

On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Preservation of the Smith Run Battlefield close to being a reality for the CVBT

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is close to purchasing a portion of the Smith Run battlefield. We are seeking to acquire 11.26 acres of land where Colonel Lewis Grant's brigade of Vermont and New Jersey troops made a critical stand against attacking Confederates of Brigadier General Harry Hays' Brigade, on May 4, 1863, during the Chancellorsville Campaign.

Sunshine Lady kicks off Endowment Fund

Mrs. Doris Buffett Bryant's Sunshine Lady Foundation has donated \$10,000 to the Trust's endowment fund. This generous amount will be used to build a strong account that will generate interest income to fund the Trust's future operating expenses. Since forming, in 1996, the Trust has diverted five percent of received donations to an endowment account whose principal is not to be reduced in any way. Our Board of Directors handles all staff functions (so we have no paid staff), but there are always other expenses such as office rent, telephone service, postage, stationary, envelopes, printer cartridges, etc. The interest from the endowment account is intended to cover ongoing expenses so member donations can be used almost exclusively for acquiring dirt and grass.

We recently began to notify members and potential donors that they now have the option to contribute directly to the endowment fund. Some people prefer to see their contribution remain intact while it provides interest in

continued on page five

As we noted in our last newsletter, more than 25 percent of the Union casualties sustained during that campaign (April 27 - May 6) were inflicted on the Federal Sixth Corps. This formation, Major General John Sedgwick commanding, crossed the Rappahannock River below Fredericksburg, when the Army of the Potomac initiated operations that spring.

They fought the Second Battle of Fredericksburg, on May 3. Several hours later, they ran into Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox's Alabama Brigade, reinforced by units under Lafayette McLaws, at Salem Church.

As May 4 dawned, the Federal army held two strongholds. Major General Joseph Hooker, with the bulk of the Federal army, had entrenched, just north of Chancellorsville. Sedgwick had his Sixth Corps deployed on a series of hills just west of Fredericksburg and was supported by another Federal division opposite Falmouth.

While Hooker remained quiescent, Robert E.



The Vermont Brigade forms a line of battle to hold off Confederates under Jubal Early at Smith Run on May 4, 1863. (painting by Julian Scott)

continued on page four

The CVBT's Annual Meeting: An educational and funfilled weekend

The CVBT held its annual meeting on Saturday, May 5, 2001. We recognize that many of our members travel a great distance to be with us on these occasions, so we provided a range of tours and other events on both Saturday and Sunday to make the trip worth their while.

Saturday began with a cruise on the Rappahannock River aboard the stern paddle wheeler *The City of Fredericksburg*. Highlights included lunch and a narration of the river's impact on Civil War campaigns in the region. The Rappahannock is not an especially large river, but participants could appreciate how it still presented a barrier to military operations. Although the vegetation was thick, we could also see where Confederate fortifications and Federal pontoon bridge sites had been

located.

After lunch, National Park Service historian Frank A. O'Reilly led a group on a tour through the streets of Fredericksburg, the nation's only urban battlefield. Mr. O'Reilly has written the definitive study of the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg (soon to be published by the University of Louisiana Press). As a consequence, the tour highlighted the most recent research available and was delivered with consummate skill. We were absolutely delighted that Mr. O'Reilly was able to provide this exceptional experience.

On Sunday, Gary Gallagher (University of Virginia) and Robert K. Krick (National Park Service) led another tour to a series of sites that most people never see. These places included Fort Hood (Talcott's Battery) on the

Rappahannock River (where ropes were needed to get on site); the Yerby House site (Belvoir), where Stonewall Jackson sat for his last paragraph on the eve of the Chancellorsville Campaign; and the Bernard Cabins site, where Confederate artillery broke up a Federal attack on December 13, 1862. In addition, the National Park Service briefed this group on recently accomplished archaeology at Sunken Road, and saw additional sites in the streets of Fredericksburg. The incompa-



The Paddle Wheeler City of Fredericksburg, the lunchtime transportation on the Rappahannock River.

Membership Categories

Annual Member	\$35
Active Member	\$135
Sustaining Member	\$250
Patron	\$500
Benefactor	\$1,000
Life Member	\$5,000
Life Patron	\$10,000
Corporate Member	\$500
Corporate Patron	\$1,000

On The Skirmish Line

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Departing board member Enos Richardson, giving his farewell speech during the Saturday night dinner and meeting.

rable Gallagher/Krick team provided an unforgettable day of historical insight at some of the most obscure, yet compelling sites in and around Fredericksburg.

The actual annual meeting took place after a barbeque dinner, near the middle pontoon site on the Rappahannock. CVBT President John D. Mitchell presided. After Lloyd B. Harrison, III delivered the Treasurer's report, we recognized the contributions of two retiring Board members - Dr. F. Baldwin Harrington, Jr. and Enos Richardson, Jr. These men have been with the organization since its inception and helped define its mission and operating procedures (dirt and grass, not paid staff). New members who were voted onto the Board included Robert Lee Hodge, William Kinnamon, Jr., and James M. Pates. Mr. Pates is a founding member of the CVBT who returns to the Board after a year's hiatus.

While the CVBT has been the recipient of several awards, this organization took the opportunity of its annual meeting to present some awards of its own. The Trust's first ever Preservation Award was presented to Cara Metz, Director of the Resource Services and Review Division, of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Ms. Metz has been extremely helpful in ongoing efforts to recognize and preserve the scene of the Chancellorsville battle's opening engagement, on May 1, 1863. This land has not been preserved and is still very much threatened

with development. Ms. Metz has helped to define the Commonwealth of Virginia's position, which helps the CVBT to continue to try to acquire this terrain. Ms. Metz sets a high standard for future awards.

The Trust also presented an Award of Commendation to Gary Embrey who is the Trust's webmaster. Establishing and maintaining a website is labor intensive and requires extreme dedication (as well as exceptional skill). Mr. Embrey's efforts help the CVBT to get its message out to a wide audience.

We also received a check from the Harrisburg Civil War Round

Table that evening. Presenting these funds, for the purchase of more battlefield ground, was William Matter. Mr. Matter is a retired Air Force pilot and Civil War historian. Many of you have no doubt read his study of the Spotsylvania Court House battles, *If It Takes All Summer*. This check from Harrisburg will be put to good use.

Special thanks are also due to Mr. and Mrs. Charles McDaniel, who allowed the Trust to gather on their riverfront property for this annual meeting. In the finest tradition of Southern hospitality, Mr. McDaniel also invited members to visit his house "The Sentry Box," once the home of Revolutionary War General George Weedon and subjected to the Federal bombardment of Fredericksburg in 1862. We trust those who participated in this spontaneous tour were impressed as well as entertained.

Anne Morgan Pates and Samantha Stanley getting to the spirit of the occasion on Saturday night.



Renewal Note

Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal. The date appears in the upper right hand corner of the label. Clip out the renewal form and send it back.

Smith Run Valley Battlefield

continued from page one

Lee aggressively concentrated against Sedgwick. He saw the chance to destroy the isolated Union corps with superior numbers (a rare opportunity for the Army of Northern Virginia). Most of the day passed, however, in getting the assault troops into position over rough terrain. Not until the late afternoon did the Confederate attack begin. The bulk of this battlefield has since succumbed to growth and development, but one area remains relatively intact. It is this terrain that the CVBT seeks to protect.

Elements of the Vermont Brigade held the ground we are trying to place under contract. The setting sun was at their back, forcing Hays' advancing Louisianans to shield their

eyes. The Union soldiers lay prone, under cover. Those who raised up to see invariably drew fire, reminding the waiting troops that the oncoming Confederates remained alert and aggressive. When the attackers closed in, though, the Federals rose up and delivered several volleys into the startled Southerners. The Confederate attack faltered and the Vermont troops held their line. Their action covered the Sixth Corps' retreat later that evening, back to pontoon bridges over the Rappahannock.

We will keep you informed as this project develops.

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Memorial Bricks to Honor Soldiers

The Trust continues to sell memorial bricks, for display at a wayside park in Fredericksburg. Several of you have already purchased bricks, memorializing soldiers who fought in the Civil War. These were set in place in time for Memorial Day. We have orders for several more bricks and will get those in place later this year.

Persons who would like to purchase a brick should note the following guidelines. The cost per individual brick is \$100. Each brick can accommodate three lines of 15 characters each. Commas, periods, numbers, spaces, and apostrophes count as one character each. Because of the limited space, lengthy names may need to be abbreviated. Information should be limited to the soldier's name, rank, and unit, and perhaps his fate.

The Trust will consult with those who buy bricks as much as possible, but reserves the right to abbreviate or move words, to maintain balance and to provide the clearest, most legible, etched brick. Members can order bricks by sending a check and the desired information to the Trust office, attention: Bricks. For more information, call (540) 374-0900.



Join Us for the Weekend
IN OLD TOWN FREDERICKSBURG

139th Anniversary of the Battle of Fredericksburg
December 8th and 9th, 2001

Battle of Fredericksburg Reenactment, Living History,
Candlelight Tours of Historic Fredericksburg Homes,
Plenty of Shopping and Old Town Fredericksburg Charm.

For more information: Call 1-800-678-4748
Write: 139th Anniversary, 706 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Email to: fburgreenactment@aol.com

Fredericksburg Battlefield Receives

Go Ahead to Restore Sunken Road

The Fredericksburg City Council is to be commended for agreeing to relinquish its right of access to the historic Sunken Road. This scene of intense Civil War action was a road at the time of the war and has remained in such use ever since. When the

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The CVBT receives *Preservation Award*

The Civil War Preservation Trust also held their annual meeting in May. Our two organizations had attempted to coordinate our respective meetings and events, but the logistics could not be satisfactorily worked out, so we wished each other well and pressed on separately. The CWPT, however, planned to present us with an award and scheduled the event when a group of us could attend the ceremony. Generous guys those CWPT folks.

Jim Lighthizer and Carrington Williams presented the CVBT with their Preservation Organization of the Year Award for 2001, "For Outstanding Local Leadership in Civil War Battlefield Preservation." We are, of course, gratified to receive such recognition and will strive to live up to the expectations that are inherently a part of such an honor.

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Endowment Fund

continued from page one

perpetuity. Others, of course, are happy to see their dollars used to purchase land. Each type of contribution clearly has a permanent impact.

We extend our sincere thanks to Ms. Robin Haymes, representative of the Sunshine Lady Foundation who lives here in Fredericksburg, and to Mrs. Doris Buffett Bryant, for providing this generous gift that highlights the endowment fund as an option to donors.

Fredericksburg - Spotsylvania National Military Park was established, in the 1920s, the Federal government acquired the road itself, while the local jurisdiction retained the right to continue its use as a public street.

Over 60 years later, a new roadway has altered traffic patterns, reducing traffic through this historic area. In addition, the transfer of Willis Hill to the National Park Service has provided the opportunity to integrate these sites into a coherent destination with enhanced visitor appeal. The Willis Hill purchase was the CVBT's first acquisition, in partnership with the Civil War Trust (now the Civil War Preservation Trust) and the National Park Service. Before any of these improvements could be implemented, though, the City of Fredericksburg had to agree to give up its local road.

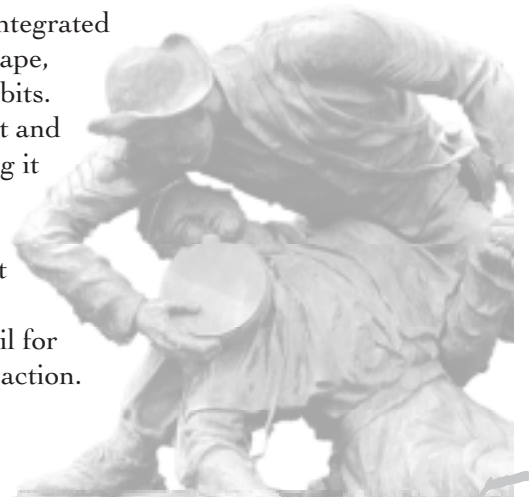
The City Council recognized that an enhanced Sunken Road could become a compelling destination and boost tourism. Still, it moved carefully to ensure local issues were identified and addressed. After the vote, Mayor William Beck stated: "I am proud of my city for recognizing the national importance of this site and for accommodating our local needs to this undertaking."

The National Park Service plans an ambitious restoration of the Sunken Road sector of the battlefield. Utilities will be relocated, the modern pavement removed, and the original road level reestablished. Missing sections of the stone wall will be rebuilt and the overall site integrated into the surrounding landscape, through new trails and exhibits.

This is an exciting project and we look forward to watching it develop. If you agree with the goals of this historic scene restoration, you might consider thanking the Fredericksburg City Council for their generous and decisive action.

www.cvbt.org

Our web page continues to expand, through the generosity of member Gary Embry. The CVBT web site is well worth a visit and includes an inordinate number of links to other Civil War web sites. Pay us a visit. You will not be disappointed.



RENEW TODAY!!

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CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

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ACTIVE MEMBER - \$135

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LIFE MEMBER - \$5,000

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Please return completed renewal form with credit card information or a check payable to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.**

Mail completed form to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, 604A William Street, Suite 1, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.**

In a constant endeavor to keep our costs down, the CVBT publishes a renewal form in all issues of "On The Skirmish Line". Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal and clip out the form above and send it back to our office. If your membership is current, but you know of someone who would like to join, please pass this membership form on to them. The CVBT would be glad to include them in our ever growing list of members.



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