

On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust Tenth Annual Meeting is a Great Success!

In 1996, a small cadre of local citizens incorporated as the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust. Within hours, this new group began to make its official presence known, to preserve 11 acres of key terrain on Marye's Heights, at Fredericksburg. At its annual meeting on May 6, 2006, the Trust celebrated a decade of concerted preservation effort, which has resulted in astonishing successes on all four



CVBT President Mike Stevens greeting the Trust members after dinner. (Image courtesy of Historical Photographs and Imaging.)

of the area's battlefields.

Members of the CVBT gathered for this annual event on newly protected land on the Chancellorsville battlefield, where fighting had occurred on May 1, 1863. This acreage had

been acquired in 2004, in partnership with the Civil War Preservation Trust and a development firm named Tricord. Additional ground has since been added to the initial holding, effectively concluding years of negotiations and advocacy. Park Service historian Frank A. O'Reilly conducted a walking tour across this terrain earlier in the day, which gave our members an exclusive view of this critical ground.

After our traditional barbeque dinner, CVBT president Michael Stevens welcomed the assembled group and formally opened the Annual Meeting. He thanked the membership for staying involved with the organization and

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13th Annual Texas Civil War Preservation Seminar to Benefit CVBT

On November 18, 2006, the Harold B. Simpson History Center of Hill College, along with the Austin Civil War Round Table, Inc. and the Waco Civil War Round Table will sponsor the one-day Texas Civil War Preservation Seminar. This year's theme is: *To the Brink of Victory: Fredericksburg & Chancellorsville*.

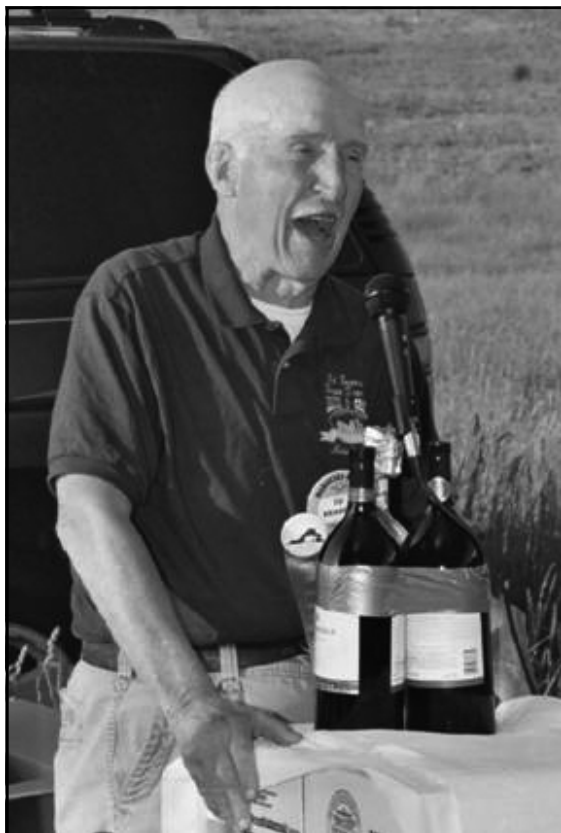
Jeff Wert will kick off the proceedings with a talk entitled: *The Crucibles of the Army of the Potomac: Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville*. Frank A. O'Reilly will follow with an expert accounting of the Fredericksburg Campaign called: *Winter War on the Rappahannock, Fredericksburg*. The afternoon session will commence with a stirring analysis by Bob Krick labeled: *Chancellorsville: Lee's Greatest Victory* and Ed Bearss

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CVBT Honors Ed Bearss

at the Trust's Annual Meeting in May

The CVBT has a special award that it presents to someone who has been instrumental in preserving battlefields in central Virginia. Named in recognition of Ralph Happel, the first historian of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, the award consists of a silver



Ed Bearss, never shy when addressing a crowd, accepts the Ralph Happel Award during the CVBT's 10th Annual Meeting. (Photo courtesy of Historical Photographs and Imaging)

medallion as well as a special presentation item that will be of particular interest to the recipient.

CVBT president Mike Stevens presented the latest award to Ed Bearss, who was on hand with a tour group from the Chicago Civil War Round Table. CVBT board member Rob Hodge introduced Ed, who accepted the silver medallion as well as a framed pencil sketch of the Marine Corps emblem, done exclusively for Ed by artist Don Troiani. The sketch had been inscribed

by the artist, by CVBT president Mike Stevens, and by the Commandant of the Marine Corps!

Ed was visibly touched by this reminder of his own war, but he recovered very quickly. Soon his booming voice was carrying over the assembled crowd as he reviewed the previous times he had been on hand for CVBT success stories – at Willis Hill, McLaws' Wedge, the Jackson Flank Attack area (also with the Chicago Round Table), and now on the May 1st, 1863 battlefield.

Ed spoke about his friend Ralph Happel, reminiscing about early visits to Fredericksburg and the Spotsylvania battlefields. He also remembered previous recipients of the award. Former New York Congressman Robert Mrazek had been the first awardee, in 2004, for his exceptionally effective work in preserving battlefields. The second award had been presented to Brian Pohanka, who had also been a tireless preservationist and whom the Trust had been privileged to honor at a special awards dinner.

Ed thanked the CVBT for the award, stating his appreciation that it represented the legacy of his friend Ralph Happel. He remarked how he looks at battlefields with a special feeling for the men who fought there, but this award had also made him

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The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

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10th Annual Meeting

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reviewed the Trust's guiding principles:

- Maintain a solid reputation for integrity and honesty.
- Remain focused on the mission, which is to acquire the right land at the right price.
- Be good stewards of donations entrusted to the organization.
- Work with land owners and local politicians.
- Stay vigilant to potential acquisitions.
- Work closely with the Civil War Preservation Trust and other preservation groups, as appropriate.

President Stevens (Dr. Mike) extended greetings to the Chicago Civil War Round Table. He noted that one of the highest honors CVBT had ever received had been a direct result of their action. The Chicago CWRT presents an Annual Ed Bears Preservation Award, directed to an organization or a project that Ed himself selects as worthy of recognition. The CVBT was exceedingly gratified when Ed chose CVBT to receive the very first such award. Dr. Mike said it was CVBT's turn to honor Ed. He stated that the group was privileged beyond measure to be in the presence of a man whose good works will

live on as long as Americans care about their history. To thank this man personally for all he has done, Dr. Mike presented Ed with CVBT's Ralph Happel Award (see article on page 2).

Following Ed's heartfelt acceptance speech, Dr. Mike emphasized that the Trust continues to be active, viable, and effective. He thanked the Board for their ongoing work that keeps the organization moving forward and he thanked the membership in general, for their ongoing commitment and support to preserve hallowed ground. Dr. Mike also thanked the following persons:

- Steve Thompson, a local high school senior who has raised funds for CVBT through the sale of battlefield photographs (they are excellent images).
- Webmaster Gary Embrey, a vitally important component of the CVBT effort.
- Greg Mertz, Frank O'Reilly, Eric Mink, and John Hennessy, National Park Service historians who led tours or set up special events.
- The Sunshine Lady Foundation, for helping to publish the Trust journal *Fredericksburg History and Biography*.
- Jeff Shaara, who has promised a sizable donation for battlefield preservation from the proceeds of

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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



After a long day of hiking and touring the battlefields, dinner is always a welcome sight. (Photo courtesy of Historical Photographs and Imaging)

CVBT's Tenth Annual Meeting

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his latest book *Civil War Battlefields: Discovering America's Hallowed Ground*.

- Cricket Pohanka, widow of Brian, who had generously supported CVBT in his will. The group gave Cricket a standing ovation, in recognition of Brian's gift and the spirit behind it.

President Stevens next presented the Trust's Preservation Leadership Awards. The first recipient was Bob Hagan, Chairman of the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors during the effort to preserve the First Day's Battlefield at Chancellorsville. In accepting this award, Bob noted that the group was preserving land forever, recognizing that it was land that we did not have forever to preserve. Craig Jones, of Tricord, also received an award, both for the First Day's Battlefield at Chancellorsville as well as for the new project at the Slaughter Pen. Craig noted that they, like CVBT, had been doing such work for about ten years, starting small, but taking on larger projects as they gained experience. He stated that he

thought the biggest projects were still ahead.

The Trust also recognized two more individuals who could not be present, State Senator Edd Houck and Bill Young, president of the National Bank of Fredericksburg. Both men have been exceptionally supportive of the CVBT mission.

Trust Treasurer Jerry Brent gave the Treasurer's Report. Trust Secretary Erik Nelson conducted the election and reelection of board members. There were no nominations from the floor, so the membership voted for the nominated slate of candidates (see story below).

As the sun went down, John Hennessy closed the meeting with a program entitled *Voices from Chancellorsville*. Several guests read aloud from the diaries and letters of those who had lived at Chancellorsville when the armies came. In the gathering twilight, the actual words of ordinary folks caught up in extraordinary times were given voice on the actual ground where those events unfolded.

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The CVBT Elects New Board Members and **Renews Returning Board Members**

At its annual meeting on May 6, 2006, the CVBT membership reelected two serving members to another term on the CVBT Board of Directors and elected one new member to the Board, as follows:

Robert K. Krick, of Fredericksburg, was reelected to a second term. He is the author of numerous books and countless articles on the Civil War. During his thirty years as the Chief Historian of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, he developed an intimate knowledge of the area's battlefields.

Harriett Condon, of Middleburg, was reelected to a third term. Harriett has extensive preservation experience and is exceptionally well versed in Civil War history.

Tom Van Winkle, of Spotsylvania County, was elected to his first term. Tom is one of those tireless individuals who has been associated with many preservation organizations and has done wonderful work for each. We are very pleased to welcome him (and his experience) to the CVBT Board.

The Slaughter Pen Farm is *Formally Acquired for Preservation*

On June 19, 2006, the Civil War Preservation Trust closed on the 205-acre property at Fredericksburg, known in 1862 as the Slaughter Pen. This ground has effectively been pulled off the real estate market, but now the Civil War community must rally to pay off a rather substantial mortgage. Fundraising is underway and the CVBT will soon turn to its members for support. As reported previously, the CVBT has committed itself to provide \$1 million toward the total \$12 million price. This cost appears high, but it is the true market value of land that can be readily developed in this area.

The market value of land is, of course, very different from its historic value. We have purchased our share of historically important wetlands and other real estate that is inherently very difficult to develop. In those instances, the purchase price was quite affordable because historic value is not something that real estate assessments really consider. In the case of Slaughter Pen, though, the land is attractive to many interests. Its development potential dictated a high price and its exceptional historic significance did not allow us to do anything other than try to acquire it.

Since the CVBT was formed, someone from our Board has been in contact with the property owners. This liaison, which is a large part of what CVBT does, proved crucial in keeping preservation of the land as an option. In the instance of Slaughter Pen, there was a third value at work, in addition to its development potential and its historic significance. The 205-acre parcel is adjacent to so many other sections of the Fredericksburg battlefield (southern sector) that its preservation will open new opportunities for historic interpretation beyond the Slaughter Pen farm itself. Walking tours of the Slaughter Pen, for instance, will be able to include other areas of the National Park, such as the Meade assault area. The vistas at the Confederate

artillery positions, on National Park property as well as CVBT easement areas, will now include their full field of fire. This expanded potential for restoring the integrity of a key portion of the Fredericksburg battlefield is further justification for acquiring this ground.

The Civil War preservation community has successfully acquired the Slaughter Pen, but must move as expeditiously as possible to pay off the note so we do not pay any more interest costs than we absolutely must. Your help in this endeavor is extremely important. Please respond generously when you receive our appeal for funds.

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13th Texas Seminar

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will close the formal presentations with a reflective piece appropriately named: *What did it all mean? Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Stonewall, and 200 Acres of Hallowed Ground.*

At the conclusion of the seminar, a print by the country's foremost Civil War artist, Don Troiani, will be raffled off along with books and other items. Over the years, Troiani prints have always been the centerpiece of the Seminar's raffle and this great artist's generosity in donating them has added literally thousands of dollars to preservation coffers.

For the second consecutive year, the Seminar will benefit the CVBT. All of this year's proceeds will go to help save the 200 acres of hallowed ground at the Slaughter Pen, on the Fredericksburg Battlefield. Over the years, the Seminar has raised more than \$150,000 for Civil War preservation and another outstanding outpouring is expected this year.

For more information, contact Dean Bill Auvenshine, of the Simpson History Center, at (254) 582-2555, ext. 309 or e-mail him at wra@hillcollege.edu.

Ed Bearss Honored

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think of another group of men, his Marines at Cape Gloucester, on 2 January 1944, the day he was severely wounded by a Japanese machine gun. He reflected, somewhat quietly, that he had been privileged to live and carry on.

We at the CVBT firmly believe that Ed Bearss has carried on with honor and integrity and it was our pleasure to provide some level of recognition. Special thanks are due to Joe Fulginiti and Don Troiani for developing the award presented to Ed. The Trust seeks to present an award that will have special meaning to the recipient and Joe and Don knew exactly what to provide. Joe is a former Marine who worked with Don to develop a pencil drawing of the Marine Corps' globe and anchor, as it looked during World War Two, when Ed was a Marine. The resulting framed drawing was an instant



The Ralph Happel Award.

success. Joe is the owner of Valor Art and Frame, in downtown Fredericksburg and is the exclusive distributor of Don Troiani's work in this area. To find out more, please visit his website at www.valorart-frame.com.



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