

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
February, 2026 – Edition CLXXXVI

## Next Meeting

**ANNUAL MEETING – March 14, 2026 1:00 p.m. at Beverly Heritage Center, Beverly, WV, followed by Beverly Heritage Day planning meeting and Mystery Movie screening.**

## 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."*

## Sponsored/Hosted Events

None at this time

## Other Events recommended by WVRA members

### February

17 – Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable – Morgantown

### March

10 – Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable – Nutter Fort

14 – Annual Meeting- Beverly

17 – Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable – Morgantown

### April

11 – Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Symposium – Elkins

### May

12 – Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable – Nutter Fort

19 – Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable – Morgantown

### July

11 – Beverly Heritage Day

## Other Events

### May

16-17 – 165<sup>th</sup> Manassas/Bull Run – Culpepper, Virginia area, 165<sup>th</sup>.org

### June

Phillipi – no information yet

## WVRA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING - MINUTES

### WVRA Executive Board Minutes

January 24, 2026 – by zoom

John Arnold, Vice-president, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. Also attending by zoom were WVRA Executive Board members Phyllis Baxter, Chuck Critchfield, Mary Mullenax

Past minutes and treasurers reports (Dec and year end) have been published in newsletters – cash balance \$890.80 at end of the year

Motion by Chuck, seconded Mary, to authorize payment for hosting of website at reasonable available rate, if not donated. All in favor.

Nominate officers / board for 2026 (election to be held at March members meeting)

Rick Byrd will do president if health allows

John Arnold will continue as vice-president

Phyllis Baxter will continue as secretary

Chuck Critchfield will continue as treasurer and newsletter editor

Mary Mullenax is willing to continue as board member at large. We will follow up with Tim Glaser (current board and webmaster), and Bill Brisendine, board member, to see if they wish to continue for new year.

Bylaws allow for up to 5 at large board members, which leaves 2 slots if all the current ones renew. Officers will talk to former members to see who might get reengaged.

Disposition of equipment from Kevin Scaggs

Currently stored by Chuck, tent is outside under tarp. Family wishes that someone

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reenacting could get use out of them. Some of his former colleagues from other units might be interested.

Could be used by WVRA for events, displays, etc. Could be used at BHC occasionally – would BHC want it and be able to store it?

Items include large tent, ammo boxes, camp chairs, etc. Proposal to see if BHC can store / use / manage tents and larger items to use for events. Discussed setting up memorial display to go with it when setup at event, donations? Provisionally move / store to BHC (if agreed) probably March meeting, set up at BHD. Photograph items for record. Teach tent setup at BHD. Decide then about further disposition.

Chuck has the two flags that Kevin had, and will keep them for WVRA.

Mike Phillips interested in one of great coats, willing to lend to him.

Not sure who may have other equipment that used to belong to WVRA, including one Springfield.

Could we re-establish lending closet policy? Possibly in partnership with BHC lending closet.

Proposal for event sponsorship -- Chuck moved Mary second to place hosting / sponsorship of Beverly Heritage Day, July 18, 2026, on the ballot for membership vote at annual meeting, passed unanimously.

March members meeting to be held at Beverly Heritage Center, with an in-person meeting. Preferred date March 14, 1 pm, with March 21 **(amended to March 28)** backup as snow date. Phyllis moved, Mary second, approved. Phyllis will confirm with BHC.

Discussed if we want to try to offer hybrid or call in for the business meeting? It is more complicated technically. Will see if there is request for it and try to set up if needed.

Agenda for that meeting:

Members meeting, election, sponsorship votes, other business

Feedback for BHD planning – discussion with BHC staff – agenda item

Viewing of Bob Campbell's mystery reenactment film (about an hour to watch it all)

Chuck may request unit money of \$75 for 1<sup>st</sup> WV in order to join USV for insurance.

Discussion and announcements:

John has been active and made some new connections especially with Valley Division. He is interested in Civil War dancing, and wants to check into Gettysburg dance organization (they were at Cedar Creek) if they might come to one of our events. John will reach out to find out if they might be interested. Also discussed possibility of future reenactment back at battlefield. John suggested idea of a possible drawing / raffle or something for winning a gift, for door prize for participation at Beverly Heritage Day.

Phyllis shared about July 11, 2026 anniversary event being planned at Battlefield.

Chuck shared photo from a past Rich Mountain Battlefield memorial march

Adjourned on motion by Phyllis, second Mary at 2:28 pm.

Please sent any corrections or additions to Phyllis Baxter.

## **Old Footage of the WVRA?? Mystery Movie Scheduled for Screening**

Bob Campbell, an Elkins-based professional photographer / videographer, has an old B&W 16mm film (and projector to show it on) of CW reenactor footage. He salvaged it and is not sure of where it came from, but presumably shot in West Virginia. It seems to be "B roll" footage, possibly shot for WV Public Broadcasting, or perhaps by a contractor for them?

The whole thing runs over an hour. He thought it might be of interest to reenactors to see it -- and possibly someone can see clues to help identify dates and/or locations where it was shot.

Bob has offered to set up his projector at Beverly Heritage Center to show this for WVRA following our annual members meeting March 14.

- Phyllis Baxter

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## **Update from Our Secretary**

I spoke with Eleanor today. She agreed to our plan to store Kevin's stuff at BHC for now, then use it for event display at Beverly Heritage Day, and discuss then a long-term plan.

Let's confirm date for spring meeting as March 14, at Beverly Heritage Center. Start at 1 pm, business meeting and Beverly Heritage Day planning (say allow an hour and a half for that? let me know if you think that will be shorter, or longer). Then I'll have Bob Campbell bring the old film to show us, say about 2:30 or so? Does that timing work?

But let's move the snow date to March 28 instead of March 21. I think this will be the only change to the minutes when Chuck publishes for the membership.

Tim - let me know if you want to try to participate remotely. If only one person, we may be able to do that from a phone or laptop.

- Phyllis Baxter

## **Election Approaching**

The annual election of WVRA officers will take place at the annual meeting on March 14. Here are the important facts to keep in mind:

- Nominations are still being accepted
- Nominations received to date are shown below
- Absentee ballots will be sent with the next newsletter by email and mail. The ballots will have to be returned by March 14.

Nominations to date:

President – Rick Byrd

Vice-president – John Arnold

Secretary – Phyllis Baxter

Treasurer – Chuck Critchfield

Webmaster – open

Newsletter – Chuck Critchfield

Executive Board Members at Large

Mary Mullenax

Four other spots are open

Additionally, we will be voting on hosting Beverly Heritage Day.

## **Kevin Skaggs Reenacting Gear**

On November 22, I met Kevin's son Christopher at Kevin's storage pod in Charleston to pick up some of Kevin's reenacting equipment. Christopher and the remainder of Kevin's family

have donated the equipment to the WVRA. Christopher said that the family wanted the gear to go to somebody or some organization that could use it.

The WVRA will have to determine what is to be done with the donation at the December meeting. I told Christopher that we appreciated the donation very much that it would either be used by the WVRA or if unwanted sold and the funds returned to the WVRA treasury for use by the organization.

Most of Kevin's personal gear has been retained by the family. So, what was in the storage pod was primarily his camp equipment.

- 1 – Officers tent and hardware
- 1 – Fly, used with officers tent
- 1 – A tent (hardware unknown)

1 – Dog tent

1 – poncho (brittle)

1 – folding camp table 20 x 15

1 – folding camp table 36 x 22

1 – folding camp table 24 x 21

1 – Ammo box, wood, new

1 – Ammo box, wood, used

1 – Army Bread box, rope handles, damaged

1 – Army Cracker box, used

1 – US Army great coat, damaged, dirty

1 – US Army great coat, fair condition

1 – lieutenants coat, used

1 – table top writing desk

Blue granite coffee pot and pan

1 – Tin cup with wire hanger

1 – National flag and iron holder with 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia painted on flag

1 – Canteen, needs cork

1 – Canteen cover and strap

3 – US army blankets, gray

NOTE ABOUT TENTS – As of Jan. 7, I have only done a quick visual inspection when I received the tents on Nov. 22, 2025. I cannot state with certainty that all the hardware, ropes, stakes and poles for the officers tent and fly were transferred to me. To the best of my knowledge, no hardware specific to the A tent was transferred. The dog tent has no hardware to my knowledge. A handful of Asian Stink Bug carcasses were found in the folds of these tents. As a result, I did not bring the tents into our house. They are currently wrapped in a tarp and stored outside. Kevin kept these tents in an unheated storage pod.

I have in my possession the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia regimental flag and iron holder which is and always has been the property of the WVRA. Kevin was the keeper of that flag. When I got it from Kevin's estate in February, it was slightly damaged by being rolled up for so long.

If the WVRA is not interested in retaining these items, I will make them available to other reenacting units.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

It's time to renew your membership for 2026. A membership renewal form is included in this email. Dues remain \$15 for an individual and \$25 for family.

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The form and dues can be sent to: C. L. Critchfield, Treasurer, 193 Eastgate Drive, Morgantown, WV 26508.

Memberships received to date:

David Starliper	Chuck Critchfield
Keith Kopshina	Joan Kopshina
Lifetime members	
Mike Phillips	Peter Baxter
Phyllis Baxter	Tag Ireland
Bill Snyder	

## INSURANCE

The WVRA has obtained a liability insurance policy for April 2025 through April 2026. Any CURRENT member who needs a copy of the policy can email or mail me or President Rick Byrd with your request.

The Association at its July meeting, voted to not renew the insurance policy for the next season. Members choose to rely on liability insurance from larger umbrella organizations, rely on personal liability insurance or go uninsured.

### Secretary/Treasurers Report

#### January 1-31, 2026

Initial Balance	\$	890.80
Deposits		
TOTAL DEPOSITS	\$	0.00
Debits		
TOTAL DEBITS	\$	0.00
<b>Current Balance</b>		<b>\$</b>
890.80		

Chuck Critchfield – Treasurer 1/3/26

## Upcoming Events

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

## Art & Photography of the Civil War

Rich Mountain Battlefield  
Foundation Civil War Symposium

The Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation (RMBF) has announced the subject and guests at it's annual Civil War Symposium, to be held once again at Davis & Elkins College.

Four speakers, including one of the leading experts on Civil War photography Ron Coddington, are scheduled to make presentations at the April 11 event. Also scheduled to speak is WVRA member Hunter Lesser, and friend of the WVRA Rick Wolfe. Registration opens at 9:00 a.m. and tickets may be purchased in advance by going to the Beverly Heritage Center website. The \$35 tickets include lunch. Students are FREE, but must register before the day of the event and present valid ID at Registration.

### Saturday April 11, 2026 Davis & Elkins College

Myles Center for the Arts

9:00 – Registration and refreshments

10:00 – *Civil War Portrait Photography – Reflection of a Generation* – Ron Coddington

11:00 – *Photos and Stories of West Virginia Soldiers* – Rick Wolfe

Noon – Lunch provided on site

1:00 – *Artist at War: The First Campaign* – Hunter Lesser

2:00 – *The Incomparable Civil War Photographer Mathew Brady* – Cliff Krainik

3:00 – Panel Discussion

The RMBF does an excellent job putting these symposiums together and I recommend that you consider attending.

## Civil War Roundtables

The Stonewall Jackson Civil War Roundtable meets the second Tuesday of the month at the FOP Restaurant in Nutter Fort. The presentation begins around 6:45 pm. If you want dinner, be there 5:30. Rick Wolfe is scheduled to speak about the 10<sup>th</sup> West Virginia in January.

The Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable meets the third Tuesday of the month at the



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Drummond Chapel behind the Suncrest Methodist Church in Morgantown. The meeting begins at 7 pm.

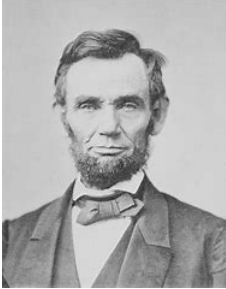
## EVENT REVIEWS

I invite any member to review any event or program related to history.

None at this time

## They Said It (or didn't)

Quotes, misquotes and fabrications attributed to the famous, nearly famous, not famous and infamous.



***"Don't believe everything you read on the Internet just because there's a photo with, a quote next to it."***

- Abraham Lincoln, February 30, 1866  
Google shareholders meeting

*"At the bottom the coming change simply meant that the infinite ferment of the industrial revolution was about to work its way with a tremendously energetic and restless people who had a virgin continent to exploit. One difficulty was that two very different societies had developed in American, one in the North and the other in the South, which would adjust themselves to the industrial age in very different ways. Another difficulty was that the difference between these two societies were most infernally complicated by the existence in the South of the institution of chattel slavery. Without slavery, the problems between the sections could probably have been worked out by the ordinary give-and-take of politics; with slavery, they became insoluble."*

- Bruce Catton

## 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**

**Mary Mullenax**

**Vacant**

**Editor - Chuck Critchfield**

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

**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 blatant political submissions will not be published.

## Editor's Corner

*The Editor's chance to speak*

**THANK YOU** – Thanks to Phyllis Baxter, Rick Byrd and the rest of the Executive Committee for their work in support of the WVRA.

**MEDIA** – I finished watching all the episodes of *The Good Lord Bird*, a fictional story based on real-life events centered around a fictional slave and John Brown. Ethan Hawkes' portrayal of John Brown is quite entertaining. The story doesn't stray too far from actual events with a few notable exceptions – like the end of the Harper Ferry's siege.

The whole mini-series presents a sometimes sympathetic treatment of Brown and at the same time shows the folly of the whole Harpers Ferry raid and the pragmatism of Brown. One moment he is a pious instrument of God and the next moment a brutal soldier in the war for the abolition of slavery. One moment he is a raging, fire-eating preacher and the next minute he pushes his religion to the side and becomes a

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stone-cold realist. The whole story is told through the young slave's eyes and his situation.

**HAVE AN OPINION** you would like to express? Want to rebut something I wrote? Send it to me. As regular readers know, I tend to concentrate on the Northern soldier and the Unionist viewpoint. If you have different opinion, send it in.

**DONATIONS** – Does anyone have a Union sack coat, sky blue and kepi/hat to donate to Beverly Heritage?

**PERSONALS** – Rick Byrd had his surgery and is convalescing. John Arnold is experiencing health issues. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

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**Association**

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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](http://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



DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD PHOTOS OF THE WVRA?? – If you could, digitize the picture (take a picture of it with your phone) and email it to me. ([ccritch608@yahoo.com](mailto:ccritch608@yahoo.com)). In this picture, former member Mark Tennant carries the National colors, while Captain Mike Phillips, Sergeant Chuck Critchfield and former member Corporal Robbie Freeman follow. The fifth reenactor is hidden in the second rank. This was part of the "memorial" march from the top of Rich Mountain down into Beverly. I can't recall if we marched all the way to the 4-H camp. Early 1990's???

WEST VIRGINIA  
REENACTORS ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 227 — Beverly, WV 26253

