Chez Vous, LRT Editions and other publishing houses have all featured his work on their covers and interior pages.

Rocco's paintings have been displayed in special exhibits across the country, including a one man show entitled *On Campaign* at the Cyclorama Building in Gettysburg National Park in 1994. His talents have not gone unnoticed by that most critical institution responsible for keeping this nation's history preserved, the National Park Service. More than 50 contracts adding up to over 80 paintings have been awarded to Rocco by the Park's Design Center on the strength of his mastery of figure painting and understanding of historic subject.

His painterly and fluid style has earned Rocco the acclaim as one of the most sought after narrative artists. His characters are a visual looking glass onto the endless variety of human nature; a nature which can be as noble as it can be

brutal. It is this honest rendition of subject along with a painting tradition reminiscent of the best that America has produced, that keeps Rocco in the forefront of his contemporaries. Originally from Illinois, today Keith Rocco lives and paints in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

The Courier is the monthly newsletter of the Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table

John A. Sandy Editor

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Arlan Byrne Ted Karle Richmond Virginia Correspondent: Brent Morgan

Below: Buford and Reynolds





The Dahlgren Raid and the Plot to Kill President Lincoln Part One

Icy winter winds mixed with wet snow pelted the riders and their horses as the blue clad columns of union cavalry clogged its way south. The roads were muddy and every trooper struggled to stay alert and control his mount. They were on a desperate mission. Surprise and swiftness of movement was essential if they were to succeed. In January 1864 the Army of the Potomac's newly formed Bureau of Military Information (BMI) determined that hundreds of union army prisoners were dying from disease and malnutrition at Belle Isle, the Confederate prisoner of war camp located on an island in the James River near Richmond, Virginia. Major General Judson Kilpatrick developed a plan to free the union prisoner and strike a blow at the Confederate capital. The plan was authorized and approved by Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton.



The plan called for two columns of union cavalry to converge on Richmond. One column of 3500 troopers under Kilpatrick was to assault the outer defenses north of the city while a second column of 500 riders under Colonel Ulric Dahlgren was to cross the James River, attack the Belle Isle prison camp and free the prisoners. Everything went wrong from the start. Muddy roads and cold weather hampered the movement of the federal columns. The James River was too high for Dahlgren's men to ford so they hired a flat boat to ferry them across. The Confederate guards at Belle Isle were alerted and Dahlgren's troopers were forced to retreat. Local Militia ambushed the federal cavalry and Dahlgren was killed. The Virginia Militia searched Dahlgren's body and found a notebook containing orders written on U. S. Cavalry stationary. The orders detailed the secret mission to free the federal prisoners.

Col. Ulric Dahlgren standing. National Archives photograph

In addition, the orders instructed Dahlgren's men to arm the prisoners, set fire to the city of Richmond and assassinate Jefferson Davis, Vice President Stevens and the Confederate Cabinet.

The contents of Dahlgren's orders were published in the Richmond newspapers and inflamed bitter passions throughout the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis was appalled that in order to prosecute the war, the federal government had resorted to the "Black Flag." The plan to burn Richmond and assassinate civilian government officials was certainly the act of an uncivilized, immoral society. President Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton both denied issuing orders to burn Richmond or assassinate the heads of the Confederate government. However, Jefferson Davis and his advisers thought otherwise.

The Confederate high command established a network of spies and informants when the war began in April of 1861. Confederate spies were deployed in Washington D. C., New York City, Boston, Chicago and a number of the union cities. Agents were also dispatched to Canada to coordinate and disseminate orders. These agents read the local newspapers, frequented hotels and pubs gathering information on federal troop movements and any knowledge that would benefit the Southern Confederacy.



Abraham Lincoln was reelected to a second term as president in November of 1864. The Confederacy was frustrated and disappointed because of major battlefield defeats at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Atlanta, the loss of the Mississippi River and a hopeless siege at Petersburg, Virginia. Confederate agents, in November 1864, attempted to burn New York City and poison its water supply. The plot was discovered and the Confederate agents were captured before they could accomplish their mission. In the north, the general feeling was that the war would end shortly because large numbers of Rebel troops were deserting daily. Lee's army lacked food, ammunition and medical supplies. The southern population had grown weary from depredations caused by the war.

In Washington D.C. a group of Confederate agents gathered to plan a bold move that might secure victory for the suffering south. The group was organized and headed by John Wilkes Booth, an actor born and raised in Maryland. At age 26, J.W. Booth had become one of the finest actors of the American theater. Booth had performed in theaters throughout the north and south and his acting skill was universally applauded.

Six feet tall, physically fit, with jet black hair and a trim mustache, John Wilkes Booth had a bevy of female admirers wherever he performed. He kept the letters of his female friends in a large steamer trunk. He cut off the name from each letter so that no one but he knew who sent it. In the spring of 1862, Booth met Lucy Lambert Hale and fell hopelessly in love. Lucy Hale was the daughter of former New Hampshire Senator, John Parker Hale, an outspoken abolitionist and supporter of President Lincoln. Lucy Hale was a close personal friend of Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's son. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. was also an admirer of Miss Lucy.

Why would a man who had achieved the respect and admiration of his peers and great national acclaim risk it all by being involved in a desperate evil act with little chance of success? Only Booth could answer that question. But what is known is that Booth had deep passion for the southern cause and he was willing to risk his life if necessary, to help the Confederacy achieve independence from the tyrannical federal government.

In October of 1864, Booth traveled to Montreal, Canada and met with Confederate government operatives. Booth returned to the Washington D. C. and assembled a cadre of agents to assist him. The group met at the boarding house of Mary Surratt, located just a few blocks from the Ford Theater. It was at this same time that Booth decided to stop performing on stage. He told friends that he had made it big in the oil business and wanted to "concentrate on other business interests."

Booth's cadre included:

John Surratt Jr., Mary Surratt's son, a former divinity student and the former postmaster of Surrattsville, Maryland.

David Herold, a graduate of Georgetown College who earned a certificate in Pharmacy.

Lewis Powell enlisted in the 2nd Florida Infantry and saw action in many battles including Gettysburg.

George Atzerodt was a German immigrant and former Maryland resident who established a carriage repair shop in Washington.

Samuel Arnold was raised in Baltimore and attended St. Timothy's Military Academy where he met John Wilkes Booth and later fought for the Confederacy. *John Wilkes Booth photograph from the National Archives*

Michael O'Langhlen grew up in Baltimore; was a boyhood friend of Booth and was a Confederate war veteran.

Edman Spangler was born in York, Pennsylvania and worked as a carpenter and stage hand at the Ford Theater.

Dr. Samuel Mudd graduated from Georgetown College and the University of Maryland and was an outspoken advocate of slavery and the Confederate cause.

Mary Surratt was raised in Waterloo, Maryland and attended a Catholic girls' school.

On March 4, 1865, Booth and Lucy Hale attended President Lincoln's Second Inauguration. Shortly afterwards Booth decided to kidnap the President when the opportunity presented itself. They would grab Lincoln and take him to Richmond and ransom him for Confederate prisoners of war and the independence of the Southern Confederacy. Booth learned that Lincoln planned to attend a performance of the play: "*Still Waters Run Deep*," at the Campbell Military Hospital outside of Washington. The event was scheduled for March 17th. The President and Mrs. Lincoln frequently visited the hospital and they seldom had a military escort. Booth assembled his gang and set up an ambush location. Unbeknownst to Booth, the President had to change his plans and attend a ceremony at the National Hotel. Samuel Arnold and Michael O'Langhlen decided that this was not what they signed on for and departed for Baltimore. It was at this time that Booth decided to assassinate President Lincoln.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia on April 9, 1865. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston was still trying to hold out against William Sherman's advance through North Carolina. Everyone, with the possible exception of Jefferson Davis and John Wilkes. Booth believed that the war was finally over. Davis thought that the south should fight on and wage guerrilla type warfare and never surrender. Booth believed that it was his duty to save the south. He must strike quickly and throw the northern government and its people into complete chaos. The union would then sue for peace and let the southern states go.

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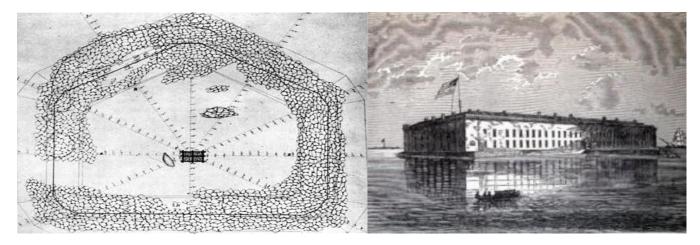
Fort Sumter Compiled by Carl Dodaro

Fort Sumter is listed as a third system masonry fort, begun in 1829 as part of the harbor defense of Charleston, South Carolina. The Third System Masonry Forts were started in 1816 when Congress appropriated over \$800,000 for the ambitious seacoast defense system based on lessons learned from the War of 1812 and British attacks on the east coast. A board of engineers for fortifications, appointed by President James Madison, visited potential sites and prepared plans for the new forts. The Board's original 1821 report suggested 50 sites, but by 1850 the board had identified nearly 200 sites for fortification. However, fortifications were only built at 42 of these sites. The main defensive works were large structures with many guns concentrated in tall, thick masonry walls constructed on the sites of earlier forts. The construction was overseen by officers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Plans for a new fort in Charleston Harbor were drawn up in 1827 and adopted on December 5, 1828. Fort Sumter was begun in the winter of 1829. Named after General Thomas Sumter, a Revolutionary War hero of South Carolina and the Gamecock of the Revolution, it was only one part of the Charleston defense ring and the other parts included Fort Moultre and Castle Pinckney.

The fort itself was designed as a five-sided brick structure, 50 feet high, 300 feet long and 400 feet wide with five foot thick walls enclosing a parade ground of roughly one acre. It was originally designed to house 650 men and 135 cannon in three tiers of gun emplacements. Progress was slow and as late as 1834, the new fort was no more than a hollow pentagonal rock mole two feet above low water and open at one side to permit ships to pass to the interior. Late in the autumn of 1834, operations were suddenly suspended. Ownership of the site was in question. In the preceding May, William Laval, a resident of Charleston, had secured from the state a conveniently vague grant to 870 acres of "land" in Charleston Harbor. In November, acting under this grant, Laval notified the Representative of the U.S. Corps of Engineers of his claim to the site of Fort Sumter. Laval's claim was invalidated by the South Carolina State Attorney General under an act of the Legislature, December 20, 1837. Finally on November 22, 1841, was the Federal Government's title to 125 acres of harbor land recorded in the Office of the Secretary of State of South Carolina.

The creation of Fort Sumter was now pushed forward, but showed slow results. The work was difficult. The granite used for the foundation, 10,000 ton, shipped from New England was laid between high and low watermarks and there were periods of time when the tide permitted no work to be done at all. Yellow fever was a recurrent problem as was the excessive heat of the Charleston summers. Much of the building material had to be brought in from the north. Well over 60,000 tons of other rock was obtained locally, but even here there were problems as local brickyard capacities were small and millions of bricks were required. Similarly, hundreds of thousands of bushels of shells were needed to make concrete for the foundation of the first tier casement floors and for use in the parade grounds fill. Even the actual delivery of supplies, however local, was a problem, for then as now; Fort Sumter was a difficult spot at which to land.



Fort Sumter's rock ring foundation and Fort Sumter in 1861. From the National Archives and U.S. National Park Service

By December 1860, Fort Sumter was unfinished when events prompted its occupation by U. S. troops. Of the 135 guns planned for the gunrooms and the open terraplein above, only 15 had been mounted. Most of these were "32 pounders," none was heavier. Various details of the interior finish of the barracks, quarters and gunrooms were incomplete. Congressional economies had had their effect, as much as the difficulties of construction. As late as 1858 and 1859, work had been virtually at a standstill for lack of funds. This is the Fort Sumter that Major Anderson and his small garrison manned in late December, 1860.

Compiled from the National Park Service Handbook: Fort Sumter found online at www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books

American Lion by Jon Meacham – a book review by Tom Horvath



American Lion is the story of Andrew Jackson's years in the White House. The narrative begins with chapters summarizing his childhood, early years, military career, and bids for the presidency. It then sets the stage for the first two years of his presidency by describing the scandal surrounding the new wife of John Henry Eaton, a cabinet member and close friend. The other major issues of his tenure: nullification and threatened secession; removal of the Native American tribes (particularly the Cherokee) beyond the Mississippi; decommissioning the Second Bank of the United States; avoiding an international war triggered by France's refusal to repay her dept to us on time; and electing his chosen successor while presenting a neutral face, follow in chronological order. The book concludes with a brief history of his later life and death.

There is a great deal of information in this book that is new to me. I knew there was a secession crisis in Jackson's administration, but I never knew how close we came to armed conflict. Jackson walked a tightrope between undermining the Union by allowing states to assume more power through nullification on the one hand, and shattering the Union through armed conflict on the other – and he did it successfully.

By this time Jackson was no longer a rough-hewn, backwoods scrapper. It is true that Jackson was orphaned early and that he had little formal education, but by this point in his life he was well-mannered, charming, and very cunning. People were often pleasantly surprised by his personality and smoothness, and his enemies underestimated his intelligence and political savvy at their peril.

Nor was Jackson's health good. An early duel left a bullet in his chest that complicated other health issues. Yet, rumors of his imminent or actual death, which started soon after his election, were definitely premature. He lived for eight more years after he left office.

The writing of this narrative is uneven. Except for one spot where the thread seems to get lost, the story is written well and easy to follow. However, Mr. Meacham's handling of quotes, which make up a large portion of the text, seems awkward and forced. He sometimes interrupts the flow of the quote to identify who was writing to whom; leaves identification of the writer to the end (which sometimes means re-reading the quote to gain the full impact); or identifies the author when the previous context has made that fact obvious. In one instance, he interjects in the middle of a quote that Jackson consistently misspelled "Salem" -- yet Jackson was neither the writer nor the recipient of the quote.

However, my biggest complaint about the volume is that, although I learned a great deal about the Jackson era, I didn't really get to know Jackson. There just seems to be too much of others and not enough Jackson to suit me. After the opening chapters, Jackson becomes a minor character as the scandal involving Secretary of War John Henry Eaton and his new wife unfolds. That takes us through a quarter of his administration and more than 100 pages into the volume. Even after that, when nullification and the other problems take center stage and Jackson becomes a central figure, there seems to be a lack of detail in many of the stories. I can remember only one instance in which the author delves deeply into the decision making process and the impact and influence Jackson and his cabinet have on one another. I would like to know more.

Published by Random House in 2008, the volume contains 483 pages. There is a section of notes, bibliography, index, and two sections of illustrations. Barnes & Noble has the hardcover available for \$23.21, a paperback edition for \$12.29, and the Nook electronic version for \$13.99, while Amazon says it has a limited number of hard covers available for \$14.00 and its Kindle electronic version available for \$13.99. Mentor library has two copies, including one large print edition, plus the book on CD. The ClevNet system has 52 copies plus 8 large print editions and 11 sound recordings from three different sources.

The Conspirator

A new movie directed by Robert Redford and starring Evan Rachel Ward

James McAvoy Alexis Biedel Tom Wilkinson Kevin Kline

The trial of Mary Surratt and the Lincoln Assassination Plot, opening on April 15, 2011

14TH PRESIDENT'S CIVIL WAR JOURNAL by Franco M. Sperrazzo April 12, 2011

<u>March 8thMeeting, Edward J. Pershey:</u> There is a striking resemblance between **Dr. Edward J. Pershey** and NEOCWRT member **Dr. Phillip Price.** Both are superb scholars that do more than 200 presentations yearly. They have the unique ability to convey their subject matter with exuberance and passion that is realized by their audience. Mr. Pershey has worked in major historical facilities, but his enthusiasm and love for Cleveland history is quite evident. It is refreshing to study the sociological and economic factors of inventions and how, despite a biased media, they drive the events that affect history. **Carl Dodaro** remarked, "I wish that was the first night of a two part series". Based on how well Dr. Ed was received by about 3 dozen troops, there definitely should be a return engagement!

Fairport Harbor Historical Society: Bob Baucher & Joe Tirpak will be guest speakers for the FHHS 2011 Sesquicentennial Anniversary of OHIO & the CIVIL WAR. Bob will kick-off the April 12th, 3pm session at the Fairport Senior Center. Bob's topic is "How Ohio Won the Civil War". JET will host the April 21st, evening session at 7pm in the Fairport Harbor Public Library. Joe's talk will be titled "Medals of Honor". Baucher will complete the 3 part series on May 12^{tth}, at 7pm in the FH Public Library. His talk is "Civil War Causes & Effects". FHHS programs are free. Make inquires to Baucher & Tirpak.

Brent Morgan to be Honored: Brent's tenure as a NEOCWRT member started in 1999. He and wife **Sharon** relocated to Richmond, VA in March 2007. In retirement they reside closer to son Rod and their grandchildren. Our Southern correspondent has ascended to 2nd Vice President of the Richmond CWRT. Brent's legacy has followed him since his 1960 high school graduation. Mr. Morgan will be honored by the Mentor High School Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame. The ceremonies are on Thursday April 14th starting at 6pm social hour, & 6:45pm dinner. Event location is Cappelli's at the Comfort Inn, Reynolds Rd. (Rt. 306) Mentor, OH. Make your check payable to MHS Alumni & Friends Assoc. For questions call Irene Carl: 440-255-0373. An NEOCWRT congratulations & salute to our friend Brent Morgan.

<u>Theodore J. Karle takes on Erie, PA: Ted</u> will speak to the Erie Civil War Round Table that we belong to on Tuesday April 26th at 7pm. Mr. Karle, will explore "Gettysburg Revisited". John Sandy, Arlan Byrne & Pres. Franco plan to attend. Contact us if you wish to fill up another car and join us!

Executive Cabinet Meeting: We will meet Thursday, April 28th, at 5:45pm. Business will be conducted promptly at 6pm. Major topics to discuss are Spring Day Outing, Sandy; Summer Picnic, Karle; Fall Field Trip, London; Civil War 150th, Horvath; Treasurer's Report, Meissner; Speaker Programs, Tirpak; Membership Packet,Byrne/Abbey/ Sears; Fairport Harbor HS, Baucher; WRHS, Sperrazzo; and more. Any member with important matters is welcome to attend this special open meeting. We will convene in a private back room at the Eat & Park Restaurant in Willoughby, Ohio (same as April of last year).

Spring One Day Outing: On April 5^{th,} spokesperson **John Sandy** and yours truly toured Ohio City, site for this year's Spring tour. Through the efforts of his wife **Theresa**, we will re-employ Cleveland Historian **Tim Barrett** as our guide. Mr. Barrett was splendid last May with his informative tour of three Cleveland churches. John will have a separate page with details on this year's exciting event. An afternoon option is Pres. Franco leading a group to Western Reserve Historical Society's new exhibit "Rally Round the Flags."This opens to the public on April 29th. Free passes for admission are secured. Guests are invited to attend.



The Last Full Measure by Keith Rocco

Smithsonian Magazine Articles: The March 2011 edition features an event from March 4th, 1861 when President Lincoln was sworn in. It makes mention of Chief Justice Roger Taney, author of <u>the Dred Scott Decision</u>. On May 10th, **George Deutsch** will convey this topic to our group. The new April edition featured article is "The Civil War Begins" in a 20 page spread by author Vincent Musi. Cleveland native Charles Michener tells a positive story of his home town, "My Kind of Town- Cleveland Rocks".

<u>Keith Rocco April 12th</u>: Mr. Rocco and his wife will honor us for the 150th anniversary of Fort Sumter. We are fortunate to have this talented American painter and narrative artist. His visual show is titled: "Historical Art-Capturing the Past". Keith will bring three books for sale.

The Northeast Ohio Civil War Round Table Spring Field Trip

Tour of Historic Ohio City and Cleveland's Near Westside

Featuring: Tim Barrett

Saturday May 21, 2011 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Ohio City, founded in 1818, is one of Cleveland's oldest ethnically diverse neighborhoods. It was originally part of Brooklyn Township until 1836, when it became an independent municipality. In its early years, Ohio City competed with Cleveland for business and commerce. In 1854, Ohio City was annexed by the City of Cleveland.



The Ohio Canal

St. Patrick's Church

Ohio City was the home of many famous personalities and boasts a landscape filled with historic sites. In the last decade, while most communities in Ohio saw a decline in population, Ohio City has grown from 6000 to nearly 11,000 residents. *Tim Barrett* will be our guide for a day filled with interesting places and lunch at *Heck's Cafe*.



The Fulton LibraryThe historic houses of Ohio CityLunch at Heck's Café (not included)Transportation provided by Shima Limousine ServiceCost: \$15.00 per personReservations: Call John Sandy at 216 486 9406