

# OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY TRAIL ASSOCIATION



November, 2004

[www.ovta.org](http://www.ovta.org)

***Our Vision:** The Overmountain Victory Trail Association shall forever preserve & commemorate the route and the story of the volunteer army whose victory at the Battle of King's Mountain was a turning point in the struggle for America's independence. The OVTA will ensure the trail will provide the opportunity to experience a deep sense of these events, the lands on which they occurred, and of the people who lived them.*

***Our Mission:** The Overmountain Victory trail Association will protect, preserve and interpret the route of the Overmountain Men to the Battle of Kings Mountain.*

## Inside You'll find

Along the Trail reports	Page 1
Financial Report	Page 4
Membership Voting Ballot	Page 5
Membership Renewal Form	Page 6
2004 March activities Schedule	Page 7

## *Membership Dues Time!*

**Individual \$30**

**Family \$40**

**Send your dues to  
OVTA, PO Box  
242421, Charlotte,  
NC 28224-2421**

## ALONG THE TRAIL

Following is an update on happenings along the trail. Thanks to Paul Carson, Buck Jolley, Blair Keller, Bob Hardin and others for providing information.

### **Overmountain Victory Trail 2005 Conference**

The second OVT conference will be held in Gaffney, SC on March 31 – April 2, 2005. Details will follow in the next issue.

### **OVTA 2005 Annual Meeting**

The recently changed by-laws authorized the board to select a date for the annual meeting that was outside the March, could attract more members and offer a variety of activities.

That intent will be met in 2005 with OVTA's annual meeting taking place in Gaffney, SC on April 2 and 3rd following the wrap of the trail conference.

### **Trail Wide News**

Student Conservation Association Intern Christian Rushing completed her employment on August 14<sup>th</sup>. During her tenure she performed valuable service. Projects included researching property owners along the trail corridor in South Carolina, scanning of a number of reports into electronic files, loading those documents for posting on the park website, and doing research on a variety of trail-related subjects. She also assisted Kings Mountain NMP in a number of endeavors, as part of the shared position agreement with that site.

A meeting of the High Country Host counties of the Blue Ridge Heritage Area met on the afternoon of August 19<sup>th</sup> in Boone (NC). Paul attended and had the opportunity to make several new contacts with potential county partners who have the Trail route within their boundaries.

A meeting of representatives from various land management agencies and parks was held at the Blue Ridge Parkway headquarters on September 9<sup>th</sup> to provide an overview and collect comments about a proposed Regional Destination Visitor Center. The facility would be located along the Parkway in Asheville. Paul attended and voiced interest in having displays about the Trail incorporated into the overall plan.

Paul presented a talk about the Trail at the main branch of the Gaston County Public Library on the evening of September 14<sup>th</sup>. About 30 people attended the one-hour session.

As of the end of September 2004 the OVNHT now has **47 miles** of the potential 330-mile route, which have been officially Certified or designated as part of the Trail. All of these sections are publicly accessible year-round. This is an increase of nine miles from last year, and an increase of 31 miles from 2002. These segments are located in various federal and state parks and community greenways and are drawing an estimated one million people to identified trail sections each year.

Paul participated in the annual Kings Mountain NMP celebration honoring the anniversary of the battle on October 7<sup>th</sup>. During the program an award was presented to Duke Power, recognizing their donation of land in Elkin (NC), which will be developed into a trailhead and way-side. National Park Service Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley was the main guest speaker.

### **Washington County, Virginia**

Paul inspected potential trail segments on August 20<sup>th</sup>. OVTA board member Blair Keller assisted with the visit. The two adjoining sections constitute close to three miles, all along the identified historic route. While in the area a visit with Abingdon officials also took place to discuss details for the September 24<sup>th</sup> Certification of two other segments that are within the town's boundaries.

A memorial service in honor of Colonel William Campbell, the patriot commander during the Kings Mountain Campaign, was held on the afternoon of September 23<sup>rd</sup> at his gravesite in Virginia. Paul spoke at the event, which had about 50 people in attendance.

Two trail segments were Certified in Abingdon on the morning of September 24<sup>th</sup>. They included about a half-mile of historic trace. These are the first portions of trail within that state to be Certified as part of the OVNHT. Around 30 people were in attendance, including local officials, members of the media, and OVTA marchers.

Mr. E.H. Bowers was presented with a NPS Certificate of Achievement on September 24<sup>th</sup> during the Certification ceremony in Abingdon. Mr. Bowers deeded a portion of the original Trail to the Town of Abingdon for preservation and Certification—the first private property to be donated for trail preservation purposes.

An on-site inspection of the new trail segment at the trailhead in Abingdon was conducted on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The portion is on land owned by the town. Final layout of the route has been completed and actual construction of the pathway is set to begin by the first week in November.

### **Sullivan County, Tennessee**

The Southern Appalachian Greenway Alliance met in Kingsport on the morning of September 15<sup>th</sup>. Paul attended and discussed possible partnering opportunities for trail-related training, as well as providing an update of upcoming new trail segments in the region that will be Certified in September.

### **Carter County, Tennessee**

Paul presented walks and informal interpretive contacts to visitors to Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area in Tennessee on September 26<sup>th</sup>. The focus was on the OVNHT and the portion of the Trail, which goes through that park. Visitor Use Assistant Susan Georgian from Andrew Johnson NHS assisted with the event and also provided much information to visitors. She was detailed from that park for the day, which was greatly appreciated.

Two new trail segments in Tennessee were Certified on September 27<sup>th</sup>. A half-mile section in the town of Roan Mountain was officially included, then a 2.1 mile section was recognized in Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area. Around 50 people and a number of officials from Carter County and the state attended both events, as did marchers from OVTA. Don Barger, the Senior Director from the National Parks and Conservation Association from the Southeast Region was also present. Both events received good media coverage.

Word was received from the Tennessee Department of Transportation that they had completed erecting signs for marking the Commemorative Motor Route within their state by the end of September. This leaves North Carolina as the only state left to properly mark their portion. Efforts are underway to achieve this by fall of 2005.

Paul met with the manager of Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area, Jennifer Bauer, on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Bob Hardin from OVTA was also involved. The development of new exhibits for the area was discussed, especially updated displays regarding the Trail. Possible funding sources were also explored. Additionally plans for next year's anniversary observances were proposed, as well as possible preservation strategies for the site. The area is being threatened by a possible four lane highway, which would be situated across the river.

### **Avery County, North Carolina**

Upon the request of the landowners Paul visited Davenport Springs and the Robert Sevier gravesite on the morning of August 19<sup>th</sup>. Both sites are Certified as part of the Trail. The areas are facing threats, which will necessitate archaeological survey work, prior to corrective action. The situation was reviewed and discussed with an archaeologist from Wake Forest University.

Paul met with officials of the Unimin Corporation in Spruce Pine (NC) on September 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss a possible partnership to gather information and better protect the area of Davenport Springs and Robert Sevier's grave. It was agreed to work together to plan the removal of a tree, which threatens the spring site under the guidance of archaeologists from Wake Forest University. The NPS will assist with funding for the project. A report on the results will also be produced.

A follow-up visit to Davenport Springs was conducted on the afternoon of October 14<sup>th</sup>. Archaeologists from Wake Forest University were just completing a three-day survey of the site, which was done in conjunction with the removal of a large tree, which threatened its preservation.

The project was funded jointly by the landowner, Unimin Corporation, and the NPS. The area has been stabilized and discussions are ongoing as to any further work that may be needed, pending completion of the archaeological report.

### **McDowell County, North Carolina**

A 4.1-mile segment of original trail, which is within Pisgah National Forest was officially designated as a part of the Trail on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The section is unusually well preserved and will now be identified in future preservation and management plans within that agency. A number of elected officials from Burke and McDowell counties attended, as did representatives from U.S. Congressman Charles Taylor and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole's offices. Around 40 people attended including OVTA marchers and media representatives.

Paul participated in a public meeting in Marion (NC) on the evening of November 9<sup>th</sup> which provided an orientation to the Blue Ridge Heritage Area and collected input about community resources for inclusion in the final GMP. The OVNHT was identified as the number one historic resource for McDowell County during the course of the evening.

A meeting with the McDowell County Natural Resources Committee was held in Marion on the morning of November 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss ideas for expanding the Trail and celebrating its 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005. Possible new segments were reviewed and the committee indicated its long-term commitment to the Trail. The committee is going to propose that 2005 be proclaimed "The Year of the Trail" to the county commissioners. OVTA Trail Liaison Bob Hardin and Bob Benner from the Mountains to Sea Trail attended the meeting

### **Burke County, North Carolina**

Paul met with Miera Crawford, U.S. Forest Service District Ranger, at her headquarters in Nebo (NC) on August 18<sup>th</sup> where she presented a formal request for official designation of a four-mile section of trail within Pisgah National Forest to be a part of the OVNHT. The segment involved is part of the historic route and is maintained as a trail and dirt road for public use.

A 3,000 acre expansion of Lake James State Park in North Carolina was signed into law by Governor Mike Easley on August 19<sup>th</sup>. The increased acreage includes a one and a half-mile section of the Trail's historic route. The State Park System has already agreed to work with the OVNHT to ensure proper preservation and public access to the segment.

Paul participated in a planning session regarding the upcoming dedication of a trail section in Pisgah National Forest at the USFS headquarters in Nebo (NC) on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Also present was the Grandfather District Ranger Miera Crawford, planners from Burke and McDowell counties, Bob Benner of the Mountains to Sea Trail, and Bob Hardin from OVTA. A program for September 30<sup>th</sup> was finalized.

Paul spoke to the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina National Heritage Trust Fund on the afternoon of September 15<sup>th</sup> in Morganton (NC). The group reviews and approves proposed land acquisitions for possible inclusion in the state's Wildlife Resources Game Lands. They are considering two tracts north of Lake James for purchase, one that has an original trail segment and another, which has an important trail viewshed. The hope is that if the land is approved they will

agree to public access of the historic trail. Early indications are promising.

Paul attended the initial meeting of core stakeholders in Burke County for the development of a plan for that community that will be included in the ongoing Blue Ridge National Heritage Area GMP process. The Trail has been identified as a prime resource for the county, since potentially 45 miles of its route could be established within its borders.

### **Surry County, North Carolina**

The Second Annual Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration was held in Elkin, North Carolina on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Paul participated in the daylong event, as well as the Certification of another trail segment in that area. The Backcountry Militia, a volunteer group from Kings Mountain NMP, participated as well, setting up an 18<sup>th</sup> century militia camp and providing interpretive programs to visitors. Former U.S. Senator James Broyhill spoke at the program. Several hundred people visited the event throughout the day.

The Town of Elkin was awarded a \$100,000 Enhancement Grant in early October for the restoration of an historic bridge and trail improvements within their community. The NPS provided a letter of support for the project when it was submitted for consideration. All of the work will be done along the Trail within the town limits, and will result in an improved pathway, along with preservation of an historic footbridge.

A planning meeting with Town of Elkin officials was held on the afternoon of October 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the design and layout of the new wayside area. Also discussed were ideas for the Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration for next fall, as well as possible addition of new trail segments along the identified route.

### **Wilkes County, North Carolina**

Paul met with officials of W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir on October 14<sup>th</sup> to review new additions to that area, as well as conduct on-site inspections of potential new trail sections. Later in the morning he met with officials from the Wilkes County Heritage Museum, which is currently renovating the old county courthouse for conversion into a museum. The group is interested in including exhibits about the OVNHT, and Paul pledged to provide assistance as the project progresses.

### **Rutherford County, North Carolina**

Paul spoke to members of the Rutherford County Arts, Parks and Recreation Commission on August 24<sup>th</sup> about incorporating the Trail as part of a possible countywide Greenway.

A meeting with Susie Hamrick-Jones, Director of the Foothills Conservancy, took place on the morning of November 4<sup>th</sup>. Paul oriented her to the Gilbert Town area, and briefed her on the site's history and current issues. Ms. Hamrick-Jones pledged to consider ways to assist in the preservation efforts associated with the area.

### **Polk County, North Carolina**

An on-site inspection of a potential trail segment in the Gray's Chapel area of Polk County was conducted on the afternoon of August 17<sup>th</sup>. Paul accompanied various county officials to explore an existing route and discuss the possibility of the section being officially included as a part of the Trail. The county is pursuing trail possibilities with several adjoining landowners as well.

Upon request Paul forwarded a letter of endorsement to the North Carolina Office of Archives and History on August 26<sup>th</sup> in support of Polk County's application for a State Highway Historic Marker near Alexander's Ford. The sign would explain the history of the area as it relates to the Kings Mountain campaign and the Trail.

### **Cherokee County Chapter, South Carolina**

A meeting of the Overmountain Victory Trail Committee was held on August 30<sup>th</sup> in Gaffney, SC. The latest plans for the new trailhead at Cowpens NB were reviewed and discussed. Cherokee County has committed their financial support and is eager to see the work done.

Paul attended a meeting of the Cherokee County (SC) Overmountain Victory Trail Committee on the evening of September 27<sup>th</sup> in Gaffney. Final preparations for the construction of a trailhead at Cowpens NB were reviewed and discussed. The possibility of an OVNHT Conference for spring of 2005, co-sponsored by the OVTC, was also examined. A decision on the latter subject will be made during next month's meeting.

South Carolina State Trail Coordinator Wendy Coplen visited the Trail in that state on November 8<sup>th</sup>. Paul and members of Cherokee County's OVTC oriented her to the route in the morning, then attended a presentation by her in the afternoon on the process involved in applying for grants through the Recreational Trails Program. OVTA board member Buck Jolley, as well as several OVTA members participated.

The Overmountain Victory Trail Committee (OVTC) of Cherokee County, and the Cherokee County Historical Society have agreed to co-sponsor the next OVNHT Conference. The event will take place in Gaffney, SC from Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup> to Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005. Details and registration information will be available in January.

## OVRTA Financial Report

Newly elected treasurer Betsy Buss of Charlotte took over the finances of OVRTA at the November 20th board meeting. Thanks to the generous \$10,000 donation from Millie Schliske commemorating Conrad earlier this year OVRTA's current bank account balance is the highest in our history.

**Total of Bank Accounts = \$18,678.56.**

General Fund = \$12,976.73

Trail Protection Fund = \$4,635.38

Scholarship Fund = \$520

Unclassified Fund = \$546.46

In addition to the unrestricted \$10,000 donation, Millie also offered up a challenge that would match all money raised between October 1, 2004 and April 1, 2005 up to a maximum of \$10,000. This gives us the potential for as much as \$30,000 in new funding to be used to operate OVRTA and to protect, preserve and interpret the trail. But...we have to act to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and we need your help and support to do that.

As you can see on the "measuring muzzle loader" on the right, \$330 has been contributed to the "Conrad Match Fund" so far.

Please consider a year-end donation to OVRTA's Conrad Matching Fund!

**April 1, 2005  
\$10,000 Goal**

**\$7,500**

**\$5,000  
Halfway  
Point**

**\$2,500**

**Nov 20-\$330 ⇒**

**\$0.00**

**October 1, 2004 Start**



# 2004 Reenactment March Report

Scars are reminders that our memories are real. Some are physical and can be looked upon with pride. Others are hidden and visible only to our own mind's eye. These run deeper and last longer with memories so vivid—so real—they sometimes spring to life by their own calling.

It is these memories, these scars if you will, that mark 2004 as a year of remembrance. It is after all the 30<sup>th</sup> time OVTA has commemorated the Campaign of the Overmountain Men to the Battle of King's Mountain. It is the year we recall the dedication and contributions and leadership of our lost friend Conrad. Alan Bowen has a "scroll" of sorts for each of us to sign. Alan will present it to Conrad's wife Millie on down the trail when we meet near the end of our journey. It is the year when things that have been are fading and things that will be are coming of age.

It's September 23 and it has, after a year's wait and deliberations, begun again. Across the street from Dunn's (Craig's) meadows in Abingdon we arrive. It is after noon. Just time for a quick hello or three and then north up to Seven Mile Ford and the burial place of William Campbell for the first ceremony of 2004. A crowd waits well ready for it to begin. Words exchanged and salutes rendered. Journey has begun for the 30<sup>th</sup> time.

And speaking of the Bowen's, they arrived early. Connected with Glenn Pratt and Cici Wendel for a luncheon and discussions of family relations. Glen is recently returned from Ireland and the pursuit of a keen interest in the Ulster Scots from which so many of the Overmountain people sprang. And there's a new Bowen in our midst this year. Sarah, daughter of Alan. She too is dressed in the manner of men going to war.

Bob Hardin is our leader this year. Much work well done in the preparation, but that is complete now. All that is left is for the first steps to be taken.

**September 24<sup>th</sup> Abingdon to Rocky Mount** The first steps are taken. We convoy to the treatment plant in the gap of the ridge and walk in along a trail freshly cleared to the old roadbed that lays claim to being the route that led the Virginians to the Watauga Road and the mustering a day's distance away.

Crowd's gathered and joined together. Paul Carson is there with something akin to pure glee at the prospect of what is to come. Mr. E.H. Bowers is called forth. Through negotiations with Paul and Blair Keller, Mr. Bowers made pledge to donate an easement along the roadbed to the City of Abingdon expressly for use of the trail. No development, no other uses. This is the very first piece of private land to be set aside for the trail in perpetuity. A narration of the donation, a presentation of NPS Certification of the segment and the National Park Service Achievement Award to Mr. Bowers all to ac-

knowledge the value of his generous act.

Lunch is next and then on to Pemberton Oak and a visit with friend Sue Vaughan and Patsy Clark. Still can't get over the vacant look of the yard. This scar runs deep indeed. An hour's pictures and fine talk.

Down to Bluff City to carpool on to Robert Young's grave. A turn-out of descendents and some newspaper folks. Got a new person with us on the March this year-- Maurice Robertson from over Fayetteville, NC way. We've put him in a shirt and hat and advised him on the proper manner to introduce himself to a lady.

Bluff City Park and Herman Carrier and friends for supper. A program on weapons of the period. The rifle of course, but also the British Brown Bess, the Dragoons sword and our own Calvary saber. Mike has one that is but 2 days old freshly made by Mark Ewing of Lincoln. It is a copy of John Crozby's sword. Crozby served under Sevier in the Battle of King's Mountain. Good program. First time we've done one like this.

Evening festivities exhausted so on to Rocky Mount and greetings with Andrea Kiser and a troop of Boy Scouts from down Morganton way. They are setting up camp when we arrive about 9PM. Say hi to Andrea and get introductions all around and finalize plans for the morning. Then the convention of campaigners at the back of the Tundra to discuss the day and anticipate the morrow. Bedtime now, goodnight.

## **September 25: Rocky Mount to Sycamore Shoals.**

First call at 6AM. Breakfast at 7 at Partners. Got a bunch this morning. The Scouts and their leaders, the Bowen Clan, Leigh, Maurice, Andy, Fran, Bob Harding, Mike, Bob Wolfe, Sam, Andrea, Carol and others take the traditional morning food at Partners. We take full bellies back to Rocky Mount. Swear in the Scouts with the Patriot's Oath, and set foot toward the Watauga.

# It's Annual Membership Renewal Time!

2004 - 2005 Dues Are

Individual = \$30.00

Family = \$40.00

Supporting = \$150.00

Life = \$500.00

# 2004 - 2005 Annual Membership Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, State \_\_\_\_\_, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please put a check next to your membership choice.

Individual      \$30 \_\_\_\_\_

Family            \$40 \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting      \$150 \_\_\_\_\_

Life                \$500 \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a tax free contribution of  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Conrad Matching Fund,

Total amount of your check = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to OVTA, PO Box  
242421, Charlotte, NC 28224-2421.

Bad traffic on River Road for a Saturday morning. After a couple of mile's walk, we decide to convoy up a bit to where there's no competition for pavement. End of the road and break time. Matthew Bailey gives a fine program on weaponry to the scouts. Good job as usual. Out through the fields spending time enjoying the flow of the river and the flow of words between friends. Up the steep hill to the quarry. Traffic again poses risk so we convoy our way to Watuaga and the community center. Being Saturday, it is closed so we are on our own for lunch. No problem. Lunch at the Roadside Cafe.

We truck up to the back roads that run to the river. Arrive at the Watauga River a bit early to check things out. Good thing. The river is high. Too high to cross. We wait an hour or so. The large crowd on the other side anticipating our crossing. But, they like us must be disappointed this year. The water is simply too high and too fast to risk the crossing.

Supper with the DAR. Larry Nowles, our resident wood carver, has offered another rendering. This one of John Alexander, King' Mountain ancestor of U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee. Larry presents the carving to OVTA. We're also joined by David Hoss and wife and by Tom Windle and family. Both descend from John Sevier and have been friends for many years. The night's energies are expended and we retire for sleep.

### **September 26, Sycamore Shoals to Roan Mountain.**

The 8 O'clock strikes. The reverend Doak (Grant Hardin) encourages us with the "sword of the Lord and Gideon". A change this year. Decision was made to consolidate OVTA cemetery visits into a special ceremony following the Doak's reading. Mike advances, draws and lowers his saber and lists off those OVTA members who have passed over these last 30 years. Bill Hall, Conrad Schliske, Bobby Duncan, Charles Young, Tom Gray, Page McClelland, Doc Lipscomb, Hugh Bennett, Lester Carrier, Rip Collins, Bill Stronach, Alma Gray, Jack Stansbury...

Mary Patton's grave is next (we did continue to visit the historic gravesites). A really good program by a descendent of Mary Patton on the making of gun powder. Jed Dahl followed that with a short program on the "British military drill" of weaponry during battle. Tom Windle takes his leave from here for home in Oklahoma.

Lunch at Bob's Dairyland in Roan Mountain and then on to the Railroad Gauge Road. We walk backwards this time towards the Doe River Gorge. Allen Ray joined us mid walk. A pretty place with the Doe running on the right and the rise of the mountain on the left.

An afternoon program at Roan Mountain State Park's amphitheater. Met a phine couple from England who joined in our program to the delight of us, them and the crowd. Fun pholks.

On our own for supper, two cabins for the night, men in one, women in the other. Good night.

**September 27, Roan Mountain to Plumtree.** Breakfast at Bob's Dairyland. We learned that George Shumaker, our friend and Roan Mountain breakfast host these past 5 years or so, passed away suddenly earlier in the week.

Drive to the rear of the post office in the village of Roan Mountain to the new city park that's been built on the flood plain that was so devastated by crashing waters a couple of years ago. A light drizzle has begun. Very light, but the clouds are low and are just creeping across the sky. Paul Carson steps up and presents to Carter County officials and others whose hands have been at work the Certification certificate for the new park's walking trail.

Hampton Creek Cove State Natural Area is next and NPS certification of the new trail that parallels the historic route at the head of Hampton Creek Cove. This is the Yellow Mountain road I speak of.

By the way, the question of when the Yellow Mountain Road was opened up has been asked frequently in recent years. Quoting from James R. Gilmore, John Sevier as a Commonwealth Builder, 1887, page 6, "For nearly ten years the immigration continued to be of this class, and almost altogether from Virginia, for no road had yet been opened into Eastern North Carolina, and the hunters' trace across the mountains was well-nigh impassable... When a passable road was finally opened over the Alleghenies in 1778, a tide began to set in from North Carolina..."

The group heads up the new trail for a mile or so walk. Fran and Mike volunteered to check out the roads on the other side of the mountain. The recent floods from the two hurricanes have devastated much of the Toe River valley and last report was 19E was impassable.

Mike and Fran return to the group with good tidings. The road had just that afternoon been repaired enough to be opened again. We turn our vehicles west and cross through the high ridge of the Appalachians and into North Carolina. Right on 19E and down the Toe River. The rampages of flood are evident everywhere. People whose homes were across the river were cut off from the world as the waters washed out the driveway bridges.

Arrive at Bill and Natalie Pruitt's for our evening's residency. A quiet dinner followed by quiet talk all to the tune of a moderate rain beating a lulling tempo on roof and leaves. We retire to our truck bunks and find sleep in that tempo.

**September 28, Plumtree to Mineral Museum.** The rain has stopped, but, the sky is still frowning at us. We're at Unimin with Dennis Voelker in attendance as our guide. The road is muddy and even the pavement is soft to the step. A commander's call and the decision is made to forego to walk to Robert Sevier's gravesite for this year because of the wet and mud. Some do laundry and some explore. We reconvene at the railroad station in Spruce Pine at 4PM for the traditional firing. Some townspeople line the streets to observe our doings.

Nighttime. Not the Pinebridge this year. Supper at the Orchard at Altapass courtesy of Bill Carson. First time we've done that and I truly hope this begins a new tradition. A large crowd is present. We meet a gentleman from England before supper. Another one. Our third in two days. Hmmm.

We devise our program—"The Gentlemanly Introduction". "Pleasure", that's Fran's errant sister of course, is charged with recruiting gentleman from the crowd who will assist us. Pleasure, with her curly ringlets of fiery red and demure and knowing countenance drops her hankie in front of those she has chosen. Our English friend of course is first (since that has been prearranged). Next is a man of distinction in our midst, Joe Sam Queen, a state senator for that western area of North Carolina. And last, we only need three you know, is a man of great stature named Stan. Stan stands up and he's huge—must be near 7 feet. Pleasure barely registered waist high on him. Judy Carson, Bill's wife, and a couple of young ladies from a local high school round out our recruits for the program. Judy and our English friend take stage first, he sweeps hat, cocks leg and out comes the most flowery river of prose ever heard in the highlands of the Blue Ridge. Steals the show. Nothing can be said to compare. Great job and totally off the cuff too. But then, those ARE the best, aren't they?

The story of the Overmountain Men follow and then we return to the Mineral Museum for our goodnights. Got to say again, the evening at the Apple Orchard was about the most fun I've ever had during a program on the Trail. Hope we do it again.

**September 29, Spruce Pine to North Cove.** An easy morning, with a walk out to the Apple Orchard. Lunch, and then a ride with a senior citizens tour bus out to Hefner Gap. Got a freelance reporter walking with us—at least part way down off the Blue Ridge.

Trip down seemed pretty easy this year. No complaints and no one's tuckered much. Run our shuttle and set night at the now closed and abandoned North Cove Elementary School.

**September 30, North Cove to Morganton.** We split our forces. Some move to the new North Cove Elementary School down in the Sevier Community for the requested program. The rest travel up old 221 to the trail head of Linville Mountain. Hear there's going to be ceremony up there at the tower road later today.

Up and up we go. Joe Sam Queen is with us. We dress him out in shirt, flop hat and Jed's Brown Bess musket. The Forest Service archeologist joins us also. He's fully dressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century wear of his own makings. Looks good.

Up we go. First time since 1997 we've walked Shelby and Sevier's route up Linville Mountain. We've followed Campbell's route along the Catawba since '97.

Arrive at the Tower road. Lots and lots of folks. Paul gives ceremony designating the 4 mile segment on Linville Mountain as part of the National Historic Trail. All the Forest Service folks from Nebo are there. See Butch Hogan. He was OVTA's very first McDowell County Marshall back 30 years ago. Also some other folks who had helped route the trail through his area back in 1975.

Fine speaking. Fine thoughts. I'm struck by one as I stand there listening. For 29 years OVTA has passed this spot in silence. Today... the silence has ended.

Return back down the mountain the way we come. Joe Sam is in a hurry and leads out. I keep pace with him and we talk about things of mutual interest. He has somewhere to be soon. A funeral for Sam Phillips of Spruce Pine who passed away a few days before. Sam, a descendent of Mary Patton, has been a friend and member of OVTA for a lot of years.

Into Morganton and the McDowell House on a Thursday night—the end of the site's week-long history celebration. The Campaign Program for those attending followed by supper provided by Mickie and Historic Burke. Thank you as always.

Nighttime now and we're alone. Alan Bowen and I hand sew some wool into shoulder capes to keep the morning's dew and chill at bay. Mornings have been well wet with fog the last 4 days. Bed time. The first week's over. We have retraced steps of the Trail for 125 miles. It has indeed been great.

**October 1, Morganton to Dysartsville.** A morning detour with Andrea Kiser back towards Old Fort, back towards a cemetery hidden in the forests. Back towards the gravesite of one of Andrea's ancestors whose grave stone says, "Benoli Banning, Revolutionary War soldier wounded in the Battle of Kings Mountain, October 7, 1981 (mistake on the tombstone).

Lunch at Andrea Bennett's with mom Lottie and kids and grandkids. Andrea offers a gift from the Bennett family. Hugh, Lottie's husband and Andrea's daddy, was

the OVTA “historian” back year ago and filmed much of each year’s March. Andrea had some of those tapes transferred to VHS and presented 4 tapes to us. During lunch we viewed the 1983 march. Cool.

Supper and program with the fine folks at Dysartsville. A little storytelling and then good night.

**October 2. Day in Camp and Annual Meeting.** Big doings in Rutherfordton—their annual heritage festival. We head south and set up to do a program. This is a “street festival” and unfortunately, the microphone system from the courthouse lawn just doesn’t carry to the street. After a few attempts, we give up and go antiquing. Our dress attracts attention though and we take opportunity to talk to folks one on one. Later we talk about actually setting up a booth at events like this to promote the trail and OVTA.

OVTA Annual meeting in the evening. Big business is a vote on by-law changes and elections. The rest of business was moved off the march to the November meeting a few years ago. The by-law changes are aimed at that as well—moving our annual meeting off the march so the meeting can be more focused and more attractive to members and the public.

Votes taken, by-law changes passed. The 2005 OVTA Annual Meeting will take place in Gaffney, SC on April 2 following the 2<sup>nd</sup> OVT Conference. That is exactly the kind of thing president Alan Bowen was envisioning with moving the annual meeting off the march.

Officers elected. Many, many thanks to folks like Roger Byers who have served on the board for so many years. Welcome to new board member Buck Jolley from Gaffney, SC. Buck is active in the Cherokee County effort to develop the Greenway from Cowpens to King’s Mountain and in the King’s Mountain National Military Park’s Back County Militia interpretive corp. Welcome to OVTA’s leadership Buck.

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dysartsville to Cane Creek.** Bad news this year. A tanker carrying thousands of gallons of gasoline overturned and exploded about a hundred yards south of the community center. Melted and closed highway 64. Roger made arrangements for us to stay at the training facility at Camp Bud Schiele instead of the community center. Thanks, Roger.

Last day of the March for walking in the woods. Out from Dysartsville, through the Boy Scout camp, down Landin Road, take a left on gravel up Mustang Drive to the chain and then, into the woods. Starts raining. Just a little bit, and not very long, but long enough for rust to sprout on our rifles.

Get lost a bit—momentarily at least. New roads have been cut and trees cleared for house sites. Lost our land-

marks. Scott says it’s this way. We follow his lead and sure enough. Betsy Buss is with us. She’s OVTA’s new treasurer. A blessing ‘cause we really needed someone to take that job. Fran and Tom, and Alan, Scott and John Bowen, and Bob and Mike and Betsy make footsteps through the trees.

Lunch at the hunter’s cabin. Tom has been gathering beg-a-lice. Must have literally thousands of them embedded in his wool leggings.

Supper on our own at the Italian restaurant in Rutherford. Bed time at camp Bud Schiele. Goodnight.

**October 4, Cane Creek to Gilbert Town.** We take heading at the intersection of hwy 64 and Cane Creek Road in clear view of the explosion site. Whew. Work is being done to completely replace the culvert and entire section of road.

We do our walking along Cane Creek. Lunch with the DAR at Centennial Church. Thanks. A loose afternoon and then supper courtesy of Roger Byers at Gilbert Town. Fran and Mike set up a table and dine by candlelight. That was cool since it’s wasn’t dark yet.

Tom Holmes gives breath to spark and tow and starts the evenings fire. As darkness drops, a program on the history of the Campaign and the things that occurred on this spot. Good to see Paul Carson in the audience. Then music by R.G. Absher and friend Richard. A jig or two are danced. Thanks for making the trip guys. Good sounds for the ears as always.

Back to Bud Schiele for the night’s rest. Alan Bowen and daughter Sara return after a day’s furlough. We stand outside and marvel at the sky—at the stars watching us. The Andromeda galaxy is visible straight overhead. It is the most distant thing in the sky that can be seen with the naked eye. All the other stars, everything else in the sky, is closer than that galaxy.

**October 5, Gilbert Town to Gray’s Chapel.** Breakfast and then head right to Gray’s Chapel. School kids arriving soon you know. Must be about a hundred of them. Split them up, dress some out, swear them in with the attendant spit on the ground and then we take foot to trail and walk down towards the river. Stop and talk—sometimes about the history, sometimes just about what we see around us.

After lunch, the “quest” is taken up again. Blair’s quest that is. His search for the cemetery he found while “misplaced” in this area in 1980. Alan Bowen, Bob Hardin and Mike had found a burial site with 5 or 6 stones that sort of matched Blair’s description earlier this year in March during an exploration of river crossing sites along the Green River. Sent photos to Blair, but he just couldn’t tell by them.

So, down we go to the cemetery found in March. "Nope, not it" say Blair. We backtrack a bit and split up with a few of us detouring to go down to the old low bridge crossing site on the Green River (Alexander's Ford?) and the two old eroded road beds to show what Alan, Bob and Mike had found in March.

We poked around and explored routes back up towards Gray's Chapel. Great day's walking, but misfortune struck when Blair fell and injured his wrist. Fearful of a break, Blair returned home that evening to seek medical care. Later word received from him was just a sprain.

Speaking of evening. We had a huge turnout for the Campaign Program after supper at the Chapel. The old picnic shelter has been torn down and a new, much improved one is under construction. Chairs were set out in the lawn in front of the chapel and stories were told. Mention was made of Blair's cemetery and as hoped, some of those local fellows volunteered to continue the search and keep in touch with Blair.

Nighttime and it is just us again. Goodnight.

**October 6, Gray's Chapel to Cowpens.** No walking today. Big doings at Knuckles Plantation down below Gaffney on the Pacolet River. Thanks to Nancy Horne for hosting us and of course to Jane Waters for making all the arrangements.

Tours of the plantation followed by a hayride down near Grindle Shoals of the Pacolet. This is really well documented land with lots of events in the summer of 1780 taking place around here. At the Shoals, Ferrell Saunders, superintendent of Cowpens, gave us a rousing program on the history of the area. Always good to hear stories from Ferrell. Sad news though. Paul Carson reported at the November board meeting that Ferrell will be retiring from the Park Service in early January. Really going to miss him.

Afternoon program at the high school in Gaffney. Thanks to Bob and Alan and to Leigh for helping with the program.

Supper at Tucker's in Chesnee and then back to Cowpens for another shower. Got to admit, sheepishly maybe, we've gotten more showers this year than ever before. But then, that's a good thing I guess.

**October 7, Cowpens to Kings Mountain.** An early program for an elementary school and then off to Kings Mountain for the wreath laying ceremony at 11AM.

Lunch at Antioch Church and then back to King's Mountain again. Three O'clock. The horn sounds. Millie, Conrad's wife, and Dawn, his daughter—a veteran in her own right of many Marches as a child—carry the OVTA banner and lead us in. Not nearly as many in

the stands anymore since the wreath laying was moved to the morning. Paul Carson gives the NPS award to Duke Power for work in Elkin. The chief historian for the Park Service gives the key note. Then it's over. All done. We say our good-byes and part from here.

A job well done goes to Bob Hardin for all the hard work in planning this year's march. Also to Alan Bowen for his leadership and work in getting us down the trail. And thanks to all who participated—either in walking or in story telling or in supporting the marchers. Without folks like Sam Lloyd, Roger Byers, Mickie Vacca, R.G. Absher, Jane Waters, Ferrell Saunders, Bill Carson, Bill and Nancy Pruitt, Dennis & Lorraine Voelker and Blair Keller, dear Blair Keller, the March simply could not happen.

Thirty years now. Remembering the thoughts on Linville Mountain, for so many years the marchers passed by in silence. Now, with Paul Carson's leadership and work from folks like Bob Hardin and Blair and RG and Buck and a growing number of communities along the trail, the silence is ending...the excitement is building.

Next year will be the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of many Revolutionary War events. The OVNHT will be among them. It is important, but not nearly recognized enough. The Battle of King's Mountain--that one hour's engagement between volunteer armies--the victory on October 7th that turned back the British invasion of the south. A week later, on October 13, 1780 when General Cornwallis finally received confirmation of Ferguson's death and the loss of his western wing, he forthwith issued orders to withdraw back into South Carolina.

The victory at King's Mountain did that and much more. It gave hope to a hopeless countryside. It provided desperately needed time to rebuild and again deploy a third Southern Continental Army. And, it showed all that the dream of a free and independent nation was not only possible, but was there, ready to be seized and embraced.

Mike Dahl,  
November 29, 2004  
Knoxville, Tennessee

# 2004 - 2005 OVTA Officers and Board



**President: Alan Bowen** 2003 – 2005  
(770)-382-2863 ga6thcav@aol.com  
102 Aubrey Rd NE, White Ga. 30184

**Vice President: R.G. Absher** 2004 – 2006  
(h)336-526-5336 (w)336-921-3750 absher-r@juno.com  
160 Brenhaven Drive, Elkin, NC 28621

**Secretary: Scott Bowen** 2004 – 2005  
(770)-889-4528 sharptoptreesmb@msn.com  
4735 Hampton's Drive, Alpharetta, GA 30004

**Treasurer: Betsy Buss** 2004 – 2006  
(704) 334-8166 bb1780@bellsouth.net  
601-C Queens Road, Charlotte, NC 28207

## OVTA Board Members

### Region 1 Virginia:

**Blair Keller** 2004 – 2006  
(276) 628-3070  
20081 Good Hope Rd, Abingdon, VA 24210

**Mike Denton** 2004 – 2005  
(276) 356-8243 pcdenton@naxs.com  
24058 Berry Creek Drive. Abingdon, VA 24211

### Region 1 Tennessee:

**Bob Hardin** 2004 – 2006  
(423) 612-0242 rvhardin@charter.net  
6500 Nave Hollow Loop, Elizabethton, TN 37643

**Charlie Zwergel** 2003 – 2005  
(423) 727-6330 chazgail@tibonline.net  
1131 Stage Road, Mountain City, TN 37683

### Region 2 NC Line to Morganton:

**Beth Silvers** 2003-2005  
(828) 738-4974  
4178 Goose Creek Road, Marion, NC 28752

### Region 3 Wilkes-Surry:

**Charles Gilreath** 2003 – 2005  
336-835-5624. PO Box 650, Elkin, NC 28621

### Region 4 Morganton to SC Line:

**Albert Dale** 2003 – 2005  
(828) 287-4338  
Rt. 1 56-7A Victory Trail, Union Mills, NC 28287

**Nancy Ferguson** 2004 – 2006  
(828) 287-3509  
771 Centennial Road, Union Mills, NC 28167.

### Region 5: South Carolina:

**Buck Jolley** 2004-2006  
(864) 489-5459 bjolley@bellsouth.net  
526 Filter Plant Road, Gaffney, SC 29340

### Region 6, Georgia

**Tom Holmes** 2004 – 2005  
tholmes@wans.net  
6810 Stringer Lane. Flowery Branch, GA. 30542-3877

### At-Large BOD Seats

**Evelyn Carswell** 2003 – 2005  
(828) 245-4708. 162 Flack Rd. Forest City, NC 28043

**Ruth Christian** 2003 – 2005  
(865)-982-3389 christian-fl@juno.com  
Box 448, Strawberry Plains, TN 37871

**Fran Dahl** 2003 – 2005  
(865)-933-0883 fran@esper.com  
2517 Shipe Road. Knoxville, TN 37924

**Joe Harris** 2002 – 2004  
910-482-3991 joe.harris@pop.net  
5360 Amberhill Court, Fayetteville, NC 28311

### Reenactment Campaign Commander:

## OVTA Activities and Support Contacts

**Newsletter Editors: Mike & Fran Dahl**  
(Home) (865) 933-0883 Email: miked@esper.com

**Festivals Chairman: Dennis Voelker**  
(828)-765-7874. raine9@rocketmail.com  
1120 McHone Rd., Spruce Pine ,NC 28777

**225th Anniversary Committee Chair: Fran Dahl**  
(865)-933-0883 fran@esper.com

**Ancestral Research: Karla Zimmerman**  
(909)-592-5505 Karlaz@msn.com  
2326 Calle Petula, San Dimas, CA. 91773-3981

**National Park Service OVNHT Superintendent:**  
Paul Carson, Superintendent OVNHT ,  
2635 Park Road, Blacksburg, South Carolina 29702.  
(864) 936-3477 paul\_carson@nps.gov

**Overmountain  
Victory Trail  
Association  
Newsletter**

**2517 Shipe Road  
Knoxville, TN  
37924**

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Knoxville, TN  
Permit # 909



**November, 2004 Issue**

**Protect, Preserve & Interpret the Overmountain Victory Trail**

*The Road to Kings Mountain  
Video. \$20 plus \$5 shipping  
Order yours Today!*

# ***Dues Time!***

**Individual Dues are \$30**

**Family Dues are \$40**

**Supporting Dues are \$150**

**Life Dues are \$500**

## ***Upcoming Events***

### **BOD Meetings and Activities**

Board of Director meetings are open to the public. Visitors are welcome to participate. All BOD meeting begin at noon.

OVTA BOD Meeting, February 19, 2005, Abingdon, VA

Overmountain Victory Trail Conference, Mar 31–April 2, Gaffney, SC.

OVTA Annual Meeting, April 2 & 3, Gaffney., SC

OVTA BOD Meeting, April 23, 2005, Morganton,

OVTA BOD Meeting, June 18, 2005, Wilkesboro, NC.

OVTA BOD Meeting, August 20, 2005, Columbus, NC.

OVTA BOD Meeting, November 19, 2005, Cherokee County, SC.