

# On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## From the President

### 1997 — What a year!

1997 began with a crisis. There was Willis Hill (that famous hill rising behind the equally famous Sunken Road in the Fredericksburg Battlefield) being put on the market by its owners, **The Daughters of Wisdom**. Would it be preserved or would it be sold to the highest bidder?

The Battlefields Trust, newly created by a small group of local concerned citizens, sprang into action. We agitated, we called, we wrote letters, we pleaded and we put up \$20,000 to help the **National Park Service** and the **Civil War Trust** meet the highest bid on the table. We could hardly believe it, but we won! In a lovely and moving ceremony in the Spring, atop Willis Hill, the National Park Service received a deed to the property. We all breathed a sigh of

*continued on page 3*

## Our New Look

Those of you who have received earlier newsletters will quickly see that this one has a more professional look, with a more readable format. Please note that we have not spent any of your donations to achieve this new image. Instead, one of our new members, Steven Stanley, has undertaken this job. Steve has graciously accepted the task of providing all of our graphics needs. He owns a firm called Colonial Type and Graphics, located in North Stafford, and his generosity in upgrading our published look is very much appreciated.

## Chancellorsville: McLaws' Wedge Update

The Trust has a contract in place for a 99 acre tract of land on the Chancellorsville Battlefield. We have renamed it **McLaws' Wedge** to highlight its historic importance. According to the purchase agreement, a payment of \$50,000 by January 20, 1998 will allow the final closing to be delayed until March 20th. Through the generous support of our membership, we are happy to announce that this payment has been made. Thank you again for your support.

The full price of this property is \$450,000 of which \$100,000 was paid in a down payment. This \$50,000 payment leaves a remainder of \$300,000 due by March 20th. Unless a major donor comes forward, though, we are not likely to raise this amount in the two months remaining. Consequently, we are prepared to mortgage the property as we continue our fund-raising.

The Trust membership should be justifiably proud of their efforts to preserve this battlefield land. This campaign has been truly gratifying, with a nationwide response. Donations have come in from committed individuals who live in places from Alaska to Florida, and from New England to California. These donations have come from persons who know they will receive few tangible rewards or benefits from this organization. We are a low-overhead group, operating through volunteers and a strongly committed Board of Directors. Our promise is to ensure that the funds provided to the CVBT will go toward the purchase of historic land.

The following members have donated \$250 or more toward the purchase of McLaws' Wedge. Readers should note that some of these persons have made

*continued on page 5*

# Why We Preserve

## 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**

The 140th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry (3rd Brigade, 1st Division, 2nd Corps) received its baptism of fire at Chancellorsville and fought across the rolling terrain that includes the Trust's contract property. Their regimental history (published in 1904) includes the following description of their return to Chancellorsville one year after the battle:

"Following Gregg's Cavalry, we crossed the river on pontoons in the early morning of the 4th and the advance of the Division reached the site of the Chancellorsville House a few hours later.

On the very ground which had been overswept by the hot blast of flaming batteries and furrowed by plunging shot and shell a year before, we bivouacked for the night. It was the same army, on the same errand as before, and in the same beautiful month of May, but how changed the scene, . . . So complete and rapid had been the transformation, in that one short year, that at first glance hardly a trace of the dreadful struggle remained. Nature, as if in pity for the ruin

wrought, had spread over all a beautiful mantle of green bedecked with choicest flowers; and, out of corruption and decay, ghastliness and death, had called forth myriad forms of life and grace and beauty. In looking around us, however, we had not far to go to see again the wreckage of the battle, and down in the edge of the wood below where comrades one after another had fallen to rise no more; where the low moan of agony had been heard from pallid lips; where the bodies of the dead were lying with only a slight covering of leaves and soil, the spell of the beautiful May-day was broken, the awful din of the deadly strife was heard again and memories, revived by these

unquestionable evidences of disorder and strife, reproduced every salient feature of that battle scene. **Thank God, the time has come, for which so many brave men longed and prayed, in those dark and evil days, when all these scenes of strife are only memories. But, may God forbid that**

**the time should ever come when the evidences which yet remain should fail to recall in the generations following the reality and magnitude of the struggle and the costliness of the sacrifice by which the blessings of permanent peace, Union and Liberty have been secured."**

## Charter Members

Persons who joined the Trust during 1997, at the Charter Member level or above, will be permanently recognized as the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's Charter Members. The Board of Directors will also provide a small gift of appreciation to those persons who stepped forward to join this new organization that had only a limited record of accomplishments to recommend it. Evidently, these persons and organizations believed as we did that preserving historic land is a noble endeavor and worthy of support and sacrifice. As of December 31st, 1997, however, such memberships are no longer available. The \$135 membership level has been retained, but has been renamed Active Member.

is published for the CVBT membership at 604-A William Street, Suite 1, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Telephone numbers are 540-374-0900 (local), 888-374-0900 (toll free). The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

### The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

Enos Richardson, Jr.  
*President*  
James M. Pates,  
*Vice-President*

Michael P. Stevens, MD  
*Treasurer*  
Erik F. Nelson,  
*Secretary*

F. Baldwin Harrington,  
MD  
Carroll Hayden

Jean W. Jones  
John D. Mitchell  
Anne W. Rowe

## President's Message: What a Year ..... from page 1

relief. But, in the midst of our celebration, we had a wake-up call. We learned that in order to save historically significant tracts of land such as the Willis Hill, extraordinary efforts, both in time and money, would be required.

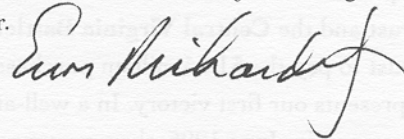
The success of Willis Hill gave us the legitimacy to be a serious factor in battlefield preservation. As word of our efforts spread, concerned citizens and organizations from throughout the country began sending letters of encouragement and generous donations. But as we reveled in the successful effort to save Willis Hill, the bulldozers were constantly at work obliterating portions of other battlefields (such as Chancellorsville).

It so happened that there was a 100-acre tract located at Chancellorsville on the south side of Plank Road (State Route 3) and just west of McLaws Drive. This tract, owned by the Ashley family, was on the market for \$450,000. We discussed whether the Trust should buy this land, whether we could afford it, whether we had the resources to take on such a monumental endeavor. However, we did not hesitate long when we found out that the tract was vital to preserve the Chancellorsville Battlefield, and that General Lee had personally directed operations from that area on May 2, 1863. Instead of talking further, we acted. On August 8th, we signed the contract to purchase the land, resolving to raise the funds to acquire the tract.

When we signed the contract, we had to pay the owners \$100,000; which we did. We also agreed to pay the owners an additional \$50,000 by January 20, 1998; which we did. However, we must pay the balance (\$300,000) by March 20, 1998. We are feverishly at work to raise this amount. It will be difficult to do, and it is a real challenge for our Trust. But, with the tremendous interest and generosity of our members and friends, we are looking forward to walking over this hallowed ground this coming spring. At the same time, we'll show the doubters and naysayers that, yes, Civil War battlefield preservation is a growing force in this area, and that the Trust will do what it has to do to preserve our country's heritage.

Thus in many ways 1997 ended the way it began. A crisis of sorts, only by year's end we have shown that we have the dedication and determination to press forward and build on this past year's success. But nothing would have been

accomplished, nor would our efforts have been successful, without the dedication, generosity and enthusiasm of each of our members. You made it all possible. My deepest thanks go out to each of you. Our crusade to save and protect our heritage is a difficult task. With your continued support, though, I am confident great achievements will occur in 1998. I look forward to sharing those achievements with you during the coming year.



### FROM THE ARCHIVES

Noel Harrison, staff historian with the National Park Service, has provided us with a published letter that relates to the Trust's contract property near Chancellorsville. It was written by a member of Company A, 12th Georgia Infantry (Doles' Brigade, Rodes' Division, Jackson's Corps). On May 2, 1863, this soldier found himself near the property the Trust calls McLaws' Wedge, as Jackson launched his flank attack and Lee swiftly moved to support his assault. As he remembered, in a letter written on May 4th:

"I was sent to the army with five wagons loaded with provisions; I arrived at Gen. Lee's Headquarters, on the field, at sundown Sunday, but could not get to the brigade, as Jackson's corps was then in the rear of the enemy, and the enemy's cavalry had possession of the Spotsylvania

road, which I had to go. About this time, the thundering of a hundred cannon, and the continual rattling of thousands of musketry, told that Jackson had commenced the work in the rear. I was present when Gen. Lee first heard it; he listened a moment, and then turning to the officers around him, said, "Yes, that is Jackson." In a instant, several couriers, already mounted, rode off in post haste, and in different directions. In a few minutes the thundering of artillery and musketry told the mission of the couriers. The action progressed terribly on every side, until 11 o'clock, when the deadly conflict ceased, and the silence of that beautiful moonlight night was only interrupted by the often repeated note of a Whipoowill or a randum shot from a picket post."

---

*"I was present when Gen. Lee first heard it; he listened a moment, and then turning to the officers around him, said, 'Yes, that is Jackson.'"*

---

## CVBT Pauses and Reflects Looking Back at Our Accomplishments

Nineteen ninety seven marks the first full year of the Trust's existence. We incorporated in late 1996 while working to bring Willis Hill into the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. That effort resulted in a partnership of the National Park Service, the Civil War Trust and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust to pay the \$1.65 million purchase price and represents our first victory. In a well-attended ceremony in June 1996, the property owners, the Daughters of Wisdom and Montfort Academy, transferred title of that significant portion of the

Fredericksburg Battlefield to the people of the United States.

In early September, the CVBT delivered its share (\$20,000) for the Willis Hill purchase ahead of schedule. We then turned our efforts to the Chancellorsville Battlefield and committed our group to purchase a 99 acre tract on State Route 3 (the Orange Turnpike at the time of the Civil War). The purchase price of **McLaws' Wedge** is \$450,000 and we are now in the midst of an active campaign to raise these funds. As we have noted in previous newsletters, battlefield land in central Virginia is at a premium. This area is growing rapidly and every bit of real estate we seek to preserve comes dear. Our unofficial motto, however, is "Dirt and Grass." We do not have any paid staff, so virtually all donations go to the purchase of land. We close out this year with a significant accomplishment, but with much more work ahead. CVBT would like to thank everyone for all their efforts and donations during 1997 and look forward to further success in 1998.

---

### Civil War Artists Support Land Purchase

Two prominent artists have been extremely forthcoming in their support of the Trust's land purchase goals. Don Troiani has donated a framed print that shows Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson at their famous meeting on May 1, 1863, a site that is near our contract property. Framing was donated by Valor Art and Frame, Fredericksburg, VA. The art is entitled "Eve of the Storm" and is being raffled by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table. This round table has been an uncompromisingly supportively and they will donate ALL proceeds for the purchase of McLaws' Wedge. Tickets are \$5 each or

3 for \$10. The drawing will be held on March 28th. You need not be present to win. Tickets can be purchased through CVBT's office, call (540) 374-0900 for information.

The second artist is Mort Kunstler who donated a portion of the proceeds from a special sale of his latest print "Remember Me." This October weekend event, held in Fredericksburg, was conducted in coordination with the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center and Fredericksburg Historical Prints. For the second time, a coordinated partnership worked for the benefit of all. The Trust extends its thanks to both of these artists for their strong support.

---

### The Future of the Past *98 Annual Meeting*

The Trust's 1998 Annual Meeting, scheduled for Saturday, May 2nd, coincides to the day with the 135th anniversary of Stonewall Jackson's audacious flank march during the Battle of Chancellorsville. A select group of reenactors (by invitation only) will recreate this march on the exact route traveled by Jackson's veterans. This Confederate column will consist of approximately 400 reenactors, which is roughly regimental strength at that time in the Civil War. These troops will camp on the Trust property called McLaws' Wedge and will be available the next day (Sunday, May 3rd) to demonstrate tactics and weaponry. Further information will be forthcoming as this event takes shape. Mark your calendars and plan on being there at the Annual Meeting, which promises to be a truly special occasion.



# McLaw's Wedge Update ..... from page 1

several donations in increments that have eventually reached or surpassed this amount. Other names on this list have been generous far beyond the \$250 amount. At the Trust, we strive to ensure that these selfless sacrifices are well spent on tangible real estate and our heartfelt thanks goes out to each of these individuals and organizations:

Mr. & Mrs. McGuire Boyd -- Richmond, VA; Dennis & Nancy Buttacavoli (in partnership with Spear, Leeds & Kellogg) -- Hasbrouck Heights, NJ; Rodney Cook -- Atlanta, GA; Jacqueline A. Eberstein -- New York, NY; Paula Felder -- Fredericksburg, VA; Peter Fisher -- Fredericksburg, VA; James R. Force -- Alexandria, VA; Joe Fulginiti -- Fredericksburg, VA; Mrs. Frances L.B. Hart -- Falls Church, VA; John Hennessy -- Spotsylvania, VA; Fr. William B. Holberton -- Bethlehem, PA; Robert E.L. Krick -- Richmond, VA; Robert K. Krick -- Fredericksburg, VA; Mort Kunstler -- Long Island, NY; David A. Langbart -- Arlington, VA; Claude T. Mangrum -- Lexington, VA; William Matter -- Harrisburg, PA; Charles G. McDaniel -- Fredericksburg, VA; Erik & Mary Nelson --

Fredericksburg, VA; James M. Pates -- Fredericksburg, VA; Robert & Louise Paul -- Big Flats, NY; James R. Peoples -- Bellaire, TX; Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table -- Fredericksburg, VA; Enos Richardson, Jr. -- Fredericksburg, VA; Richmond Civil War Round Table -- Richmond, VA; Mark Rothert -- Portland, OR; Mr. & Mrs. Josiah P. Rowe, III -- Fredericksburg, VA; Sons of Confederate Veterans - Gen. James Longstreet Camp -- Ashland, VA; Mary Stevens -- Fredericksburg, VA; Michael P. Stevens -- Fredericksburg, VA; Mary Anne K. Sutton -- Fredericksburg, VA; Don Troiani -- Southbury, CT; Wouter K. Vanderwal -- Alexandria, VA; Lawrence R. Velvel -- Windham, NH; Virginia Heartland Bank -- Fredericksburg, VA; Chris Wagner -- Davison, MI; Ed Wenzel -- Vienna, VA; David M. West -- Richmond, VA; Wheat First Securities, Inc. -- Fredericksburg, VA; Dana L. Wooley -- Cedar Hill, TX; Barbara J. Wright -- Charlottesville, VA; Mr. & Mrs. William B. Young -- Fredericksburg, VA; Alan L. Zirkle -- Stafford, VA.

**www.cvbt.org**  
 Our web page continues to expand, through the generosity of members Michael P. Stevens and Gary Graham. 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.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The CVBT has accomplished a great deal in 1997 through the efforts of many dedicated volunteers and without any paid staff. But our successes to date have also generated a growing list of needs and new projects. To maintain our momentum and to meet the preservation challenges that continue to face us, we need many more volunteers. The Board of Directors has established 7 committees, all of which need your help. Their responsibilities are as follows:

<b>Finance and Audit</b>	Handles all fundraising, budget, and annual audit. Coordinates and staffs all fundraising events. Chair: Enos Richardson (540) 371-4157.	<b>Government</b>	Serves as liaison and contact with local, state, and federal agencies and legislators, generates grassroots preservation campaigns, and coordinates efforts with other preservation organizations. Chair: Johnny Mitchell (540) 371-2030.
<b>Administration and</b>	Runs the CVBT office, maintains computer system,	<b>Relations</b>	
<b>Communication</b>	prepares and distributes press and promotional materials. Coordinates volunteers. Chair: Jim Pates (540) 372-1020.	<b>Education</b>	Serves as our community outreach, provides speakers and materials to community groups and schools, and manages the CVBT website. Chair: Mike Stevens (540) 371-3115.
<b>Lands</b>	Researches and identifies priority land acquisition projects, negotiates with landowners, manages all CVBT properties. Chair: VACANT.	<b>Nominations</b>	Recruits and presents a slate of nominees for officers and directors at the annual membership meeting. Chair: Anne Rowe (540) 373-2321.
<b>Membership</b>	Receives and processes all membership inquiries, recruits new members, publishes and distributes newsletter.		

Anyone interested in helping with any of these committees should call either the chair listed above or Jim Pates at (O) 540-372-1020 or (H) 540-373-0140. Call Today!

# RENEW TODAY!!

Renewing Member

New Member

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

PATRON - \$500

CORPORATE MEMBER - \$500

ANNUAL MEMBER - \$35

BENEFACTOR - \$1,000

CORPORATE PATRON - \$1,000

ACTIVE MEMBER - \$135

LIFE MEMBER - \$5,000

SUSTAINING MEMBER - \$250

LIFE PATRON - \$10,000

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

CHECK

VISA

MASTER CARD

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE (REQUIRED) \_\_\_\_\_

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 and holding to our unofficial motto of "Dirt and Grass", the CVBT will not be sending out reminders of when your membership is to be renewed. To help facilitate your renewal efforts, we will publish a renewal form in all issues of "On The Skirmish Line". Please check your records to see if you are due for renewal and clip out the form below and send it back to our office. If your membership is current, but 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.



## CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST

604-A William Street, Suite 1  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

(540) 374-0900 ■ fax (540) 371-4505

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