

On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Preservation March Raises Funds for Chancellorsville

On November 1st and 2nd, 2003, thirty re-enactors from Illinois, North Carolina, Virginia, Missouri, Ohio and Maryland participated in a fund-raiser on the pristine nineteenth-century farms around Upperville, Virginia. The event generated \$4,000 for the CVBT's Chancellorsville Fund.

The biggest single money-raiser was Mike Huston from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mike, a musician in "the modern world", raised over \$600 for Chancellorsville by playing his music at local clubs in Pittsburgh and asking his audience to contribute to the CVBT cause. Mike is already looking forward to another march for preservation. "I know I can raise a lot more next time," he said.

Wide Awake Films came from Kansas City. They donated over \$500 to the Chancellorsville Fund and also filmed the event. Wide Awake does excellent work, as should be evident from their 1999 CVBT preservation film, "Saving Civil War Battlefields." We look forward to seeing how they present this preservation march.

The National Park Service's Chief historian emeritus Ed Bearss led the marchers on Sunday morning, as they tramped through Loudoun County. The 2nd Maryland Fife and Drums entertained the troops as well as local landowners on Saturday night. This group also played at the Sunday morning ceremony.

Long-time CVBT supporter Don Harrelson brought \$1,000 that he and his son Sam had raised. "Put the event together earlier," Don said, "and we will bring even more next time."

The CVBT wishes to thank all of the committed re-enactors that helped raise funds for purchasing battlefield land at Chancellorsville. CVBT Board member Rob Hodge is this organization's point person for the Chancellorsville Fund. People like Rob and his fellow re-enactors are some of the front-line troops in the CVBT's efforts to protect these hallowed grounds.

Donations for Chancellorsville can be sent to CVBT directly. Be sure to note "Chancellorsville" on your check so we can place it in the appropriate account.

On The Skirmish Line is published for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust membership at PO Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. The CVBT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Virginia's Civil War battlefields. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs. Our latest IRS Form 990 is also available on our website.

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"The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses, behind the lines...and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights." –Muhammad Ali



CVBT was as active as ever in 2003, with much of the activity being "behind the lines...and out there on the road." Some highlights:

--In April we purchased 20 acres on the Po River, land that is part of the Spotsylvania Courthouse Battlefield. With our previous purchase of nearby property in 2001, CVBT now owns some 40 acres of this hallowed ground.

--CVBT was actively involved in The Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefield's successful effort to deny rezoning on the historic Mullins Farm, site of Day One fighting of the Battle of Chancellorsville. This was a major triumph for the Good Guys, but since current zoning allows the landowner to build 225 homes and 55 acres of the property is already zoned for commercial development, the fight goes on. You can be assured that CVBT will continue to fight the good fight to save this hallowed ground.

--Spotsylvania County residents, who are also CVBT members, were instrumental in seeing to it that candidates who looked favorably on preserving the open space of Civil War battlefields within their jurisdiction were elected in the November elections for the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors. All were so elected, representing a watershed moment in the history of Spotsylvania County. CVBT will continue to work with the Spotsylvania Board in the preservation effort.

--In April, CVBT received a \$150,000 donation from the estate of the late Ralph Happel, a longtime historian with the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park. To honor and to perpetuate his memory, we have established the Ralph Happel Award to be presented annually to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to preservation in the central Virginia area.

--At our Annual Meeting on the first weekend of May, Ed Bearss gave a rousing and very well-received keynote speech, and our members were able to tour area battlefields, to visit places they

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had helped to preserve, and to examine battlefields still needing to be preserved.

--During the Fredericksburg Civil War Memorial Day Weekend, CVBT sponsored a lecture and tour by CVBT member and supporter Frank O'Reilly. Frank talked about his book, *The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock*, and then took the attendees on a walking tour of the urban battleground.

--CVBT owes a great debt to the Sunshine Lady Foundation, who stepped forward twice over the past year to assist us. First, the Foundation provided a generous grant as seed money for us to launch our annual scholarly journal, "Fredericksburg History and Biography." Volume One was very well-received, and Volume Two is scheduled to be ready in December.

--Second, the Foundation provided funding for cleanup of the Smith Run property, hallowed ground that we had saved in 2001. The property had an old house, a deep well that needed to be capped, and what appeared to be decades of accumulated trash and equipment scattered throughout the property. In June, CVBT volunteers as well as the wrestling team from Chancellor High School spent a day handling this work. Thanks so much to the Sunshine Lady Foundation for their generous and ongoing support!

--CVBT signed on this year with the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). For Federal employees and members of the military residing in the DC Metro area, Norfolk, and central Virginia, all it takes to make contributions to us through payroll deductions is filling in the payroll deduction authorization form, with the amount to be deducted from each paycheck, and that's it. (We can't participate in the national CFC Campaign because we do not have offices in other states.). We are excited about the possibilities of increased donations through our participation in these regional CFC programs!

--With our success (over one million dollars in assets, over 600 members scattered throughout the United States and Europe, etc.) has come increased administrative responsibilities, and this year saw a private donor step forward to fund a part-time Executive Director position. This position is entirely funded by this outside source and thus no member contributions are used. So be assured that the CVBT Board is still very much a working Board, with its members (who are all volunteers) continuing to work hard to fulfill CVBT's missions. Advocacy, fundraising, educational programs, working with property owners to acquire land, and physically caring for the land we own are only some of the tasks our Board members are actively involved in.

Negotiations are also underway to save additional threatened land in the area (involving all of our major battlefields), and we continue to be proactive while still balancing good stewardship of the funds our members have entrusted to us.

Good things are happening as we continue to work "behind the lines...and out there on the road," and it won't be long before we will be able to "dance under those lights" of newly acquired hallowed ground, ground which because of our efforts will be there for us and our children, for our children's children, will be there forever and for all time.

Stay tuned, because 2004 is going to be exciting indeed!



Fredericksburg History and Biography

The CVBT is preparing to publish Volume Two of its annual publication, *Fredericksburg History and Biography*.

This year, it will be our pleasure to present a journal that includes a study of Spotsylvania County's Confederate Cemetery; a review of how Medals of Honor were awarded during the Civil War as well as in the decades after the war; and a report on the archaeological work underway on Willis Hill (an eighteenth century site on the Fredericksburg battlefield). In addition, we are thrilled to be able to present an account of the little known pre-Civil War court martial of Joe Hooker.

Members who are at the Active Level or above will automatically receive a copy of the new journal in the mail, as a benefit of membership. Look for it in early January 2004.

This latest journal will also be available for purchase in Fredericksburg at the **Made in Virginia Store**, 807 Caroline Street (540-371-2030); **Beck's Antiques & Books**, 708 Caroline Street (540-371-1766); and the **Eastern National Bookstore** located at the National Park Service Visitor Center on Lafayette Boulevard (540-786-5156).

CVBT Property Acquisitions

Since its formation, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has systematically acquired land on all four of the Fredericksburg area's battlefields. It's only through the generosity of our members that we have been able to save the following Hallowed Ground:

Fredericksburg:

- **Willis Hill** 9.5 acres; 1997 (incorporated into NPS site)
- **John Pelham site #1** 2 lots totaling 2/3 acre; 1999 (CVBT retained)
- **John Pelham site #2** 11.9 acres; 2002 (CVBT retained)

Chancellorsville:

- **McLaws Wedge** 99 acre tract; 1998 (sold to NPS)
- **Stonewall Jackson's Flank Attack** 5.39 acres; 1998 (sold to NPS)
- **Nine Mile Run**
Johnson tract; 5 acres; 1999 (CVBT retained)
Warren tract; 6.5 acres; 2002 (CVBT retained)
- **Talley Farm** 25 acre tract; 1999 (CVBT retained)
- **Orange Plank Road** 3.854 acre tract; 2000 (CVBT retained)
- **Smith Run** 11.26 acres, (Fredericksburg site); 2001 (CVBT retained)

Wilderness:

- **Grant's Knoll** 6 acres; 2001 (CVBT retained)

Spotsylvania Court House:

- **Po River**
20 acres; 2001 (CVBT retained)
20 acres; 2003 (CVBT retained)

Total: 224 acres saved

2004 Annual Meeting

Plans are underway for CVBT's 2004 Annual Meeting scheduled for May 1 & 2. We'll be using a different approach for this meeting, scheduling a Saturday afternoon seminar, a dinner and speaker for Saturday evening and a tour of CVBT properties on Sunday morning. As we commemorate the 140th anniversary of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse our **guest panelists** will be **Gordon Rhea, Brook Simpson and John Hennessey**. At the Saturday dinner we'll present the **first Annual Ralph Hapel Preservation Award** as well as have a keynote speaker, and conduct the "real business" of the annual meeting!

Sunday morning's tour will showcase CVBT properties and allows members to see all the "dirt and grass" their donations have purchased!

We'll be holding the event at the Holiday Inn Select at Central Park in Fredericksburg, which allows the seminar and dinner to be in the same facility...and our out-of-town attendees will also be able to reserve rooms there at a special "meeting rate".

The tentative schedule is as follows:

Saturday, May 1: 1:30 to 4:30 PM— Seminar with guest panelists.

5:30 to 6:30 PM—Cash bar.

6:30 to 9:00 PM—Dinner, meeting.

Sunday, May 2: 8:00 AM to noon—Tour of CVBT properties.

We will have a registration mailing with final details to our members in February; watch our website as well for more details.

Join us in 2004!!

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We do everything we can to make sure your donations go to “**Dirt and Grass**”. To help keep our costs down we rely on you to check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal. If your membership is current, but you know of someone who would like to join CVBT, please pass this membership form on to them.



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