



# ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## CVBT Annual Meeting Celebrates Fifteen Years of Saving Dirt and Grass

**F**rom April 29 to May 1, CVBT held its 2011 annual meeting, which was hailed by many attendees as our best meeting ever. This year, the timeframe for the meeting was expanded from two to three days. Many members, especially those who live out-of-state, greatly appreciated this expanded format, given the cost and effort of a taking a trip to Fredericksburg. The CVBT Board was delighted to see many of our longtime friends from the last fifteen years. We were also glad to meet a number of new guests, and to share with them our special tours, as well as CVBT's longstanding commitment to preserve hallowed ground.

We began the weekend with a very special sojourn to Richmond on Friday afternoon and evening. We toured both the Virginia Civil War Sesquicentennial exhibit at the Virginia Historical Society, and the Confederate War Memorial Chapel, which was built in 1887. We were then treated to a one-of-a-kind evening at the Museum of the Confederacy, where we toured both the Museum itself and

Photo by Eric Mink



NPS historian Greg Mertz leads the CVBT annual meeting morning tour which focused on the Mine Run Campaign.

the White House of the Confederacy. We were also granted a very special "behind the scenes" tour of the Museum's flag curatorial storage room and areas not normally open to the public. This was followed by drinks and dinner at the Museum. All in all, a great evening!

Saturday's tour gave our members a rare opportunity to visit two privately held venues that are not normally accessible to the public. Well known NPS Historian Greg

Mertz led our morning tour, which focused on the Mine Run Campaign, while our afternoon tour, led by NPS historian Jake Struhelka, explored the area of Lee's 1863 winter encampment.

Saturday evening's events included a reception, silent auction and dinner, followed by our "official" Annual Meeting. Outgoing President Erik Nelson welcomed our guests, and gave special thanks to all those who have helped CVBT achieve its goals over the last year. Communications Director & Webmaster Tom Van Winkle then presented his new

{CONTINUED ON PAGE 2}

**{ANNUAL MEETING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1}**

video, "On the Front Line," which reflects poignantly on CVBT's fifteen year history and our mission to preserve hallowed ground in the Fredericksburg area. Tom and his wife Lisa also took charge of the silent auction, which raised \$2,400 for CVBT. Our thanks to the two of them, as well as our generous silent auction donors, including Beck's Antiques and Books, George Bisbee, Jerry Brent, Karl Fredericks, Charles McDaniel, Erik Nelson, Frank O'Reilly and Robert Roser.

Following the submission of the Treasurer's Report by Lloyd Harrison, Erik presented a check for \$50,000 to Civil War Trust representative Mary Koik. With this disbursement, CVBT has now paid \$900,000 out of our one million dollar pledge to the CWT, to save the vitally important battlefield ground at the Slaughter Pen Farm.

Next, Erik asked for a vote to approve several individuals nominated for the CVBT Board. Kevin Leahy (second term), Jim Pates (third term), Josiah Rowe (first term) and Mike Stevens (sixth term) were elected unanimously.

He then presented the gavel to incoming President Mike Stevens, who profusely thanked Erik for the stellar work that Erik has provided to CVBT over the last 15 years. Past President Johnny Mitchell was also recognized for his ongoing efforts to support CVBT's work.

Mike then announced the recipient of CVBT's prestigious Ralph A. Happel Preservation Award: Clark "Bud" Hall. Mike acknowledged and praised Bud for his extraordinary efforts in preserving the Brandy Station battlefield and other key battlefield lands. The evening ended with a special program by noted historians

Photo by The Fairfax Group



Clark "Bud" Hall, the recipient of CVBT's 2011 Ralph A. Happel Award, for his extraordinary efforts in preserving Brandy Station and other Civil War battlefields.

Robert K. Krick and Gary Gallagher, who led a lively discussion on "The Best and Worst Civil War Books of Recent Years."

Our Sunday tour, which included visits to several properties preserved by CVBT, was led by NPS Historian Eric Mink and CVBT Board member Jim Pates, with help from other Board members at various stops. This tour focused not only on the history of the sites, but on some of the "behind the scenes" strategies that we have used to acquire various parcels. We began with a delicious champagne breakfast at Braehead, an historic antebellum residence on eighteen acres on the Fredericksburg battlefield. CVBT bought the home and surrounding land in 2006, and then preserved it through the use of a conservation

easement. Our breakfast visit provided a rare opportunity for our members to gain access to the house and grounds, and thus see the meticulous work that the current owners, Rob and Diana Almy, have performed to restore this unique property to its full glory. Our heartfelt thanks to the Almys for sharing their wonderful home with us!

Before Erik turned over the gavel to Mike, he read a poem which focused on the twin themes of honor and memory. We of CVBT seek to preserve hallowed ground because in doing so, we honor and remember the sacrifices that the men in both blue and gray made on these lands so many years ago. We thank you for joining us in our efforts to save these irreplaceable blood-soaked fields, and we hope and pray that our nation, and all generations to come, will never lose sight of the bravery of these men and the ultimate price they paid. **SL**



**ON THE SKIRMISH LINE** is published for the CVBT membership at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. Contact CVBT at 540-374-0900 or [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org). The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

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- |  |  |
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This Issue:*

- Robert K. Krick  
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*Photographs:*  
Tom Van Winkle

# 10 ACRES DONATED TO CVBT

*Like a jeweler stringing another pearl onto a fine necklace, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has added a new property to its collection of Fredericksburg-area hallowed ground. ✪ Fredericksburg developer Lee Garrison recently donated 10 acres near Lee Drive—a favorite driving-tour route for visitors to Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park—to the local nonprofit group.*

ARTICLE BY CLINT SCHEMMER AND THE FREE LANCE-STAR

“We can’t acquire every historically significant property, so being given this property is pretty special,” said Jerry Brent, the Fredericksburg-based trust’s executive director. “It points out the longstanding good relations we’ve had with the developers in the area.”

The small grass-roots trust, now beginning its 15th year, has saved more than 890 acres on the area’s four major Civil War battlefields.

Some of its biggest successes grew from its ability to work with builders, Brent said. As examples, he cited its acquisition of two parcels near Grant’s Knoll on the Wilderness battlefield, the preservation of Fredericksburg’s Slaughter Pen battlefield along State Route 2 and U.S. 17, and conservation easements placed on Latimer’s Knoll, a Confederate artillery position overlooking Slaughter Pen. Tricord Homes of Fredericksburg was instrumental in the Slaughter Pen project, as well as the preservation of 140 acres on Chancellorsville’s “first day” battlefield along State Route 3 at Lick Run.

Garrison, a former Tricord manager, just wanted to “do the right thing” with his land near Lee Drive, Brent said. “My experience while working with Tricord on the Chancellorsville and Slaughter Pen preservation efforts gave me an appreciation for balancing the need for development as our local population continues to grow with the need to protect the significant historical battlefields in our area,” Garrison said in an interview yesterday.

The 10.3-acre tract between the park road and Lafayette Boulevard lies within Fredericksburg’s “core” battlefield as designated by the federal Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, the nation’s top authority on where Civil War actions took place.

But it wasn’t the site of bloodshed, Brent said. “No battles were fought on this property. No bullets were flying,” he said. “It probably saw rear-area troop movements or served as a supply area.”

Eric Mink, the park’s cultural resources manager, elaborated. “During the December 1862 battle Confederate troops were likely stationed in this vicinity, if not on the property itself, but they would have seen virtually no action,” Mink said.

“That winter, Confederates may have occupied, if not camped on, the property. The details on Confederate troop locations are sketchy for that time period.”

The tract, which adjoins the national park, isn’t far from Lee Drive’s Pickett Circle picnic area. The National Park Service’s holdings along Lee Drive are not deep at some points, Brent said, so “the preservation of this parcel provides an excellent buffer against future development.” To add the tract to its acreage, the federal agency would need to adjust the park’s authorized boundary. That would require congressional approval.

Russ Smith, the park’s superintendent, praised the property owner’s action.

“Mr. Garrison has been very generous in his donation of land to the CVBT,” he said yesterday. “We will consider this parcel for inclusion in the park as part of our current General Management Plan process.”

Civil War historian Robert K. Krick said the tract was part of the long line that Gen. Robert E. Lee defended on the outskirts of Fredericksburg in December 1862. It was occupied by Fredericksburg’s own regiment, the 30th Virginia Infantry.

“The 30th—part of a brigade commanded by Gen. Montgomery D. Corse of Alexandria—numbered in its ranks several hundred men and boys from this region: Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Caroline, Stafford and King George,” he said. “The ranks included many familiar family names: Chew, Doggett, Sener, Rawlings, C. Wistar Wallace (for whom the regional library is named), Braxton, Hunter, Tayloe, Thornton, McGhee, Newton, Broaddus, Massey, Hilldrup, Armstrong, Ashton and Barton.”

Krick, who lives in Fredericksburg, is a CVBT board member and the former chief historian of the national military park. Lafayette Crossing Holdings LLC gave the property to CVBT after their respective attorneys sanctioned the arrangement.

“With this donation, we can put the money we raise toward other projects,” Brent said. “That’s a very important thing to us, to be able to preserve land without having to raise money for it or take money out of our coffers. That’s the way we like to do business whenever we can.” **SL**

**L**ocal businessman Lee Garrison recently donated to the CVBT a 10.3-acre tract on Fredericksburg battlefield, near Deep Run, on the west edge of Lee Drive. The location is in the middle of a deep curve in General R. E. Lee's Confederate defenses, far enough west of the longitude of Marye's Heights and Hamilton's Crossing that the Federals could not attack. Military engineers would have described that configuration as a "re-entrant angle," the reciprocal of the more familiar "salient" projection toward an attacking enemy.

Hundreds of men from Fredericksburg and its environs had rallied to the colors to defend Virginia early in 1861. Some went into the Fredericksburg Artillery or the 9th Virginia Cavalry. Musket-toting foot soldiers from around Fredericksburg joined companies that made up the 30th Virginia Infantry, with local names like Fredericksburg Grays, Gordon Rifles, Caroline Grays, Sparta Grays and Washington Guards.

The captains they elected to command their companies reflected Fredericksburg's society both before and after the war: Robert Stanard Chew, long-time clerk of the court; Hugh Stephens Doggett, sometime mayor; James Soutter Knox, who owned a factory in town; and C. Wistar Wallace (for whom the library still is named).

The Fredericksburg regiment—and most other Confederates in Virginia—saw little active operations during the war's first year. On September 17, 1862, battle caught up with the 30th Virginia in a brutal action around the famous Dunkard Church, near Antietam Creek. Within about a quarter-hour, the 30th lost some 180 men, includ-

## Fredericksburg Soldiers in Position Near their Homes, December 1862

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*Robert K. Krick, Fredericksburg*

ing more killed than all but two other regiments in Lee's whole army. "It is a wonder," one 30th survivor wrote, "that any of us escaped."

In the aftermath of that violent ordeal, some 30th men deserted. Isaac Hirsch, who had emigrated from Germany to Fredericksburg at age 13, abandoned the regiment and never returned. After the war Hirsch became one of the wealthiest men in town and

served on city council—and insisted in an autobiographical publication that he had not come to America until after the Civil War.

When the 30th came home to Fredericksburg in the fall of 1862, still recovering from the Antietam maelstrom, a position at the heart of Lee's line, looking down on their own homes and families, would have seemed axiomatic. In fact, they wound up south of town, waiting for an enemy who never attacked. The regiment first camped, late in November, along the Telegraph Road. Families and friends converged on the 30th, bringing food and clothes and affection. On December 9 one of the 30th soldiers proved himself a poor prophet. He was "busy as a bee making fires to keep from freezing" in the "bitter cold," he wrote, and added: "I do not see any prospects of a fight."

Two days later the Yankees came across the river—but they never approached the portion of the line held by Fredericksburg's own riflemen, on ground newly protected by the CVBT.

Mr. Garrison's public-spirited largesse has ensured the perpetual preservation of another piece of historic ground near Fredericksburg.

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### **Booth Escape Route Tour Postponed**

**As announced during our annual meeting weekend, we had planned this fund raising tour for September 24th, 2011. Unfortunately, a conflict with that date arose and we were forced to postpone. We were not able to finalize a new date before the newsletter had to go to press. Michael Kauffman, author of American Brutus, will lead this tour. His knowledge of John Wilkes Booth, the man as well as the assassin, is based on exhaustive research and will provide the tour group a more thorough understanding of Booth's motivation and cunning planning. When a new date is selected, the membership will be notified**

## The Most Valuable Donation of Them All

As part of Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's fifteenth anniversary, we are making more public appearances than usual. On the 21st and 22nd of May, Spotsylvania County presented a Civil War weekend inclusive of soldier camps, cavalry reenactments and a reenactment of a major battle that took place in the area.

More than two thousand people attended this weekend and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust was present with an outdoor booth to greet those guests. Central Virginia Battlefields Trust member Scott Eystone, Tom Van Winkle, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's Director of Communications and his wife, and long time volunteer Lisa, worked the booth for the two days.

We met with many interested and interesting folks, some with ancestral ties and

many with just deep interest in the Civil War and the preservation of the endangered battlefields. One couple we spoke with was from Holland and was on a sixty day bicycling tour of Civil War sights.

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust booth was decked out with all the information one would need to understand the organization as well as our success in preservation. No booth of course is complete without a large donation jar, and boy we had one. It is the second biggest beaker on record. Why mention this? Well this is why. While we were talking to several visitors, a young boy of about 8 or 9 walked up to our booth with his equally young sister. As we watched the children the boy was intently looking at a video loop of battlefield preservation from our new



Zack and Skyler Parish of Fredericksburg, VA. Zack donated part of his allowance; imagine what part of yours could do.

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust film, "On the Front Line." He then read the assorted signs and stared at the photo of Salem church in the 1960's as compared to a photo of it today.

With his parents only a few feet away, speaking with other visitors while watching the loop themselves, the young boy, whose name is Zack Parish, reached into his pocket and took out a single quarter. He then proudly dropped that quarter, part of his own allowance, into the huge donation jar.

This, my valued members, is one of the reasons

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust does what it does! Inspiring one of our youngsters to value the meaning and importance of these battlefields and all they contribute to understanding our nation's history is imperative for the future preservation of this hallowed ground. Out of all the donations we received that day, and they were all much appreciated, that single quarter was the most important of all. Thank you Zack for your contribution, and thank you Mr. and Mrs. Parish for raising two children you need to be very proud of. They are our future. **SL**

### 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 (we are not like magazines that like to get renewals six months in advance of expiration). You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



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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](http://www.cvbt.org).

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

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### Membership Categories

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

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Design and production by The ID Entity • 540.834.0151



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