

President's Letter

Certainly the 150th anniversary of the Maryland Campaign was a huge event for SHAF. The weather was great, the NPS did an outstanding job of coordinating the events at Antietam, and lots of folks stopped by the SHAF tent to purchase goods and wish us well. Because I was active with the 125th anniversary, it was also a time for me to reflect on how different things were in 25 years. SHAF was just getting started then, the Grove Farm, our first big purchase, was still slated for development, we had not yet bought the house on Mechanic St., our first bold step into fund-raising to save something, and there was something of a real estate boom occurring in Washington County. In fact, so far all that we'd done was what I'd characterize as negative action. We'd protested, loudly, an unlawful rezoning by our county commissioners took them to court. We made a lot of news in the paper by doing that, and it sparked much public discussion. But was that really why SHAF was created? To tell people what we thought was bad?

In one of our meetings with a sympathetic elected official he gave us a very good piece of advice. He told us that to be taken seriously we needed to do something positive. Something opposite of what we were protesting. Something to prove we could "put our money where our mouth was." He was right. Soon we became known not as a protest group of disgruntled history nuts, but by buying a house slated for demolition, by purchasing 40 acres of land platted for eight large-lot mini-mansions, by showing we were serious, we got attention, and ultimately respect.

It was a leap of faith, make no mistake about that. We signed mortgages to buy property when we had no money in the bank at all, and counted on donations from hundreds of people like you to meet our bills. And we never missed a payment, thanks to you, and people like you. Soon the County Commissioners we sued were calling us to work with them on a new zoning category for the battlefield area. The Antietam Overlay Zone was the result. They asked us to take title to the Sharpsburg train station, about to be demolished by the Norfolk & Southern RR. We did, and it is now a museum for model trains, restored and run by a local group of train aficionados. Were sought out by the United Methodist Church, which wanted to divest itself of Tolson's Chapel; a small church in Sharpsburg. Now a group called Friends of Tolson's Chapel has restored the building and interprets the story of how this AME church was built in 1867 and used by the Freedmen's Bureau as a school to educate former slaves.

I could go on, and on, about our accomplishments. (Just ask anyone who knows me!) But you probably get the point by now; we became a force for positive change in the area. We have worked with local government, state government, lots of local groups and individuals, and of course the National Park Service at Antietam Battlefield. Together we have secured easements on nearly 5,000 acres of land surrounding the nearly 3,200 acres of land within the NPS boundary. Antietam is regarded as the best preserved battlefield in the NPS system, and was recently lauded as one of the top five best preserved battlefields in the world!

So is it time to rest on our laurels? Disband SHAF and say "Our work is done here?" Hardly! Lately we have been active in calling attention to Shepherdstown Battlefield, and putting up money to help purchase a portion of it. We hold semi-annual Work Days to help restore Antietam Battlefield to its

war-time appearance. To commemorate the sesquicentennial of the battle we purchased interpretive plaques to accompany the newly-redistributed cannons on the battlefield. We will soon be aiding a family who has owned the historic Kennedy Farm for 40+ years with clearing and cleaning up 18 acres surrounding the cabin from which John Brown launched his raid on Harpers Ferry and ignited the Civil War. We are working with some local land owners to save a portion of one of the 1863 cavalry battles in Washington County. Although much of Antietam is now safe and well preserved, there are still challenges out there, and we need to be prepared. Especially in a time of shrinking funds for the NPS, partners like SHAF take on a more significant role in ensuring that the sacred site of the past will be here for our grandchildren to see.

Before I end this diatribe it would be an error to omit thanking our Board of Directors. As you well know, SHAF has no paid staff. Our overhead is tiny so your funds can achieve maximum effectiveness. These directors serve as volunteers, offering their work and their wisdom, and they SHAF running. Our VP, newsletter editor and webmaster Harry Smeltzer does a great job, despite his living quite a distance away. Bill Maharay, our Treasurer, lends his time and talent unstintingly, and his guidance is greatly appreciated. Dr. Paula Reed, our secretary, and in her "day job" a professional historic preservationist, not only provides much pro bono assistance, but keeps us on track in our meetings because the President has a tendency to ramble. We have local members of our board, including Dennis Frye, chief historian at Harpers Ferry, author and former President of APCWS, the precursor of Civil War Trust, John Nelson and John Schildt, both local historians and authors. Beyond these fine folks several board members travel long distances and raise money in their own communities for SHAF. Don Macreadie, past president of the Baltimore CWRT is a regular attendee and contributor, David Langbart, a professional archivist and historian, lends his aid, often traveling from the Washington DC suburbs for meetings and Work Days. We have two Illini on our board; Dr. Mary Abroe, a history professor from Chicago, has contributed immeasurably to SHAF, and many of you have received notes from her thanking you for contributions, and Dr. Gordon Dammann, who is Chariman of the Board of the Medical Museum of the Civil War in Frederick MD, and travels here often enough to become a Licensed Antietam Battlefield Guide as well as attending meetings. Without these fine folks, and many past board members, we could have accomplished all that we have done. Without your support SHAF would not exist. The sesquicentennial year marked SHAF's 26th year of existence, and what a long way we have come. Thanks to all who have made that happen.

Tom Clemens

President, SHAF

Letter from Supt. Susan Trail

It is difficult to believe that I have been at Antietam Battlefield for over 1 ½ years already. While the months have flown by, much has happened during this period. Preparing for and participating in the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam was certainly one of the highlights of my career in the NPS, and indeed I believe for the park staff as a whole. Around 50,000 visitors attended the anniversary

events, which included numerous talks by well known authorities; tours, hikes and other special programs conducted by park staff and others; and the most amazing weather possible. It was wonderful to see so many people, including members of SHAF, pull together to make the Sesquicentennial commemoration a reality and enable us to pay tribute to this special place and all that it means.

This year, unfortunately, we have been struggling with the impact of sequestration on Antietam's budget and operations. As happened with other government agencies, we were hit with a 5% across-the-board reduction in our budget almost half way through the fiscal year. This came on top of a steadily declining fiscal environment over the past several years that had already begun eroding the park's budget. In combination, these reductions have placed Antietam National Battlefield in an extremely difficult fiscal position that we are presently working through. Actions we have taken this year include detailing staff to other parks and cutting back on some operations, particularly grounds maintenance. Given that these budget cuts appear likely to remain in place and that additional cuts are possible, the park is faced with making difficult choices in the coming year. It is my belief, however, that as long as we commit to our core mission – maintaining and preserving the battlefield for future generations and providing our present-day visitors with a meaningful experience – the park will get through these difficult times, just as it has in the past.

Even with the cuts in the park's operations budget, many good things are underway at Antietam. Restoration of the D.R. Miller House exterior is nearing completion and the stucco work, presently under wraps, is magnificent. Rehabilitation of the Parks (Cunningham) Barn is done and work will begin soon on the Newcomer Barn. We have installed many of the artillery interpretive markers graciously funded by SHAF, which complement the new booklet on artillery at Antietam written by Keith Snyder and published by the Western Maryland Interpretive Association. I invite the SHAF membership to pay us a visit this summer and see what is going on at your Antietam Battlefield.

Treasurer's Report

Thanks to the generous support of the contributors to Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), the organization has been able to preserve the Antietam Battlefield and its environs. Annually, the organization takes in around \$15,000 (12K in 2011 and 17k in 2012). SHAF has no paid staff, so all your contributions go to program activities. The expenses of the organization vary from year to year as the organization responds to challenges and opportunities that emerge. In addition to our newsletter reports, last year SHAF provided monies for two scholarship awards, an annual Civil War forum, signage for the artillery at the battlefield, and markers for Civil War hospitals and headquarters in the area. Land preservation has been one of the organization's principal activities, and SHAF stockpiles some of your contributions for that purpose. In 2011, SHAF contributed \$34,000 to preserve the Shepherdstown Battlefield. Currently, SHAF is working with another Civil War group to protect the Falling Waters battlefield, near Williamsport Maryland; and the organization is an active participant in an effort to develop and implement a long-term preservation plan for the Kennedy Farm (aka John Brown farm) from which the raid of Harpers Ferry originated. These efforts will take all our available reserves and

then some, so your continued support is needed. The area in and around the Antietam Battlefield is one of the most pristine Civil War battlefields in the nation. With your continued financial support, it will continue to be that way for generations to come.

Bill Maharay, Treasurer

SHAF MEMBER PROFILE: MARTY GANE

When this writer asked friend and fellow Antietam fan Marty Gane to provide information for a newsletter profile, she went above and beyond the call of duty and provided the following, fascinating narrative. So, edited a bit for length, here is Marty—in her own words:

I was born an army brat at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. Three years later my dad, a lieutenant colonel, was stationed at Fort Shafter on Oahu in the territory of Hawaii, where I went to pre-school and kindergarten, from 1956 to 1959. My family and I took the USS *Lurline* back to the mainland in 1959, the year Hawaii became a state. (I learned later that the *Lurline* was the ship that took Ed Bearss to the Pacific.) We moved to Arlington, Virginia, where I lived for the next twenty-six years.

I attended the University of Virginia. I was a member of the second class of women, as UVA did not begin to accept women until 1970. I was interested in many subjects—astronomy, history, English, environmental science—but none that would earn a living! With the deadline for choosing a major approaching, I completed a fantastic course in Greek civilization. That period of history came to life at the hands of an outstanding professor, and the Greco-Persian War—the ultimate underdog story—became my first “favorite war.” So I ended up doing a “University Major” in which I designed my own curriculum. It included courses in ancient Greek and Latin, ancient history, religions, philosophies, architecture, and art. My biggest impression from my course work was the realization that absolutely nothing is new, whether in politics, philosophy, theater—or even on the battlefield: people of the past cared for and obsessed about pretty much the same things that we do today.

After graduation, I worked in the Public Affairs Office of the Smithsonian for three years; then I got a job at the Smithsonian’s Associates Travel program with the international land tours. At that time all of these tours were designed by programmers at Academic Travel Abroad (ATA), a tour operator in Washington that designed educational travel for non-profit groups; Smithsonian was their biggest client. Part of my job was to accompany Smithsonian tours three or four times a year as the Smithsonian representative—a huge challenge for me as I was so desperately shy! But when it came to a choice of either get on a microphone in front of thirty tour participants or not travel, the travel bug—a legacy of my big brother, John—won out; though public speaking still is something with which I struggle, I have managed over the years to partly conquer this fear.

In 1987, I was working full-time at a property management company in Oakton, Virginia and going to George Mason University at night to earn a teaching certificate when an old friend from my Smithsonian days phoned and told me about an opening at Academic Travel Abroad (ATA); the job

entailed designing tours to Southeast Asia. I gladly accepted and worked there for fifteen years, during which time I organized twenty to thirty tours annually to Southeast Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East. Among ATA's clients for whom I designed tours were Smithsonian, National Geographic, and Harvard alumni. Following 9/11, I worked full-time as a tour manager for ATA, accompanying groups to Western Europe in addition to "my countries."

Despite the fact that I grew up in Arlington and rooted for the "Generals" and the Blue and Grey at Washington Lee High School, I did not visit my first Civil War battlefield until I was in my thirties. It was not until I watched the Ken Burns series in the early 1990s that I developed an interest in the American Civil War. Following that series, I began researching my great-grandfather Frank Haskell, who fought with the Fifth and Seventeenth Maine. I came to learn that Frank was captured three days after First Manassas, put on burial detail at Manassas, and then taken by train to Richmond. He escaped from Libby Prison, reenlisted with the Seventeenth Maine, and fought in all of the major battles of the Eastern Theater. He participated in at least two bayonet charges (the Union breakthrough at Fredericksburg and the Wheatfield at Gettysburg), captured Edward Allegheny Johnson at Spotsylvania Courthouse, and lost his right arm at Petersburg.

I met Ed Bearss in August 1994 when I volunteered to manage the Smithsonian one-day Civil War bus tours. On his First Manassas tour, Ed showed me exactly where my great-grandfather's unit (the Fifth Maine) stood on Chinn Ridge to fire their one and only volley before they took off "skedaddling." I was hooked. I managed almost all of Ed's Smithsonian Civil War tours and drove him home after those tours. Ed and I became good buddies, and eventually (in 2000) I was delighted and honored to get the chance to meet Mrs. Margie Bearss. A historian herself and author of *Sheridan's Meridian Campaign: The Forgotten Expedition*, Margie was in very poor health with congestive heart failure--housebound and in a wheelchair--for several years before I met her. After our introduction, she, Ed, and I spent numerous dinner times together, and eventually I took Margie on field trips to Gettysburg and to Charleston to see the *Hunley*. Ed and Margie Bearss became dear, dear friends--family really. I lost my mom to cancer when I was nineteen, and my dad died of cancer ten years later. Ed has been more than a mentor and friend; Ed's been like a father to me.

Ed Bearss asked me to organize a few tours for him. So in 2006, I established my own company, South Mountain Expeditions, a boutique travel company that offers four-five history tours a year in the States and abroad. We have operated tours focusing on the American Revolution, Civil War, and World War II and, during a two-week tour of Greece in 2010, Ed led us as we studied the World War II battle of Crete. We also have done and continue to do a series of "state" tours in which we visit historic and cultural sites and national parks in states like Montana, Wyoming, Missouri, and Kentucky; upcoming are visits to Maine and Utah, among others.

When I sold my condo in Reston, a friend of mine who lived in Sharpsburg encouraged me to look for a house in Washington County, Maryland; thus I bought a historic home (circa 1840) in Keedysville in 2002. The best part of living in Keedysville is having Antietam as my backyard. I walk Jack, my black Lab, there three-four times a week when I am home, usually bushwhacking through the fields off the beaten track. I had been blessed with the opportunity to visit many battlefields and had even

volunteered at the Stone House at Manassas one summer, but from my first visit, Antietam always has been my favorite. When I first saw the battlefield, I remember wishing that I had a personal connection with that hallowed ground; I almost wished my great-grandfather had fought here...as long as he survived! And in researching my great-grandfather, I stumbled upon just such a connection with Antietam.

I discovered that Frank had an older brother who fought with the Seventh Maine. William Haskell was a graduate of Bowdoin College, class of 1860. He was an associate principal teaching at a Quaker school near Augusta, Maine when he learned that his little brother had been captured at Bull Run. That week he quit his job, married his sweetheart, and mustered into the Seventh Maine. At 5:00 PM on September 17, 1862, Will was mounted on Col. Connor's white horse, preparing to advance with his regiment on the Piper Farm. Imagine my surprise when I first read Thomas Hyde's *Following the Greek Cross* and discovered that my great-great-uncle is mentioned by name:"We were moving at the double-quick down into a cup-shaped valley...Adjutant Haskell...on the left, and I to the right. Seeing Haskell had fallen, and old "Whitey," too, I rode round in front of the regiment...."

Will was shot through the flesh of his leg; no bones were broken, so they did not amputate. He and his best friend, who was wounded in the foot, were sent by train to Chambersburg. Will wrote home everyday to his pregnant wife, who was about to be "confined." Initially they thought Will would make a full recovery, but infection set in and his caretaker telegraphed Will's father, Jasper, in Maine. Jasper took the train to Chambersburg and arrived the day on which Will died. Fortunately, however, Will still was conscious when his father arrived, so he was able to learn that his wife had given birth to a baby girl the week before. Will died on October 17, 1862, four weeks after he was wounded. His wife, Louise, named their daughter Willa, after her father. William's Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity brothers raised enough money to send Willa to Wellesley, where she graduated second in her class, first in mathematics.

I am so indebted to all those who fought so hard to preserve this pristine battlefield. It is so quiet and achingly beautiful today that it is hard to imagine the carnage that took place here 150 years ago. But, thanks to SHAF, the National Park Service (including Ed Bearss, who did the map study), and other preservationists, I and so many others can walk the ground here and easily imagine what the countryside looked like on the days before Lee's and McClellan's armies marched over Antietam.

I give special thanks to my friend and neighbor Tom Clemens, who introduced me to collector and SHAF member Scott Hann. One day a few years ago, Scott bid on and bought a military memorial dedicated to William Haskell, complete with a photo of Will in uniform and holding his sword. A few months after Tom introduced us, Scott sold me the print. It now hangs proudly on my wall. I hold out hope that someday I might find the letters Will wrote everyday to his wife as he lay dying in Chambersburg.