

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

April, 2025 – Edition CLXXVII

Next Meeting

1-2 Guyandotte (TENTATIVE)

**Beverly Heritage Days, July 19
at 5:30 p.m.**

Upcoming Events

Important note about the official calendar below. After some discussion at a recent meeting, it is the opinion of the group that liability insurance is more likely to cover events sanctioned by the WVRA. It is our opinion that to be sanctioned the event should at the minimum be listed on this calendar. Addendum, January 2022. I discussed this issue with the insurance expert of the USV and he agrees that this is a gray area. There is some question whether the liability insurance would cover WVRA members only at sanctioned WVRA events or all events. He further agreed that publishing events in the newsletter may help to make them "official."

NOTE – Some of the following events are tentative at this time.

WVRA Hosted Events

July

19 – Beverly Heritage Days

Other Events recommended by WVRA members

April

26 – Clarksburg History Museum Civil War Tour, Lowndes Hill, Clarksburg, 11 a.m. (See below for details)

Other Events from friends of the WVRA

April

26 – Buchanan, Va.

July

4-6 – Gettysburg, Daniel Lady Farm. Register on line

August

15-16 - Fort Mulligan, W. Va.

September

26-28 - Hardy County Heritage (TENTATIVE)

September

12-14 – Carnifex Ferry (no other details provided)

October

10-12 Droop Mountain

17-19 – Cedar Creek

November

EDITOR'S ANNUAL MEETING WRAP UP

The WVRA got together for its annual meeting March 22 at the Beverly Heritage Center. The minutes of the meeting can be found on the following pages. As editor of this fine publication, allow me to make a few additional comments.

By the actions of the membership, the decision was basically made without formal vote, to continue the Association another year.

Since we will sally forth in 2025, we felt the bylaws should be revised to more accurately reflect the current state of the WVRA. We don't have the membership or interest to hold events. We don't have many members interested in active reenactments. The number of GENERAL members has increased, and those members had no representation on the Executive Board. And, bylaws matter. I know from talking with other units, that bylaws can be very important at times.

In a close vote, the members present voted to acquire liability insurance. The non-binding vote we held last year indicated that the majority of members favored maintaining our liability insurance. More on that subject is printed below.

Thank you to all members who were present at the meeting. Thank you to Art and Pam Dodds for serving as officers last year.

West Virginia Reenactors Association

Members Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2025 at Beverly

Heritage Center

Attending were Art Dodds, Pam Dodds, Chuck Critchfield, Bill Brisendine, Richard Byrd, Debra Byrd, David Starliper, Shelly Starliper, Phyllis Baxter, Eleanor Renshaw, Peter Baxter, and Tim Glaser on zoom.

Art called the meeting to order at 11 am.

Minutes of previous meeting which have been printed in newsletter with corrections were approved on motion from Chuck, second by Phyllis

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Election of officers -- Slate as presented in the newsletter was

Richard Byrd – President
John Arnold – Vice President
Chuck Critchfield – Treasurer
Phyllis Baxter – Secretary

Non-voting positions:

Chuck Critchfield – Newsletter Editor
Tim Glaser – Webmaster

Chuck moved, Pam seconded motion to elect these officers by acclamation. Motion approved with one absentee vote in agreement.

Rick took over conducting the meeting at 11.08. Asked for comments or new business.

Art expressed appreciation for Chuck keeping association afloat.

Treasurers report upon handoff has balance of \$1303.34. Bill moved, Peter seconded motion to accept financial report. All in favor.

Chuck and members offered a tribute to Kevin Skaggs, with a moment of silence. Chuck attended his service. Kevin's son Christopher returned the 1st WV Regimental and gave Chuck Kevin's National Flag, and offered his reenacting gear to WVRA. Chuck suggests we accept all except his Colonel's uniform. Chuck moved we establish a memorial fund with opportunity to donate to WVRA in Kevin's memory, with the funds collected to go to Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation. Bill seconded, all approved. Chuck will manage the fund.

Bylaws - Discussed bylaws proposed changes. Phyllis described changes. Phyllis moved, Chuck seconded, motion to approve revised bylaws to replace old ones. All voted in favor including one absentee ballot.

Nominations -- Executive Board members at large nominated were Bill Brisendine and Tim Glaser. Chuck moved, Phyllis seconded motion to elect this slate at large by acclamation. Approved. Noted that there are additional at large seats available, if representatives of units or other active individuals are interested in serving, they should contact the Executive Board.

Newsletter editors report – Chuck reported there 16 paid members including today. He noted that while the newsletter schedule is more flexible under the new Bylaws, he intends to continue providing them on a regular basis.

Event sponsorship -- Proposal to host Beverly Heritage Day had been presented and posted in the newsletter. Bill moved, Chuck seconded motion to sponsor (host) Beverly Heritage Day, motion

approved with one absentee vote. Rick volunteered to assist with BHD planning and camp host. Discussion included posting pictures from previous events before and during the event, along with WVRA application forms. Eleanor can help with that if folks share photos with her.

Old business – Executive Board had previously approved to reimburse Tim for the website hosting and domain name renewal, but he found other funding so that is not needed at this time.

Insurance - Motion had been made at July meeting to not renew liability insurance. Motion was tabled at that time, and membership was asked for opinion in subsequent newsletters. Responses included 10 wishing to continue, 6 to discontinue, and 3 didn't care. Cost for the insurance is \$700 + \$40 to join NRA. Insurance covers liability for injury or property damage for the person you hurt, with \$500 deductible. Payment for the new year is due within a couple of weeks. After considerable discussion of options, the group took the following actions.

- Phyllis moved, Chuck seconded, approved moved to untable motion to discontinue insurance. Vote on original motion to discontinue was rejected by majority vote.
- Chuck moved to continue insurance one year only, Bill second. Approved on vote of 5 yes, 4 no.
- Agreed to make further decision in time before renewal for April 2026. We will see if more of the previous members who want insurance follow through to join for this year. Motion proposed to vote at next meeting, with absentee vote opportunity published in newsletter sent to 2024 as well as 2025 members, based on three likely choices:
 - to renew insurance for 2026 if treasury funds allow,
 - to authorize additional fee to help cover cost – likely \$50 per individual - for those wanting insurance coverage, or
 - to discontinue insurance.

Executive Board will then make decision about 2026 insurance based on expressed vote of paid members, and financial capacity of the organization.

Next meeting will be at 5:30 pm Saturday July 19, following public hours for Beverly Heritage Day, at or near the Beverly Heritage Center.

Meeting adjourned on motion by Chuck at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Phyllis Baxter, Secretary

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MEMBERSHIP

WVRA membership dues for 2025 are due now. To be covered by the liability insurance, you need to renew your membership. Membership renewals and new members to date:

Mike Phillips	Phyllis Baxter
Peter Baxter	Tag Ireland
Bill Snyder	Hunter Lesser
Keith Kopshina	Joan Kosphina
Linda Donegan	Bill Donegan
Eleanor Renshaw	Bill Brisendine
Art Dodds	Pam Dodds
Rick Byrd	Chuck Critchfield

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The new bylaws allow for members to be elected to the Executive Board. No longer do units elect a Unit Representative to the Exec. Board. General Members and members from other time periods had no unit representative. As a result, the change to Executive Board Representatives at large. Currently, we have no General Member on the board and would ask that general members consider being on the board for 2025. Most, if not all, of the Exec. Board duties can be handled by email. Contact me or any other current WVRA Executive Board member if you would like to serve.

INSURANCE

After a lengthy discussion and the presentation of several options, the members present at the annual meeting voted by a one-vote margin to renew the liability insurance for April 2025 through April 2026. The primary concern with those who voted no is the cost, which will drain our treasury eventually. Also, some members have insurance through other organizations or feel their personal liability insurance would cover any costs.

Other members have no insurance through any other source and insurance certificates are required to attend some events. The annual meeting was scheduled right up against the deadline to renew, which required a decision right away.

The members also approved a plan to canvass current members on what they might want to be due after April 2026 when the current policy expires. The questionnaire will ask members to select one of the options:

1. Do you wish to renew the liability insurance the next year (April 2026) if the WVRA treasury allows.
2. Do you wish to obtain insurance next year, funded by an additional fee to cover cost - possibly up to \$50 per individual
3. Do you wish to discontinue the insurance.

See the questionnaire on the following pages.

KEVIN SKAGGS



Colonel Kevin Skaggs

We lost our good friend and former WVRA member Kevin Skaggs last month. His health had declined over the past couple years and we had not seen him in the field for a while. His knowledge and command were greatly missed.

He served as an officer in the WVRA and in the 1st West Virginia Infantry. He rose from private to corporal to captain in the 1st West Virginia. In the United States Volunteers, the regional unit the 1st West Virginia belonged to, he rose to

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major, lieutenant colonel and finally colonel in command of the 1st regiment within the USV. He may have been approached about becoming the brigadier general in charge of the entire USV, but declined. That role would have required riding a horse, and Kevin never seemed keen to ride the beasts.

I was with Kevin at his first reenactment – Sailor's Creek – about 30 years past. What a way to start your reenacting career. The Saturday battle usually involved over five miles of marching. On Sunday morning, I was sitting in camp with Kevin and he was miserable. I believe he headed home early. I figured I would never see him again. So much for that prediction. As his first sergeant, when he became captain, we worked together to run the company. Kevin knew his stuff. Better than I did for sure. And he would lose his patience with me, especially at dress parade, when I wasn't sure what to do. But he never lost his temper and was always courteous. At Gettysburg 150, on the first day, our regiment ended up in an unrehearsed situation and Kevin knew exactly what command to give to get the 1st Regiment to change face to stop a Confederate flank attack. He gave the command to his eight company commanders: Battalion! On the right by files into line! March! That maneuver when done by battalion is different than doing it by company. And I screwed it up. Kevin let me have it!! But I deserved it. He knew his stuff. He knew his drill.

He had put together a history of the 1st West Virginia Infantry, and was probably one of the most knowledgeable person around, when it came to the 1st. He took pride in his West Virginia heritage and was quick to respond to Confederate Virginians when needed.

Kevin's tent was always a gathering place and he was always a gracious host. That enormous tent was often used as a changing station; was home to the regimental and national flags when not flying. And had a few of the comforts of home that he was famous for bringing with him. The

fly was often a place for an early morning cup of coffee and a place to talk to friends. And a great place to get out of the rain.

As we laid him to rest in the family plot in Fayetteville, a flood of emotions came over me. A lot of good memories of Kevin returned. And another friend was gone.

In his memory the Association has created the Kevin Skaggs Memorial Fund for those who desire to remember our friend with a donation. The money collected will be given to the Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation. Kevin participated in the Rich Mountain reenactment for years and was the Federal commander on a number of occasions. He also served as the condemned soldier for our living history scenarios at Rich Mountain. Afterall, he was the lightest member of the unit.



A bright, brisk, sunny morning in Fayetteville when we laid Kevin to rest. Thanks to Jake Thompson and Monty Bledsoe of the 7th West Virginia for honoring Kevin that morning by their attendance at the brief, simple ceremony.

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Kevin Skaggs Memorial Fund

At the suggestion of some members, a fund in memory of Kevin has been established by the WVRA. Anyone wishing to give a memorial donation can send a check to Chuck Critchfield, 193 Eastgate Drive, Morgantown, WV 26508. Make the check to West Virginia Reenactors Association (WVRA) with SKAGGS in the notation.

All donations will be given to the Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation in Kevin's Memory.

1st West Virginia Members

I renewed our membership in the United States Volunteers. Because the annual meeting of the WVRA was so late, I was late in turning in our dues to the USV (which I paid out of my own pocket). So, I am not sure we are covered by the USV insurance. However, we should be covered by the WVRA insurance. As long as you are a member of record with the WVRA.

Secretary/Treasurers Report

March 26, 2025 (Since last report)

Balance	\$ 1,248.34
Deposits	
Membership	\$ 190.00
Kevin Skaggs Memorial	\$ 150.00
Debits	
None	\$ 0.00
Current Balance	\$ 1,588.34

Outstanding obligations

Insurance	\$ 743.16
Kevin Skaggs Memorial	\$ <u>150.00</u>
Funds available	\$ 695.18

Notes – upon assumption of the treasurer's duties on March 22, 2025, the bank account stood at \$1,303.34.

Chuck Critchfield - Treasurer

Upcoming Events

For the complete list, see above. The following is any additional information submitted to the editor for the events listed above.

Clarksburg History Museum Civil War tours are scheduled to resume Saturday, April 26. If you are interested, please contact Art and Pam Dodd or myself. The military portion of the tour is held on Lowndes Hill and is scheduled for 11 am and lasts 10-15 minutes.

Civil War Symposium

Davis & Elkins College & Rich Mountain Battlefield present:

Fighting Disease and Patching Wounds Medical Service During the Civil War

Saturday, April 5, 2025

9 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Tickets \$35 – includes lunch

Students – free, lunch \$15 (Student ID required)

Beverlyheritagecenter.org

304-637-7424

Civil War Roundtables

Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable

2nd Tuesday, of each Month except in the summer

FOP Restaurant in Nutter Fort.

If you want dinner, arrive between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

Presentation should start around 6:45 p.m.

April's presentation will be made by Keith Kopshina and Chuck Critchfield

Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable

3rd Tuesday of each month except December

7:00 p.m. Drummond Chapel, behind Suncrest United Methodist Church, 479 Van Voorhis Road.

No meeting in April

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2025 WVRA Officers

Rick Byrd - President

John Arnold - Vice President

Phyllis Baxter – Secretary

Chuck Critchfield - Treasurer

Webmaster – Tim Glaser

Board Members at large

Bill Brisendine

Tim Glaser

Vacant

Vacant

Editor - Chuck Critchfield

Note - Webmaster and Editor are non-voting members of the Executive Committee.

Unit Field Officers

(Continue in effect until further notice. See minutes of January, 2022 meeting)

ATTENTION - Please do not send any correspondence to the former PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member. Karl Mulac is the administrator of the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use.

As newsletter editor, I encourage submissions from members or readers, that are related to American history. I retain the right as editor to make a final decision on the content of this publication. Abusive or political submissions will not be published.

Editor's Corner

The Editor's chance to speak

THANKS to Rick Byrd for the Treasurer's report. Thank you to Art Dodds for serving as president in 2024. Thank you to Phyllis Baxter for stepping up to serve as an officer this year. Thank you to Rick Byrd for agreeing to run for president. Thank you to Pam Dodds for serving as unit representative in 2025. Thank you to Tim and Bill for agreeing to be an officer and attending the meeting.

I apologize to Art and Pam if at anytime I have misspelled your last name. Because I knew a family who spelled the name without an S, I still want to spell Art and Pam's name that way.

ADDRESS – The WVRA has a new official address. The new address is WVRA, PO Box 227, Beverly, WV, 26253. However, any correspondence about dues, membership, newsletter, etc., should be sent to me. If any mail comes to the Beverly PO Box, the Beverly Heritage folks will contact me. My address has changed to 193 Eastgate Road, Morgantown, WV, 26508.

HAVE AN OPINION you would like to express? Send it to me.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$15 per year fee. The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA.

WVRA website - wvra.org

Chuck Critchfield - Editor

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"We tend to create stories that appeal to us. Then we impose those stories on the past."

- A Wallace Collection video produced on the 500th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt -found on You Tube

"History is dangerous. It goes after our myths and our identities."

- Brig. Gen. (ret) Ty Seidule after receiving death threats for writing about history

"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world."

- Robert Penn Warren

All history is revisionist. By its very nature, the moment it is committed to memory it has been revised.

- Anonymous

"The People made their recollection fit in with their suffering"

-Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War

"History and memory aren't the same thing."

- Me