

ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

CVBT's Annual Meeting Focuses on Chancellorsville

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust held its 2013 annual meeting on May 3, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville. Noted authors and historians Robert K. Krick and Gary W. Gallagher joined us for the evening and served as our keynote speakers. Bob's presentation focused on Robert E. Lee's direction of the Battle of Chancellorsville, which was his greatest victory of the war. Gary enlightened the sell-out crowd of 200 with a discussion that looked forward from Chancellorsville to Gettysburg, focusing on the importance of the latter battle in the overall war.

President Mike Stevens welcomed guests and presided over the Trust's traditional dinner and business meeting. Mike gave an overview of the Trust's activities and acquisitions during 2012, and then nominated Eric



President Mike Stevens presents the Ralph A. Happel award and silver medallion to longtime CVBT member and battlefield preservationist Jack Ackerly.

Powell, a local educator and civil war enthusiast, to our Board of Directors. Given Eric's unique expertise in history and education, we are delighted to have him join us on the Board.

While CVBT traditionally hosts numerous tours and events as part of our annual meeting, we did not do so this year, to enable our members to participate in a wide variety of tours and programs sponsored by the National Park

Service. The NPS events, which spanned more than a week, are described in detail below. Thanks to all of you who attended our meeting and the NPS events at Chancellorsville. This was an excellent opportunity for our Board to spend time with our valued members and to share camaraderie, a mutual interest in history, and a commitment to preserve the battlefields in Central Virginia. We look forward to seeing everyone at our annual meeting next year! **SL**

A Nation Remembers: CHANCELLORSVILLE

IF YOU WERE NOT AT CHANCELLORSVILLE DURING THE first week of May, you missed an extraordinary event. From May 1-10, residents and visitors were treated to a insightful and evocative series of programs as the National Park Service commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville. The event was conceived and executed by Superintendent Russ Smith and the dedicated and knowledgeable staff of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

The commemoration events at Chancellorsville were varied and numerous. NPS sponsored activities included four bus tours, many walking programs, and a number of on-site presentations. Moreover, many of the bus tours and walking programs were held in "real time"—faithful to the times and places where the actual events occurred in May 1863. The bus tours focused on the lead-up to the opening clash, the events on May 2 (including Jackson's flank march), a rare behind-the-scenes look at the hidden sites of Chancellorsville, and a tour tracking Stonewall Jackson's final battles.

The walking programs addressed a number of subjects, including the opening conflict on the First Day field, a first ever walk of the entire route of Jackson's flank attack, and a highly personal walk in the footsteps of a soldier wounded at Fairview. In addition, "real time" walking programs focused on a small clash beginning at Catharine Furnace that ensured the success of Jackson's march, the path of Jackson's flank attack, sunrise and impending death at Hazel Grove and Fairview, the Confederate surge to victory in the Chancellor clearing, and the subsequent Yankee victory in the Battle of Second Fredericksburg.

On-site NPS presentations also chronicled the final bivouac of Lee and Jackson, the time and place of Jackson's mortal wounding, the ordeal of the Chancellors, the battle that raged at Salem Church, the connection between *The Red*



Another glimpse of the CVBT 2013 Annual Meeting: CVBT members mingle in the dining room prior to the start of the meeting.

Badge of Courage and Chancellorsville, and artillery demonstrations at Hazel Grove and Fairview. Additional programs focused on the life of the Chancellor house, a candlelight event at the Jackson Shrine marking the 150th anniversary of Jackson's last night, and finally, a "real time" program at the Shrine on May 10, marking Jackson's last day and his death. In addition to the NPS programs, friends and partners of the Park offered a wide variety of additional activities, including events designed for local students, children's musters, living histories, music programs, and the opening of the Salem Church to visitors. A local committee also planned and orchestrated a large scale re-enactment of the Battle of Chancellorsville on land near the Spotsylvania Court House.

We of CVBT were privileged to host our annual meeting during the sesquicentennial of the Battle of Chancellorsville. Huzzah to the NPS and to all of the local friends and partners who helped to bring the battle to life for so many people! SL



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The demolition of the Stars and Bars structure in April.

CVBT Completes Demolition Projects

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has just completed two demolition projects on recently acquired properties. Both properties are located on the south side of the Orange Turnpike (modern day Route 3) and are what we refer to as our Rodes-Doles tract and the Stonewall Brigade parcel. Both properties were part of Jackson's famed Flank Attack during the Battle of Chancellorsville. Our biggest and most obvious demolition project involved the structures on the Rodes-Doles tract. This 13 acre parcel was the site of the old Stars and Bars relic shop, also known locally as "the Castle" because of its construction features which included several turrets and parapets. This massive 7,500 square foot brick and block building had been a blight on the battlefield since the mid 1970s. Now it is gone and the property appears much as it did when Jackson's men charged down the Turnpike 150 years ago. Local demolition expert Ken Wolfrey said the construction of the building made it particularly challenging. The thickness of the brick and block walls plus the amount of poured concrete used was astounding. To compound the scale of the project, a massive underground bunker was discovered, with poured concrete

walls and a floor 17 inches thick. The second demolition project on the 9 acre Stonewall Brigade site was much smaller in scale but not without its surprises. When tearing down a two story brick residence, our demolition expert discovered an old hand dug well shaft, approximately 20 feet deep and 5 feet square. The sides of the well shaft were lined with poured concrete that had been painstakingly formed with wooden framing.

To the greatest extent possible, we try to acquire land with few or no improvements. The rationale is simple. If a piece of property has existing modern day structures, the structures generally have value, which increases the cost of the property. We obviously have no use for the modern day structures since our desire is to return the property to its war time appearance. Thus we pay for these structures twice: initially when the property is purchased, and again when the structures are demolished. Although our desire is to remove these structures, in most cases we are required to do so. CVBT strives to maximize your donations by obtaining matching federal and state grants to acquire eligible properties. One of the requirements for receiving grant funding is that a protective easement be

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CVBT Says a Fond Farewell to Russ Smith

FREDERICKSBURG HAS BEEN BLESSED beyond measure for the past ten years to have Russ Smith serve as the Superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (F&SNMP). So it is with mixed emotions that we must report that Russ has accepted a new position as Superintendent of the newly created First State National Monument in his home state of Delaware.



First State is one of five new national monuments that President Barack Obama created in March. We of CVBT are of course thrilled for Russ and this wonderful new opportunity. However, we are also saddened by his departure. Russ has been a very active participant in the Fredericksburg community, and he has been a true champion and partner in the effort to preserve

Civil War battlefields. His hard work and dedication are matched only by his kind, fair and compassionate nature. When asked about the high points of his in time Fredericksburg, Russ stated "An outstanding feature of my tenure here was working with the generous and supportive people of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust." We of CVBT have been truly privileged to work so closely with Russ on matters of mutual concern, and to count him as a good friend. CVBT will miss Russ's wise counsel and thoughtful cooperation, and we wish him Godspeed as he embarks on his new position. SL

CVBT Adds a New Member to our Board of Directors

We are excited to announce that Charles G. McDaniel has agreed to join the CVBT Board of Directors. Charlie has been a constant presence in the Fredericksburg community for many years. His work has included service with the Fredericksburg City Council, the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center, the local Chamber of Commerce, the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, the Mary Washington Hospital Foundation and the University of Mary Washington's Presidents' Roundtable. Charlie graduated from the University of Richmond, and he presently serves as chairman of the Hildrup Companies. Having Charlie on the CVBT Board will enhance our effectiveness immeasurably. Welcome, Charlie!

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT ANNUAL MEETING!

The 2014 CVBT annual meeting will be held on May 2, to coincide with the **150th anniversary of the Battle of The Wilderness**. While our meetings typically span several days and include a number of tours, we are scaling back to a dinner meeting again in 2014, to allow our guests to attend the many informative and evocative programs that the **Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park** will be hosting in remembrance of the sesquicentennial. Noted author and historian **Gordon Rhea** will join us to discuss the battle, and to inscribe his books for our guests. Gordon will be in town on May 2 and 3 to conduct a tour for the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield. (Details about that tour, which is not a CVBT event, will be posted at www.fowb.org once the arrangements are finalized.) The CVBT annual meeting will be held at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel in Central Park. Complete details about the meeting will be included in our next newsletter, and will be posted on our website. We look forward to seeing you next May, both at our meeting, and for the 150th anniversary events commemorating the Battle of the Wilderness!

May

2014

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A Cannon for “The Gallant Pelham”

CVBT HAS PRESERVED MORE THAN 1,000 ACRES of Civil War sites in the Fredericksburg area, both by acquisition in fee simple and through the use of conservation easements. However, with only one part-time staff person, we generally do not have the resources to interpret the sites that we acquire. Our goal, to the greatest extent possible, is to eventually transfer the properties to the National Park Service (NPS) so the sites can be properly interpreted and accessed by the public.

One site that CVBT owns—that is open to the public and interpreted—is Pelham’s Corner. This one-acre parcel at the intersection of Tidewater Trail and Benchmark Road is the setting for one of the most remarkable stories in Civil War history. Here one lone cannon not only started the momentous Battle of Fredericksburg, but also single-handedly defied an immense Union force for an hour. Major John Pelham’s incredible feat inspired admiration from his contemporaries—General Robert E. Lee called him, “The Gallant Pelham,” and said “It was glorious to see such courage in one so young.” Pelham’s actions and courage have inspired and amazed historians, students, and soldiers for generations.

The parcel contains two interpretive signs plus a granite marker installed in 1903 by Fredericksburg resident James Power Smith, a member of Stonewall Jackson’s staff. The site is visited by the public and is one of the iconic locations of the Civil War. CVBT owns and maintains the site, and is undertaking several improvements to the property to attract more visitors and make their experience more meaningful. The site is completely surrounded by development and thus it is difficult for visitors to understand and appreciate the engagement in the midst of all the modern intrusions. In an effort to screen the site from development, CVBT has installed rows of cedars along the perimeter. Since cedars were on the property during the war, this improvement will greatly add to the property’s visual appeal when the trees mature.

While the landscaping will certainly increase the property’s appeal to the public, the installation of a cannon would also dramatically enhance visitors’ experience, both aesthetically and educationally. Frank O’Reilly, NPS historian and author of the definitive book on the Battle of Fredericksburg, had this to say about CVBT’s proposal:

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{Demolition, continued from page 3}

placed on the property. The easement requires that most, if not all, modern day structures be removed in a reasonable amount of time. Unfortunately, grant funding is not available to assist in the demolition of structures. Moreover, the demolition can be very expensive, not only because of the labor involved in the process, but the cost involved in properly disposing of the materials that remain. Organic material such as wood must be separated from the non-organic material such as brick and block. The material must then be transported (another expense) to a facility that can properly dispose of and recycle the material, such as a county landfill. The county charges "tipping fees" based upon the weight of the material. The total cost of these two demolition projects exceeded \$40,000. We are most grateful to those of you who have made donations to assist us with these expenses, and we are still accepting donations to help defray these costs. We are proud of the improvements we have made to these two parcels, and we hope that you will appreciate our efforts the next time you travel on the Orange Turnpike. SL



Gary Gallagher enlightened the sell-out crowd of 200 with a discussion that looked forward from Chancellorsville to Gettysburg.



CVBT Board Member Bob Krick was happy to inscribe books for the guests at our annual meeting.

Stay on the Skirmish Line!



Take a look at the mailing label on your latest *Skirmish Line* newsletter. You will see that it includes your CVBT membership expiration date. As a dirt and grass outfit, members can help us save on mailing costs by checking that expiration date and sending in their renewal on their own. If the date is highlighted, your membership has expired. While we would like to share the Skirmish Line with everyone, we can only afford to send it to current members. So please renew your membership at the appropriate time. You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



Remember to order all your Amazon.com items through the CVBT Amazon web link. CVBT receives a percentage of the order to help preserve hallowed ground!

"If ever a site cried out for a cannon to interpret and commemorate battlefield initiative and bravery, Pelham's Corner is the one! Not only is a cannon essential to the story, it is one of the most impelling magnets to attract the curious to engage the site and learn the story. People are instantly drawn to a cannon—it is the incentive and the reward that invites visitors to explore the site. It is the tactile, tangible symbol of the importance of the location and the events performed there one hundred and fifty years ago."

Frank continues: "Monuments are wonderful in commemorating a site and historical events, but cannons have a transcendent timeless quality to them. A cannon allows visitors to dream and wonder—they will stand behind it and picture themselves involved in the action; they will stand in front of it and examine the bore, and imagine the thunder and the effect. Monuments make us all remember—but I genuinely believe that a cannon makes us imagine and ultimately empathize with those who did great deeds under extreme duress so long ago. People may be told a barren field or an open lot is important to history—but there is no doubt in the popular mind when they see a site with a cannon. They know instinctively that this is a battlefield and something truly special, hallowed, and unique in its own right."

CVBT is thrilled to announce the acquisition and installation of an authentic replica of a Napoleon cannon—the same artillery piece used by Pelham in his famous action. The cannon was fabricated by Steen Cannon and

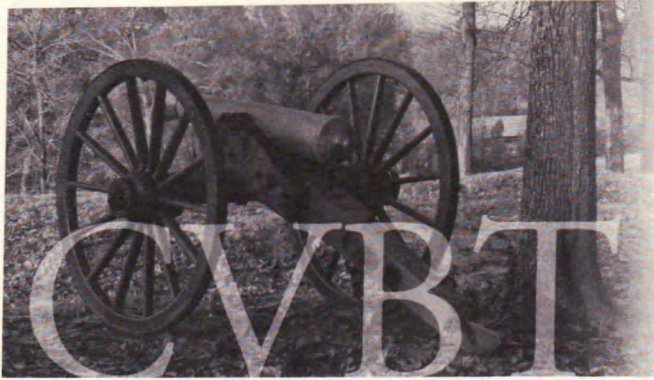
Ordnance Works, a nationally known manufacturer of such pieces. The cost of the cannon, including shipping and installation, was approximately \$19,500. Since we are always hesitant to use our members' donations for projects other "saving dirt and grass," CVBT has worked diligently to secure full funding for the cannon through a collaborative effort with several entities and a private donor. We received a grant of \$6,000 from the Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund of the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region. The Community Foundation is a nonprofit, public charity established by local community leaders created by and for the people of Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline counties and the City of Fredericksburg. This is the third grant that CVBT has received from this wonderful organization. CVBT also received \$9,900 from The Blue & Gray Education Society, one of the premier Civil War education organizations. And lastly, one of CVBT's members and stalwart supporters, James W. Davis, donated \$3,300 to CVBT for the cannon. We may incur some small incidental expenses but these will be covered by funds remaining from the landscape project at the site, which was also an earmarked donation.

The cannon was delivered and installed on July 7. We are planning a dedication ceremony on the anniversary of the "Gallant Pelham's" action on December 13, 2013. We are excited that Park Historian Frank O'Reilly will be our keynote speaker. We hope that you can join us at the dedication, as we share the story of Major Pelham and honor his memory. **SL**

National Park Service Historian Don Pfanz Retires

CVBT also wants to recognize the enormous contributions of NPS Staff Historian Donald C. Pfanz, who retired from the service in May. Don served with the NPS for 32 years, and we in Fredericksburg were blessed that he shared his scholarship, love of history and kindness with us for 26 of those years. Don's love of history grew from his early boyhood years in Gettysburg, where his father worked as a historian for the Park. In 1987, Don was working as a supervisory historian at City Point in Petersburg when he learned of the desecration of the Ox Hill battlefield in Chantilly. He immediately sprung into action, and came up with the idea of forming a group to save battlefields. Don wrote to historian Brian Pohanka with this idea. In doing so, he became one of the founding members of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites—the predecessor to the Civil War Trust.

Over the years, Don has meticulously studied the four battles at Fredericksburg, and the physical sites of those battles. In turn, he has given back to the community and visitors for years, conveying his knowledge of the battles and the need to preserve battlefield lands. He has touched tens of thousands of people, and conveyed his love of history to them. He has edited and published primary source documents to bring the reality of the war to readers today. He has also developed digital resources of thousands of quotes and images, which will be immeasurably helpful to other students of history for years to come. Along the way, Don has remained constantly cheerful and helpful to everyone. He once stated: "Although my role in creating this organization was modest compared to that of many others, nevertheless I view it as the greatest accomplishment of my life." We of CVBT will miss your help, counsel and friendship, and that ever present smile out on the trails. We wish you all the best in your retirement, Don, and maybe a little time off too! **SL**



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The Trust's mission is to purchase Civil War battlefield terrain and to advocate for battlefield protection at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

For information on membership, please write to the Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402; call our office at (540) 374-0900; or visit our website at www.cvbt.org. Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

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



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