

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## THE WEST VIRGINIA REENACTORS

ASSOCIATION, INC.

*(Revision of March 1994)*

### ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND PURPOSE

**Section 1** - The name of this organization will be the "West Virginia Reenactors Association, Inc.", also called the "WVRA" or "The Association".

**Section 2** - The purpose of the WVRA will be to present the appearance and manners of typical citizens and soldiers of Western Virginia, both Union and Confederate, in the period of 1861-1865 in as historically accurate a manner as possible. The WVRA will strive to improve and to encourage the hobby of Civil War reenacting within the state of West Virginia, to educate the public about West Virginia's Civil War, and to otherwise commemorate and preserve our state's Civil War heritage.

**Section 3** - The nature of this organization will be volunteer and not-for-profit. No member or officer of the WVRA shall profit individually from participation in the WVRA.

**Section 4** - if at any future date the WVRA should cease to function, the last Executive Board will see that all Association property is sold to the highest bidder, and that the proceeds, together with any treasury funds remaining after payment of any outstanding debts of the WVRA, shall be paid to a non-profit battlefield preservation organization.

### ARTICLE 2- MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1** - Membership is open to all persons at least 13 years old with a serious interest in the American Civil War period. Membership will not be denied on account of race, gender, creed, or national origin. Units may determine suitability of individual applicants for their particular unit impression, subject to Executive Board action.

**Section 2** - New members may be admitted to the WVRA upon payment of dues and acceptance by the Executive Board. The Executive Board may designate one of its members to receive and accept routine membership applications, but denial of any application must be sustained by the whole Board in open vote. Any person refused membership may appeal for a vote of the whole membership present at any scheduled meeting of the WVRA, whose decision will be final.

**Section 3** - Each new member will have completed a membership application. The Treasurer will certify that the new member has paid dues, and the President will certify the initial membership type and/or chosen unit of the new member on the face of the application. This information will be collected and maintained by the Secretary, in cooperation with the other officers of the WVRA.

**Section 4** - Persons less than 18 years old must have their membership application countersigned by their parent or legal guardian. Members must be at least 16 years of age to carry a firearm. Such members should also recognize that participation in specific events may be contingent on legal waiver or event rules requiring adult authority and/or minimum ages.

**Section 5** - Dues will be determined by a Full Ballot Procedure of the whole membership. They are currently set at \$15.00 for the period from March 1 to March 1 of the next year, or at \$1.25 per month for any part of the year up until the next March 1. Family dues rates are set at \$25.00 for two people and \$5.00 for each additional person in the same family. Any member who has not renewed his dues by May 31 will be dropped from the membership list.

**Section 6** - The membership may choose to name a worthy person to be an Honorary Member. An Honorary Member has all the rights of any other member, but will not pay dues.

**Section 7** - Members will abide by all of the rules and regulations of the WVRA under the supervision of their Association officers. Any member who willfully violates WVRA rules, defies legitimate authority, or otherwise acts to jeopardize or disgrace the reputation of the WVRA or any of its component Units, will be

subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the Association. Disciplinary authority will be exercised by the member's Unit, or by the Executive Board in the case of General Members.

**Section 8** - Individual WVRA members will elect to be either a *Reenacting Member* - who belongs to one of the reenacting Units - or else a *General Member* - who chooses not to actively pursue a living history impression. New members may declare their preference when they join, and all members may change their preference at the March meeting. No member may change categories or Units otherwise without the express consent of the Executive Board.

**Section 9** - *Reenacting Members* are those members affiliated with one of the component units, who actively participate in living history impressions, subject to the regulations and Officers of their chosen Unit. The rights, duties, and responsibilities of Reenacting Members are enumerated in Article 5 on Units.

**Section 10** - *General Members* are those members-at-large who share and support the goals of the WVRA but do not participate directly in living history impressions. General Members may vote on any issue before the Association as a whole, but will not participate in Unit business. The President of the WVRA will serve as coordinator of all General Members, and be responsible for General Members at events. General Members are subject to the same disciplinary action as Reenacting Members and enjoy all the same rights. The Executive Board will serve as the disciplinary body in any case involving a General Member.

### **ARTICLE 3 - MEETINGS AND VOTING**

**Section 1** - General Meetings of the WVRA will be held at regular intervals with due notice to be published in the newsletter. Members present at any scheduled General Meeting will constitute a quorum for conducting business.

**Section 2** - Special Meetings may be called by the Executive Board if they need to consult the membership on short notice. Attempt must be made to notify all members of such meetings. A quorum of 1/3 of the membership must be present at a Special Meeting to transact business which is binding on the Association.

**Section 3** - All members of the WVRA are entitled to one vote on general Association matters. To vote at the March meeting, members must have paid dues for the year following. Only members listed on a Unit roster will vote on that Unit's affairs.

**Section 4** - Important group decisions of the WVRA will be made in a way that lets every member participate in the decision, whether they are able to be present at General Meetings or not. This process is called a **Full Ballot Procedure** in the WVRA, and operates as follows:

- A. - The issue is presented in full to all members present at any General Meeting. Discussion is permitted and encouraged, but no vote is taken.
- B. - A report of the issue presented, discussion heard at the meeting, and any written member comment for or against the issue is published in the next WVRA newsletter along with a blank absentee ballot.
- C. - Absentee ballots are returned to the Secretary by all who cannot be present at the next meeting. Absentee ballots may also be completed by the Secretary upon verbal instructions from a member.
- D. - At the next meeting the issue is put to a vote of all members present. Absentee ballots are counted in to yield the final result.

**Section 5** - The **Full Ballot Procedure** must be used in the following cases:

- A. - Election of Officers** - Nominations are made at the General Meeting preceding the March meeting. Nominations can be made by nominating committees, Units, or individuals in person or by mail, and do not require a second. The election will then take place at the March meeting by secret ballot.
- B. - Amendments to the Bylaws** - The Amendment must receive at least 2/3 of all votes cast to pass.
- C. - Admission of New Units** - Voting will be by secret ballot and admission must be recommended by the Executive Board.
- D. - Sponsorship of Events** - Events must receive at least 2/3 of all votes cast to be officially sponsored.
- E. - Sanctioned Events** — Events need a majority of votes cast to be Sanctioned.
- F. - Appeals and Review** - Actions taken by the Officers and/or the Executive Board may be put to a Full Ballot Procedure, which results are binding.

## ARTICLE 4 - OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Section 1** - Association officers of the WVRA include the President, the Vice- President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the Newsletter Editor. These officers are all directly elected by the whole membership by means of the procedures specified in Article 3, and serve a one-year term. Each office has specific responsibilities:

**A. President** - Presides over all meetings of the general membership or the Executive Board. Appoints committees and delegates specific tasks or responsibilities as necessary. Serves as the leader of the General Members. The President may personally make emergency decisions if necessary, but his decisions are not binding on Association members unless ratified later by the Executive Board.

**B. Vice-President** - Presides over all meetings of the general membership or the Executive Board in the President's absence. Oversees the work of all committees. Performs other tasks as requested by the President.

**C. Treasurer** - Receives and disburses Association funds. Provides a monthly accounting of debits, credits, and balances to the Executive Board. Keeps account of dues payments by members and provides such information to the Executive Board as required.

**D. Secretary** - Takes complete and accurate minutes of all General and Executive Board meetings. Maintains necessary Association correspondence. Keeps a current list of all dues-paid WVRA members. Receives and accounts for Absentee Ballots.

**E. Newsletter Editor** - Composes and publishes the WVRA newsletter according to the provisions in Article 7. Composes and publishes all forms and other material as required by the Executive Board.

**Section 2** - Executive authority in the WVRA is vested in the **Executive Board**. The Executive Board consists of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the WVRA together with the Unit Representative from each component Unit of the Association. The Newsletter Editor is a non-voting member of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will provide guidance to the Association and will establish and provide for the execution of all policies and procedures not in contradiction to the letter and/or spirit of these bylaws. The Executive Board will submit to a vote of the membership all issues designated in these Bylaws as requiring a Full Ballot Procedure, or as requiring a vote the membership present at a General Meeting, or any other decisions they designate which affect the Association as a whole. The Executive Board may meet at any time and place they mutually choose, but may not transact WVRA business without a quorum of at least 2/3rds of all voting Board members present. The Executive Board will report to the membership on its actions. Any member may observe any meeting of the Executive Board, and/or may ask to see the minutes of any meeting. No member may hold two offices on the Executive Board simultaneously. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office on the Executive Board.

## ARTICLES- UNITS

**Section 1.** - A "Unit" in the WVRA is defined as a subgroup of WVRA members organized under one group name for a shared impression.

**Section 2.** - Present WVRA Units are:

- 1) Company A of the First Regiment of (West) Virginia Volunteer Infantry, U.S.V.
- 2) Company B (The Upshur Grays) of the Twenty-Fifth Virginia Infantry, C.S.A.
- 3) The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers' Aid Society
- 4) Batteries A and B of the First West Virginia Light Artillery, U.S.V.

**Section 3.** - All Unit members must be members of the WVRA. Reenacting Members of the WVRA must affiliate with one Unit of their choice. Each Unit Commander will maintain a current roster of their Unit Members. Only those whose names are on that roster will be eligible to vote on Unit business or Officers. No WVRA member will be listed on two Unit rosters simultaneously, although he may participate with other units at events at the pleasure of all concerned.

**Section 4.** - Units will operate democratically on all matters of Unit business except while reenacting, when their relations will be determined by the historical probabilities of their respective impressions.

**Section 5.** - Each Unit will have a Representative on the Executive Board. This will normally be the Commander of the Unit, but may be any other person on the Unit roster who is so elected at the March

meeting. Unit Representatives serve a one-year term.

**Section 6.** - Rank in the infantry Units will be elected for one-year terms at the March meeting. Rank grades are determined by the number (rounded to the nearest multiple of five) of private soldiers on the Unit roster who meet Unit equipage standards at the time of the March meeting. Ranks elected will not exceed the following proportions:

- 1 Corporal for every 5 Privates
- 1 Sergeant for every 10 Privates
- 1 Lieutenant for every 20 Privates
- 1 Captain for every 40 Privates

**Section 6A** - An exception to the above rule permits the 1st (West) Virginia to elect a Captain.

**Section 7.** - The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers' Aid Society may have one society president and two associate managers, one each of Union and Confederate sympathy. These officers will be elected for one-year terms at the March meeting. They will also elect a Representative to the Executive Board at that time, who may or may not hold other Unit office.

**Section 8.** - Artillery Units may have 1 Sergeant per gun, one Lieutenant per section of two guns, and 1 Captain per battery of four guns. Each gun may also have 2 Corporals, but the total number of ranks should not exceed the number of privates. Ranks will be elected for two year terms at the March meeting.

**Section 9.** - Unit Commanders are responsible for the appearance and deportment of their Unit members at events. Unit members, in turn, are required to respect the legitimate authority of their Commanders

**Section 10.** - Each Unit will have established a written set of authentic uniform, doming, and/or equipage samaras which must be approved by the Executive Board and given to all Unit members. Unit members are expected to acquire necessary standard items as rapidly as their circumstances permit. Unit members who do not yet meet these standards may not be eligible for participation at all events, and are not to be counted in determining Unit Rank, but they may vote on all Unit business.

**Section 11.** - For continued failure to meet standards, for refusal to comply with legitimate orders of superiors while at events, for conduct unbecoming a WVRA member, or for any other just and sufficient cause, any member may be dismissed from his Unit by a 2/3rds vote of all members on the Unit roster. Members so accused will be given all common rights of due process, including the right to confront their accusers, to question witnesses, time to prepare a defense, examine the evidence, etc. Members so accused will have the right to resign at any time. Members dismissed by one Unit of the WVRA will have the right to apply for membership in another Unit. If no other Unit will accept them, they will forfeit their membership in the WVRA, and any previously paid dues will be refunded to them pro-rata on application to the Treasurer.

**Section 12.** - Any Association or Unit officer may be dismissed from his office by a 2/3rds vote of all those on the pertinent Unit or Association roster for continued failure to properly execute the duties of his office or for any offense enumerated in Article 5. Section 11. All rights of due process are to be allowed. Any office vacated through dismissal or resignation will be filled as soon as possible. If the office is in the military rank structure, all ranks will move up to fill the empty offices, if the post is a non-military one, the affected Unit or the Association will hold a vote to fill the office at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The replacement officer will serve until regular elections at the following March meeting.

**Section 13.** - New Units may be formed in the following manner:

A. - At least three current WVRA members may present a proposal, first to the Executive Board, then, with their consent, to a WVRA general meeting. This proposal should state the full name of the proposed Unit, its history and significance, its intended uniform and equipage standards, how its formation will benefit the WVRA, and a preliminary roster of its Unit members. No more than three present members of any one existing Unit may appear on this preliminary roster.

B. - This proposal will then be published and voted on using the Full Ballot Procedure. A majority of votes cast will create the new Unit.

C. - The new Unit may then elect appropriate ranks and a Unit Representative to the Executive Board, to serve until the following March.

## ARTICLES- EVENTS

**Section 1.** - The term "event" will mean any activity that the WVRA may be concerned with. Events include, but are not limited to, battle reenactments, living histories, etc.

**Section 2.** - All WVRA events will be placed on a calendar which will be printed in each issue of the newsletter. Additional information on each event will be published as specified.

**Section 3.** - WVRA events will be divided into three types: *Sponsored Events*, *Sanctioned Events*, and *Suggested Events*. The procedures for establishing each type of event and the rules governing each type are specified in the Section for each type, below:

**Section 4.** - *SPONSORED EVENTS* are those that the WVRA may initiate, organize, or administer on its own authority and responsibility. All WVRA members are required to attend and to assist with the work of Sponsored Events.

A. - There will ordinarily be no more than 2 Sponsored events in each calendar year. One of these may be a School of the Soldier drill and training event.

B. - Events to be sponsored must be voted on no less than 3 months before the scheduled event date.

C. - Members absent from two consecutive Sponsored Events will be subject to inquiry and appropriate action by the Executive Board.

D. - No event will be Sponsored which exposes the WVRA or its members to unsecured legal or financial liability.

E. - Sponsored Events are established as follows:

With the advice and consent of the Executive Board, a proposal is prepared by the Board and the initiating member. The proposal is as complete a plan for the event as possible, and states whether or not a WVRA meeting will be held at the event. The proposal is then presented and voted on using the Full Ballot Procedure. A proposal is adopted as Sponsored when it receives a 2/3rds approval of the votes cast.

F. - The Executive Board will be responsible for all details of regulating, planning, and administering the event. They may assign and delegate duty posts to members as required. The President will oversee the satisfactory discharge of all members' duties and responsibilities.

G. - All available information on each Sponsored Event will be printed in the Newsletter at least twice: once when the proposal is submitted, and again in the issue before the event date.

**Section 5.** - *SANCTIONED EVENTS* are those not planned or organized by the WVRA, but approved by the Association official participation. Attendance at Sanctioned Events is expected of all WVRA members. The following rules apply to Sanctioned Events:

A. - There will be no more than 4 Sanctioned Events in each calendar year.

B. - Events to be sanctioned must be voted on no less than 2 months before the scheduled event date.

C. - Members absent from more than 50% of the Sanctioned Events in any year will be subject to inquiry and appropriate action by the Executive Board.

D. - Events will not be sanctioned which exclude any member unit of the WVRA.

E. - Events will not be sanctioned whose primary motive is individual or corporate profit.

F. - Sanctioned Events are established as follows:

Any member may propose an event for Sanction at any meeting of the WVRA. If his proposal meets the rules and receives a second, it is presented and voted on using the Full Ballot Procedure. The event is Sanctioned when it receives a majority of the votes cast.

G. - Each Unit Representative will be responsible for the timely and accurate completion of all necessary registration materials for his unit, and the collection and transmission of all fees and other moneys required to participate in a Sponsored or Sanctioned Event. The Unit Representative may delegate some other unit member to do this task for an event, but the Unit Representative is still responsible for seeing that registration and payment is correctly completed.

H. - Each Sanctioned Event will be fully publicized in at least one issue of the Newsletter prior to the event date. All necessary information about the event will be printed, including a map and/or directions to the event, schedules, regulations, etc..

**Section 6.** - *SUGGESTED EVENTS* are those which WVRA members may wish to bring to the attention of other members. Participation in Suggested Events is optional.

A. - There are no limits on the number and timing of Suggested Events.

B. - No member may be held to official disadvantage by the WVRA because of their non-attendance at a Suggested Event.

C. - No WVRA or Unit business may be conducted at a Suggested Event, unless an exception is approved in advance by a vote of the membership and duly published in the newsletter.

D. - Activities planned by the WVRA, but at which participation is not required, may be designated as Suggested Events instead of Sponsored Events. Any event which includes invitations to other organizations to participate with the WVRA must be treated as Sponsored Events, however.

E. - Events may be proposed as Suggested Events by any member at any meeting and do not require a vote. The proposing member may speak of the event for not more than 10 minutes initially and for not more than 5 minutes at any subsequent meeting.

The member proposing the event will be personally responsible for communicating all relevant details to other members and for completing any necessary registration forms, etc. The WVRA and its officers are not responsible for such events and will not be held liable for any outcome of such Suggested Events.

**Section 7.** - The Executive Board will compile a record of members' attendance at all classes of events, and may recognize exceptional participation at the end of the year by some appropriate means.

## **ARTICLE 7- NEWSLETTER**

**Section 1.** - The WVRA Newsletter is established to support the goals of the Association, to assist in the conduct of business, to promote communication among reenactors, and to inform and advise the members and other interested parties of the people, issues, and events of interest to Civil War reenactors in and around West Virginia.

**Section 2.** - The Newsletter will be issued ten times each year, monthly except for combined issues of November/December and January/February. One copy will be sent to each member.

**Section 3.** - The Executive Board will appropriate sufficient funds as necessary for publication of the Newsletter, and may authorize the production and distribution of extra copies if desired.

**Section 4.** - Each issue of the Newsletter will contain:

- A. - A complete and accurate calendar of future WVRA events.
- B. - Complete and detailed information on the next immediately upcoming **events**.
- C. - Notice of the next upcoming meeting.
- D. - A report of the last most recent meeting
- E. - A report of any issues to be voted on by Full Ballot Procedures, along with an Absentee Ballot for such a vote.
- F. - A Treasurer's Report.
- G. - Any message offered by any officer of the WVRA, not to exceed one page in length.

**Section 5.** - Each issue of the Newsletter may contain:

- A. - Reviews of past WVRA events.
- B. - Letters or messages from any member or other correspondent.
- C. - Stories, articles, artwork, or commentary and opinion by WVRA members.
- D. - Other items of interest or concern to members of the Association.

## **ARTICLE 8 - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** - This Constitution and Bylaws will be adopted and take effect upon a favorable vote from 2/3rds of the total membership of the WVRA.

**Section 2.** - These Bylaws may be amended by a *Full Ballot Procedure* of the whole Association, with a 2/3rds vote of those cast required to pass the Amendment.