



ON THE  
**skirmish** *line*  
Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust



## Reflections from the President

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) began in October 1996 with but a single purpose: To preserve the hallowed ground of our remaining Civil War battlefields. And after eleven years, it gives me great pride to state that we have remained true to that purpose.

- ★ We have helped save well over 700 acres of battlefield land on all four of our local battlefields, land which might very well have been lost but for our efforts.
- ★ Our membership has grown from the eight original folks who created the organization (all from the Fredericksburg area) to over 2000 members scattered throughout the United States and Europe.
- ★ We remain good stewards of the monies entrusted to us. Our Board remains all volunteer, and we continue to be serious about putting as much of every dollar donated to us as is humanly possible into “dirt and grass.”
- ★ We have established, and pledge to continue to uphold, a reputation in the community and in the country for integrity and honesty, effectiveness and seriousness of purpose. We carry out our mission in a spirit of compromise and cooperation, always looking for win-win situations, rejecting confrontation and personal attack, wanting to be known for what we stand for and not for what we stand against.
- ★ And, as important as anything, we continue to strive to remain worthy of those brave men in blue and gray whose suffering and sacrifice on these fields provide the reason why we do what we do. Success is not always possible, but remaining faithful to our cause is, and we are committed to continuing to fight the good fight until the Final Role is called.
- ★ The past year has been a good one for CVBT, and I’d like to share a few reasons why with you:
- ★ As you know, we have pledged \$1 million toward the purchase of the Slaughter Pen Farm on the Fredericksburg battlefield, an unbelievable amount of money for a small nonprofit organization like ours. But we did so because the land simply had to be saved, because we as the local preservation group had a responsibility to stand up and be a part of the effort to preserve it, and because we know that our members and friends would come through for us.

{ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 }

- ★ As New Year 2008 arrives, it gives me great pleasure to let you know that \$725,000 of that pledge has been fulfilled. You, our members and friends, have indeed been generous in your support, and I would be remiss if I failed to publicly acknowledge the incredibly generous donation of \$100,000 made by Mr. Hugh Cosner, one of the giants of Spotsylvania County.
- ★ Our efforts to raise the remaining \$275,000 continue, and I would most respectfully ask that each of you make a New Year's resolution to continue to support this effort as generously as you are able, both through personal contribution and by encouraging your friends and neighbors to do the same. If every one of our members and friends were to do so, this pledge would soon be fulfilled and we would be well positioned to respond in a timely manner when the next opportunity to save hallowed ground arises.
- ★ And in that vein, let me say that there are several ongoing projects and negotiations we are working on, and my hope is that 2008 will find us adding to our list of land preserved. (Some vitally important efforts may be coming to fruition at Chancellorsville in the coming months; stay tuned!)
- ★ Based upon efforts this past year, several definite HUZZAHS are in order: First, a loud and sustained HUZZAH! for the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) which has been instrumental in preserving much hallowed ground in our area (and around the country, too). Simply put, the Slaughter Pen Farm would be an industrial park right now but for their efforts and for their willingness to stick their financial necks out for preservation. So, to Jim Lighthizer and Jim Campi and all the guys and gals at CWPT, well done and thank you!

- ★ A major CVBT fundraising success this year came about when we produced a unique DVD showing never before seen or released aerial video of the Slaughter Pen Farm property, with narration by CVBT Board member Bob Krick. This video was produced entirely by Tod Rheinholtz (the pilot) and Tom Van Winkle (CVBT Board member and Communications Director), with CWPT graciously mailing a copy to each of their thousands of members. This effort alone brought in well over \$50,000, every dollar of which went towards our \$1 million pledge. So, to Tod and Tom and all the CWPT folks, HUZZAH! and thank you!
- ★ Another successful fundraising effort was made in November with an event in downtown Fredericksburg spotlighting a new book, "*In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: The Wilderness Through Cold Harbor*," whose two authors, Gordon Rhea and Chris Heisey, graciously consented to attend to sign books and give a talk. An enthusiastic HUZZAH! And thank you to both Gordon and Chris!
- ★ As mentioned above, we of CVBT approach our task of battlefield preservation in a spirit of compromise and cooperation, always willing to sit down with others in a non confrontational manner to find win-win situations for all concerned. This well-earned reputation for integrity and seriousness of purpose has paid off any number of times, with the latest example being a gift this year from a local developer, The Silver Company. Several years ago the Silvers had donated to us 5 acres at Grant's Knoll on the Wilderness Battlefield, and this year they donated an additional 6 acres in this same area. Their generosity is deeply appreciated, so to The Silver Company, thank you!



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- ★ This past year showed a continued close relationship between CVBT and the folks at Fredericksburg/ Spotsylvania National Park Services. Noel Harrison, Frank O'Reilly, and Mac Wyckoff were instrumental in making our Annual Meeting in May a resounding success. Eric Mink continues to provide an ongoing and invaluable liaison between the two organizations, and Russ Smith, the Superintendent of the Park, is as true a friend of CVBT and preservation as we have. To Russ, Eric, Noel, Frank, Mac, and all the folks of the Park Service, thank you!
- ★ An enthusiastic HUZDAH! to the Sunshine Lady Foundation is needed as well, for its ongoing and very generous funding for the printing of our Journal for the past several years. It's a magnificent Journal (thanks to its incredibly hard working editor, Erik Nelson; thank you, Erik!) and its printing is made possible by the folks at the Sunshine Lady Foundation. To you all thank you!
- ★ Finally, at our Annual Meeting the fourth Ralph Happel Award was presented to one of our own, Mr. Enos Richardson. Enos was a charter member of CVBT and its first President. He was the "heart and soul" of our early board, leading by example, keeping us together, keeping us focused on the mission, being willing to roll up his sleeves and work hard to see that that mission was successful. And he has been willing over the past 11 years to spend untold hours to further the preservation

cause, not only for CVBT but for other preservation organizations as well, offering his legal experience and expertise without thought of recompense other than the satisfaction of seeing hallowed ground preserved.

Simply put, CVBT is the vibrant, active, effective organization it is due in very large part to Enos, since it was his dream and his hard work that have played such a huge roll in seeing it all become a reality. He is a man whose good works and personal integrity are worthy of the highest recognition and honor, and it was with a profound sense of gratitude and admiration that we were able to present him with the Happel Award. Thank you, Enos, for all you have done for, and mean to, CVBT. We couldn't have done it without you!

Our Annual Meeting in 2008 will be held on May 3-4, with the Saturday evening meeting itself to be held on Willis Hill on the Fredericksburg battlefield, the site of our first preservation triumph (this is being made possible through the kindness and support of Russ Smith, since the land is now a part of the national park system. Thank you, Russ!. (Check our website, [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org) for details). I hope to see many of you there!

And always remember, together, we ARE making a difference!

**Mike Stevens**  
President, CVBT

## 2008 Central Virginia Battlefields Trust Annual Meeting

**T**he coming of 2008 marks the beginning of a dozen years the

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has been saving hallowed ground. On May 3rd and 4th, CVBT will present our twelfth annual meeting. Entitled, "Looking Back and Moving Forward", our event will take place on historic Willis Hill overlooking the sunken road in the Fredericksburg battlefield. The CVBT helped the National Park Service to acquire a key portion of Marye's Heights in 1996. This was our first project as a fledgling preservation organization and our success would gain momentum, with hard work and perseverance, through the coming years. There is no better place to reflect upon our accomplishments and look with excitement towards the future.



As a very special addition to this year's event there will be several rarely seen "Stonewall" Jackson artifacts on display courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy. Some of these items have never been viewed by the public before! There is a hint as to one of these items posted on our website if you are curious and want to make a guess.

As always, there will be interesting programs and tours, a speech by our esteemed president, and of course the famous BBQ dinner can't be missed!

Set these dates aside and visit our website, [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org), for further details as they become available. We look forward to seeing you, our valued members! sl

# CVBT Holiday Event a Great Success

**G**ordon Rhea and Chris Heisey were both on hand to greet those who attended the

Trust's holiday event on November 16th in downtown Fredericksburg. They graciously signed copies of their collaborative new book that provides photographic highlights of the



scenes of the 1864 Overland Campaign. Entitled *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: The Wilderness Through Cold Harbor*, this volume recounts the drama and the tragedy of war alongside photographs of the tranquil beauty of the landscape through which the armies of 1864 passed.

In remarks to the assembled group, photographer Chris Heisey spoke of his desire to capture the spirit of the battlefields, to visually impart the smells, the weather, and the inhabitants of these now quiet places. With some hesitation, he had forwarded some early photos of spider webs and wood ducks, the current inhabitants of hallowed ground, wondering if these types of images were what Gordon anticipated. Happily, Gordon was of the same mind and a great collaboration ensued.

In his short talk, Gordon spoke of his exploration of the Virginia countryside, searching for the routes traversed in 1864. To his surprise, there was very little information available on the landscape of Central Virginia when he began his research, although there were many published battle books. He subsequently became fascinated with exploring the 1864 campaign beyond Spotsylvania Court House. The result was mixed, though. In places like Caroline County, he encountered people like Ray Hamill, the County Clerk and a descendant of a soldier who rode with the 9th Virginia Cavalry. Mr. Hamill had collected old maps, learned from local folks where historic events had occurred, and had contact with others who had material of

their own for a researcher to examine. Unfortunately, this bonanza was not to be found everywhere.

Still, the research was intriguing. Of considerable interest was the area around Mudd Tavern, where the next battle after Spotsylvania Court House should have been fought, but wasn't. Confederate

earthworks still course through the woods, all but forgotten, as are so many other places that were touched only lightly by those distant events. Gordon stated that their book was meant to capture the flavor of places like that—places that had experienced intense military activity for a brief period then faded from view, softened by nature and devolving into quiet witnesses to history. Such places, however, could be revived to significance by a curious visitor, an occasional hunter, and finally by the researcher who sought to place them in their historic context.

As he moves through this part of Virginia, Gordon said he is usually of two minds. The first mindset is as a modern traveler, paying attention to road signs and traffic. The other mindset, however, is as a historian, with the memories of researched events around every corner.

Chris and Gordon encouraged the group to continue their efforts to preserve hallowed ground in Central Virginia. We at the CVBT thank these two gentlemen for sharing their time and for their constant support of battlefield preservation.

The evening proved to be absolutely delightful. Gordon Rhea's other books were on hand for sale and the author happily signed these as well as previously purchased volumes from private collections. Fredericksburg Square also provided a wonderful array of hors d'oeuvres of a quality consistent with their restaurant's superior rating. In addition, the owners, Deborah and Van Perroy, sponsored this event. When you see them, be sure to thank them for their generosity. *sl*

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**"I drive around Atlanta every day and see buildings, houses and parking lots on land that I know should have been preserved. I am glad that there are people like you that are dedicated to this task." Jim Phillips, Atlanta, Georgia**

**J**ohn Pelham! The name conjures up the image of gallant youth. Schooled at West Point, Pelham resigned from the academy to side with the South in 1861. On December 13th, 1862, just south of Fredericksburg, this innovative artilleryman positioned two cannons on the flank of a powerful Union line of battle, preparing to attack. Using the cover of a morning fog, he pushed far in advance of the Confederate lines. Bringing his two guns into battery near the Richmond Stage Road (modern day Route 2/17), Pelham held up the Federal assault for nearly two hours.

The corner of Route 2/17 and Benchmark Road has long been memorialized as the site where Pelham

# PELHAM'S CORNER



made his stand that morning. The CVBT sought to preserve this area early in its existence, but the property owner had every intention of developing that historic quadrant of the crossroads. Still, in 1999, the CVBT purchased two very small parcels nearby.

In and of themselves, this limited acreage (0.63 acres total) was of negligible importance, but we held on to them in anticipation of some future advantage.

The Silver Company acquired the historically significant corner several years later and began to

discuss a land swap with the CVBT. In return for our two tiny lots, the Silver Company agreed to transfer a full acre of ground at the corner, the very site memorialized as Pelham's Corner. In December 2007, the Silver Company transferred title of this site to the CVBT. In addition, they provided another \$10,000 for landscaping and also reserved several parking spaces for visitors. While the surrounding area has been developed, this critical acre is owned by CVBT, so it can be maintained as a key component of the Fredericksburg battlefield. Once again, the Silver Company has worked with a local preservation organization to preserve a site of national significance and we thank them for their generosity. **SL**

## Wilderness Purchase Victory

**I**n the last issue of *The Skirmish Line* we informed you that on July 19, 2007 the Orange County Planning Com-

mission met for the rezoning of a 176 acre tract, from Agricultural to general commercial zoning. The application was for property west of Route 20, in the vicinity of Route 3. This area is in close proximity to the Grant's Knoll property held by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and the National Park property that includes Grant's headquarters in the Wilderness as well as the Lacy House, (Ellwood), site of Stonewall Jackson's amputated arm, field hospital in the 1863 Chancellorsville campaign, and



focal point in the 1864 Wilderness battle.

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust was instrumental in convincing the Orange County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to deny that request.

It is with great pleasure that we can announce that the National Park Service has purchased and closed on the Dotson property, December 19th, 2007. This ground will now forever be preserved as part of one of the nation's most endangered battlefields, the Wilderness. **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](http://www.cvbt.org).

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

## Membership Categories

Annual Member	\$ 35	Patron	\$ 500	Life Patron	\$10,000
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