

Trans-Allegheny Disptach

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2019 - November - Edition XI

Upcoming Events

Civil War

Sponsored

None at this time

Sanctioned

None at this time

Other Events recommended by WVRA members

Beverly Heritage Days -- July 10-12, 2020

Other Events

2nd Day Chancellorsville - National Park
Service Event, Date to TBD, 2020

Appomattox 155th Event - Appomattox
Nation Park, tentatively scheduled for Easter
weekend.

Other Time Periods.

World War II

None at this time

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 10, at the Christ Episcopal Church in Clarksburg -- the same site of many WVRA meetings and dances in the past. Meeting gets underway at 1 pm. The Church is located at the corner of 6th and Main streets in Clarksburg. We will meet in the red brick Parish House immediately behind the church. Please park in the parking lot adjacent to the Church Parish House. Entry to the parking lot and the Parish House may be gained off of Traders Avenue.

Elections

It is time to begin the process of electing new officers for the West Virginia Reenactors Association. Nominations are open currently for Association positions:

President

Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

Editor - Chuck Critchfield nominated

Website

Unit Representatives

1st West Virginia

25th Virginia

TASAS

Artillery

The President currently serves as Unit Representative for General members which includes other time periods.

Please send your nominations to current officers or to me, Chuck Critchfield, Newsletter Editor

Membership Renewal

It is also time to renew our memberships for the next reenacting year. Membership renewals are good from January 1 through December 31 of 2020. I will include a membership renewal application with this newsletter.

Keep in mind that in order to be covered by our insurance policy, you must be a member of record.

- Dues:** Dues are \$15 per year per person and \$25 per year for a family. If you wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter there is an additional \$10 fee. The Email version of the newsletter is included in the membership.
- Minors:** All members under the age of 18 need the signature of a guardian to join. Those under 16 will not be allowed to carry a firearm. Those under 14 may not participate in reenactment battles. In addition the WVRA complies with the particular rules at specific events regarding age.
- Meetings:** Will usually be held at the first Saturday of the month during the off-season. During the Reenacting season, meetings may be held at particular events as needed.
- Families:** All individuals should have their own memberships, although family memberships, covering the entire family can be used to save cost. This is limited to members and their home-based children.

Memberships Received to date:

1st West Virginia Infantry

Mike Phillips

25th Virginia Infantry

Tag Ireland

Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society

Phyllis Baxter

Peter Baxter

Bill Snyder

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Gettysburg

The Gettysburg Anniversary Committee (GAC) announced last month that they did not plan to hold their annual Gettysburg reenactment in 2020. However it appears the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association is stepping into the void. Read the following announcement:

The Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association (GBPA.org) is proud to announce they will be hosting and managing the 2020 Battle of Gettysburg reenactment. It will be staged on the hallowed ground of the GBPA's 148-acre Daniel Lady Farm located on Hanover Road bordering the Gettysburg National Military Park at Benner Hill. The Lady farm was briefly occupied by Union troops of the 12th Corps on the first day of the battle only to be ordered to positions on Culp's Hill. Confederate forces of Edward Johnson's Division set up its artillery on the farm and organized its infantry for the assault on Culp's Hill. The house and barn became a field hospital for the wounded and dying. Later the Confederate 2nd Corps troops retreated through the farm.

The 2020 reenactment is being planned as a two-day event on July 4th and 5th weekend. Kirk Davis, the GBPA's Vice President of Operations, will manage the event. He has decades of experience as an event organizer with the Gettysburg Anniversary Committee and other major reenactments.

The GBPA is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation founded in 1959. For 60 years the GBPA has fought to preserve the Gettysburg Battlefield through land purchase, education, and advocacy. Current GBPA programs include the historic Daniel Lady Farm, Gettysburg Battlefield Monuments Project, Scout Camping Program on the farm, historic site tours, BSA Venture Crew 1861 Fife & Drum Corps, and Preservation Advocacy.

Treasurer's Report

September 1-30, 2019

Beginning balance \$3,025.01

Credits: \$0.00

Debits:

Newsletter expenses

C. Critchfield 31.13

Ending Balance \$2,993.88

Submitted by Jack Rush

Insurance

From the minutes of the June meeting:

"The Certificate of Insurance was handed out to all members in attendance at the meeting. It was suggested that a PDF of the Certificate be sent to all of the members. M. Tennant made the motion that the PDF be sent to the members with the next newsletter. Seconded by Jim Allman. Motion Passed. J. Rush will send the PDF to C. Critchfield."

I sent by email, a PDF copy to all members of record who have an email address. Remember this insurance only covers members who are known to the treasurer and editor as dues paying or legacy members. There are a handful of members who have no email address. There have been some people over the past few years claiming to be members, who are not. We have some people who were long time members, who everyone assumes are still members - who are not. So if you get a request from somebody for a copy of the Insurance form, be sure they are a member.

Upcoming Events

Martins Ferry

Received this summer:

We are currently planning the 2019 Martins Ferry Christmas Parade to be held Friday, November 29, 2019. We would love to have the West Virginia Reenactors be a part. Please advise. If you have any questions and/or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me. Grove Spencer, Christmas Parade Planner, 430 1/2 North Zane Highway, Martins Ferry, Ohio, 43935

Civil War Roundtables

The Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable has resumed its schedule of speakers. They meet the second Tuesday of September - November and January - May at Eat'n Park at the Bridgeport Exit(119) of I-79 at 7 pm.

The Mason-Dixon Roundtable (Morgantown) has not sent out any announcements yet and I believe is getting organized for the upcoming year. Their

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website is listed below. I understand that they had some sort of meeting in Sept. They usually meet the third Tuesday of the month.

Event Reviews

Burlington Living History

By Jim Barnes

On Saturday, October 5, Linda and I traveled to Burlington, WV for a Civil War living history event at the Old Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival, which was started in 1973. This event is put on by local reenactors including WVRA members Dave and Sue Judy.

I have not been to Burlington for a long time (maybe since they finished I-68) and had never been to a festival there. We were amazed at the size of the festival. It included what had to be one of the biggest flea markets that I have ever seen. There seemed to be a lot going on, as there was certainly a big crowd.

The Civil War camp was located on the east side of town on the edge of a large field. This made for a comfortable, spacious camp with a goodly bit of room for a crowd-pleasing skirmish. There was a visiting artillery group from the Pittsburgh area, Battery K 5th US, who brought a full-size Parrott rifle. The Confederates had Dave and Sue's full-scale Ordinance Rifle and Mountain Howitzer. The Federals let me fire the Parrott once. That was pretty cool!

Also in attendance were McNeil's Rangers. We could have used some more Federal troops for sure.

After the skirmish, we soon formed up for a parade. The Federal artillery pulled their caisson and gun behind a pickup and at that point, I had no desire to walk, so I rode with them. I have to give Sue Judy many points for walking a good bit of the route while playing bagpipes! There must have been several thousand people lining the parade route.

Overall, we had a good time and a lot of people got some exposure to living history. Small living history events such as this may well be the key to keeping Civil War reenacting as a viable entity as we move on into the 2020s. Much thanks to Dave and Sue for their hospitality.



Figure 1 The Judy's artillery piece in action at Burlington

Droop Mountain

by Ralph McCready

Janet, myself and Ross (Wetherell) arrived at Droop Mountain battlefield about 6:00. At the registration we were informed that we were the only "Yankees" there. So we had a choice of any spot in the Union Camp. We had a large pile of firewood, two portajons and water buffalo all to ourselves.

On Saturday morning we went to the officers meeting and learned that the Confederate camp was almost full and that they had over 30 infantry. There were also four artillery pieces there. The 31st Virginia were helping out this year in organizing things and they had everything covered. There were about twelve Confederates who had blue with them and would galvanize for the battle.

Ross Wetherell, Granny McCready and Ralph McCready at Droop Mountain.



After the meeting two union infantry privates showed up from the 83rd Pa. They said more were coming for Sunday. The battle went well with about 16 on each side. The Saturday meal of pulled pork was very good and

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served at the museum. The Dance, also well done was also held at the museum. All at our front door.

Sunday we had a very good church service at the battlefield. The man giving the sermon had car trouble and had to have his truck towed to a garage on Saturday. Mike Butler captain of the 83rd Pa. showed up Sunday morning with eight union troops. We then built breastworks on the battlefield. The Union forces came out of the woods in the battle and drove the Confederates off the field. Jason from the 31st Virginia suggested that before taps were blown we try something different. We brought Confederate prisoners up by the 120 spectators that were there and also dug up the dead from the fields and lined them up on the battlefield ready to be buried.

Over all it was a very good event and we plan to attend next year. I just hope we can get more Union there.

Meet the Generals

By Jim Barnes

On October 3, Linda and I attended an event at the revamped Robinson Grand Theater in Clarksburg called "Meeting of the Civil War Generals." This was a benefit for the Clarksburg History Museum. It featured General Lee, portrayed by Al Stone, and (President) Grant, portrayed by Barry Meadows.

The theater opened for a reception at 5:30. Snacks were available and drinks could be had with a ticket. We met up with WVRA members Art and Pam Dodd, who were there as Governor and Mrs. Pierpont. We also ran into Rick Wolfe, who is a member of two local Civil War Roundtables and also Rich Mountain Battlefield Association, I believe.

At 6:30, the staff began encouraging everyone to head for the theater seating and at 7:00, the show began. The scenario was set in the White House in 1869. General Lee, now president of Washington College, has come to Washington to lobby for a railroad spur from Staunton to Leesburg to further the economic development of the area. This discussion led to musings about the war and related topics.

After the generals gave their prepared discussion for about 40 minutes, the floor was opened up to the press corps (the audience). This went on for about an hour and many of the questions were quite good. The generals' answers demonstrated that they had done their homework on the time period and their personas.

One nice feature for us was seeing the old Robinson Grand Theater fixed up and being used again. Linda and I both attended a lot of movies there years ago. It doesn't look exactly the same, but it is attractive and a valuable asset to that community.

Overall, we had a great time and would like to pass on our thanks to Al Ford for inviting us.

WVRA members attending Meet the Generals Pam and Art Dodd and Linda and Jim Barnes.



Cedar Creek

By Chuck Critchfield

WVRA members present at the 155th anniversary reenactment of the battle of Cedar Creek last month.



After a one-year hiatus, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation (CCBF) resumed the annual Cedar Creek reenactment October 18-20 at the site of the battle near Middletown, Virginia. The discovery of a bomb at the 2017 event set in motion a series of events that cancelled the 2018 reenactment. Of course the rumor mill churned out dire predictions of the end of future Cedar Creek events and maybe the demise of the entire hobby.

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The CCBF promised in its pre-event literature that security would be tighter at this year's event. No walk-on registrations, photo ID required at registration and a wrist band that was affixed to your wrist by the registration table. There were some signs of the increased security. One civilian reenactor related the saga of encountering a plain clothes policeman who wanted to see the wristband. There was only one entrance to property unlocked to vehicles to control access to the property (a second gate was unlocked on Sunday after the battle).

The event itself was a typical Cedar Creek reenactment in many ways. We had two large scenarios: Cedar Creek on Saturday and Second Kernstown on Sunday. A small skirmish was held in town Friday to simulate action that took place there. There were about 750 reenactors per side including a dozen artillery pieces per side. Confederate cavalry numbered 3-4 dozen while Federals were far less. The amenities were good, the sutlers totaled around 30 and the registration fast and organized.

The weather became the topic conversation. Temperatures on Friday night into Saturday morning dropped to the upper 20's and ice appeared on the surface of the fire bucket water throughout our camp. Many a cold reenactor climbed out of their tent on Saturday morning in search of a warm cup of coffee. But the day produced good weather with sunny and cool conditions. Saturday night into Sunday morning brought us rain. We watched the weather radar which showed a lot of rain moving up the coast. But we were spared a drenching and got a light rain from 3 or 4 am until 7 or so. Although it threatened the rest of the morning we did not suffer any further participation that amounted to anything but mildly inconvenient.

To my knowledge, there were no further incidents or threats to the weekend. The crowds were down a bit from past years and we saw almost no spectators wander into our camp, a long walk from the entrance - although a shuttle was available. It was good to see old friends and close out the reenacting year. It was especially good to camp with Greg Waterson and Kevin Skaggs and have Jim Barnes join us for the scenarios.

More about my adventures in the Valley in the next issue of the ***Trans-Allegheny Dispatch***

Other Time Periods

BLAIR MOUNTAIN: PLANNING MEETING FOR THE BATTLE OF BLAIR MOUNTAIN CENTENNIAL TO BE HELD IN WELCH, WV ON NOV. 2ND

Plans to commemorate West Virginia labor history are developing only steps away from the historic shooting of Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers on McDowell County's Courthouse Steps

The West Virginia Mine Wars Museum and a variety of local, state, regional, and national partners are spearheading a campaign to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain, a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Battle of Blair Mountain in September 1921 was a five-day battle and the culmination of two decades of conflict and violent unrest for labor and civil rights in the coalfields of southern West Virginia.

The next wave of organizing for the Centennial Project will take place in McDowell County, within sight of the courthouse steps where Chief of Police Sid Hatfield and his companion Ed Chambers were gunned down by operatives of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency--an event that further stirred outrage among miners whose fundamental and civil rights were being suppressed.

On November 2, 2019, the Mine Wars Museum and partners will host a collaborative session to discuss events, create a shared vision, and solidify plans for the Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial set for Labor Day Weekend, 2021. This meeting is part of a bold effort to coordinate West Virginia southern coalfield counties to organize their collective work into one weekend of interpretive and educational activities.

The Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial is as grassroots as the labor history it aims to commemorate. Teachers, community leaders, historians, museum staff, and other members of the public are invited to make their mark on the planning process. Only by banding together as courageous coal miners did in 1921 can we hope to make an impact worthy of this unique American legacy. Previous planning sessions have already generated ideas and momentum for Centennial events, from informative game nights to digital walking tours through Clio. Attendees are encouraged to bring Centennial ideas to add to our growing timeline of 2021 Labor Day Weekend events, to be released at the end of this year. Those interested are encouraged to RSVP by contacting the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum Director Kenzie

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New at 304-923-4027, visiting www.blair100.com, or by emailing wvminewarismuseum@gmail.com. Light refreshments and drinks will be provided.

The November 2 gathering will be the final meeting of 2019 for the Centennial Project. 2020 meeting dates have not been released.

When: November 2, 1:00-5:00pm

Where: Jack Caffrey Cultural and Arts Center, 143 Wyoming Street, Welch, WV 24801

What: Planning Meeting for Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial

Who: West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, National Coal Heritage Authority, The Battle of Homestead Foundation, United Mine Workers of America, Clio, will host the event. All members of the public are invited to attend.

- Submitted by Jim Barnes

Other Features

For Sale

Tim Koch (or Cook?) a reenactor in the Morgantown area is selling a large group of Civil War reenacting equipment from weapons to clothing. As of October, he still had items remaining. For more information call Tim at 304-906-552.

I am selling my Stonewall Jackson impression uniform based on the uniform given to Stonewall by Jeb Stuart. Frock coat, pants, kepi and riding boots. ccritch608@yahoo.com or text me at 304-476-2632.

-- Chuck Critchfield

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"They Said It (or didn't)"

"Historians customarily write about past events as if each one occurred in isolation, neatly encapsulated in a sealed container, or chapter, which keeps it from being mixed up with other events in their own containers. This practice is based on a sound assumption that both the writer and the reader can best do one thing at a time. The alternative would be to make history as chaotic as a dictionary of dates. Yet a realist will always want to remember that this neat historical order is only a convenient fiction, and sometimes a deceptive one, and that diverse events constantly impinge upon and modify one another."

-- David Potter

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!"

-- Daniel Webster

Caesar has his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell and George the Third - may profit from by their example."

-- Patrick Henry.

"...[Perhaps] God has instituted the present troubles to rid the country of the predominance of slavery in its public affairs. The whole country, North as well as South, has been instrumental in the endeavor to spread it over the continent, and to force it on unwilling people. While the South has been actively propagating and perpetuating the institution, the North has winked at the wrongful business and encouraged it. -- Therefore, in the coming troubles, the North must not expect to escape the penalty of her lack of principle. She must suffer, like the South."

-- Evansville Journal (Indiana) April 20, 1861

Other Sites

American Battlefield Trust - www.battlefields.org

Beverly Heritage Center -

www.beverlyheritagecenter.org

Mason Dixon Civil War Roundtable

www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/

WVRA Officers 2019

Jim Barnes - President

Ken Connell - Vice President

Jack Rush - Secretary/Treasurer

Diane Tennant - Unit Rep (TASAS)

Mark Tennant - Unit Rep (1st W. Va. Infantry)

Bill Brisendine - Unit Rep (25th Virginia Infantry)

Unit Rep (artillery) - TBD

Webmaster - Peter Baxter

Editor - Chuck Critchfield

ATTENTION - Please do not send any correspondence to the 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 of record.

There are two Facebook pages currently in use as avenues of communication by WVRA members. One is the WVRA-The

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Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society group page. The other group is labeled simply West Virginia Reenactors Association. Tonya Daft is the administrator on the West Virginia Reenactors Association page. Please address all questions to her about that page. I am not sure who is administrator to 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

THANK YOU to Peter Baxter, Jim Barnes and Jack Rush. All three have faithfully assisted the editor or made contributions to the Dispatch.

INSURANCE - I continue to get questions about the WVRA insurance policy. I have been running the article about insurance for about five months in the Dispatch. Please review said article above.

BEVERLY HERITAGE DAYS - Planning for next year's event is underway. If you have any ideas, please let me know or pass them on to WVRA member Phyllis Baxter.

PERSONALS - Keep Jennifer Smith in your prayers. It was nice to see Hunter Lesser featured in a recent edition of GOLDEN SEAL magazine.

GETTYSBURG - Just a month past, reenactors were lamenting the demise of the annual Gettysburg reenactment. Another group has stepped forward to organize the 2020 reenactment (see above). Large national events seem to be on the decline or even a thing of the past - although Cedar Creek as reemerged from a one-year hiatus. But the truth is inescapable. The Civil War hobby has declined from its peak popularity in the 1990's and the hobbyists are aging. The younger generation of reenactors seem to be more interested in campaigning with no attachment to a unit.

CEDAR CREEK - According to one source, a "person of interest" has been indentified in connection with the bomb discovered at the 2017 Cedar Creek reenactment.

THURM SHAVER - does anyone have an address for Thurm? He is not on line at all and he moved to a new location. But the address he gave me is not correct - at least the USPS keeps returning emails.

PLEASE SEND ALL MAIL TO MY ADDRESS and not to the PO BOX in Buckhannon. We have received some announcements recently at the PO Box which we do not inspect on a regular basis.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$10 per year fee. The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA.

WVRA website - wvra.org
Chuck Critchfield - Editor
608 Skyview Drive
Clarksburg, WV 26301
ccritch608@yahoo.com



Granny McCready guards the Union camp at Droop

"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world - Robert Penn Warren