

OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY

TRAIL ASSOCIATION

"KEEPING THE STORY ALIVE"



**December 2015**

# OVRTA NEWS

**NPS 2016 PLANNING SESSION  
TO BE HELD IN ASHEVILLE, NC  
JANUARY 29 AND 30, 2016**

The 2016 Planning Session for the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail will be held in Asheville, North Carolina on January 29 and 30. There is no charge to attend and participate in this yearly event which will include formulation of goals and projects along the trail for the coming year and a Friday evening reception.

The sessions will be highly interactive and require brainstorming, so bringing your thinking caps is highly encouraged. One session will focus on tourism. Please bring any and all materials with you that your community uses to promote the OVNHT and/or Southern Campaign.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Renaissance Marriott. If you plan to stay at the Renaissance, please make your reservations by December 31, 2015. The room rate is \$107 per night and the rate is available for January 28, 29, and 30.

There is no registration fee for the planning session; however, please RSVP to Katherine Lynn at [katherine\\_lynn@nps.gov](mailto:katherine_lynn@nps.gov) or by calling 864-461-2828 no later than January 22, 2016.

The OVRTA will hold its annual meeting and board meeting at the conclusion of the OVNHT planning session on Saturday.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

***COWPENS ANNIVERSARY***

*Gaffney, SC*

*January 15-17*

*Cowpens National Battlefield*

***OVNHT Planning Session***

*Asheville, NC*

*January 29 & 30*

*Renaissance Marriott*

***OVRTA Annual Meeting***

*followed by OVRTA*

***Board of Directors Meeting***

*Asheville, NC*

*January 30*

*Renaissance Marriott*

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## Message From The President

**By: RG Absher**

It's been a busy year up and down the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. It's also been very busy for the OVTA. The 2015 year has rolled by so fast and yet, we've noticed a lot of good things happening on the trail. The OVTA has stepped up to take a more active role in it's mission to protect the trail and to tell the story.

As we've been celebrating our 40th Anniversary, it's apparent that we are entering a new era of participation, outreach, and growth. During our 2015 Annual March, despite the rainy weather, we reached approximately 10,700 people with "The Story" most of whom were fourth graders. Estimates of contacts through media coverage from newspapers and TV stations, are near 500,000. Even after the Annual March the OVTA reached an additional 2,000 people with programs. We were able to carry out this huge task with support from the Ticket To Ride Grant and the Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service. Through the work of our Director of Interpretation plus an expanded Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service we are now positioned to tell the story year around.

This year's Annual March saw some amazing highlights: Participation of the Tennessee State Guard at the crossing of Sycamore Shoals, river crossings over the Holston and Catawba Rivers, Revolutionary War Weekend events in Morganton, NC and in Gaffney, SC, and NPS booths and Ranger programming all along the trail.

Our Fall Meeting and workshop was held on November 20, 21 in Elkin, NC. We were thrilled and inspired by the moving presentation of **Robert Rambo** as he did a first person presentation as Cherokee Chief **Attakullakulla, "Little Carpenter."**

NPS Ranger **Margo Blewett** conducted a black powder safety class. Other hands-on activities included tomahawk throwing, fire starting with flint and steel, period clothing, colonial dance and period cooking.

The **Wilkes-Surry Chapter** hosted the event and offered sessions on some of the least known personalities on the Eastern Wing of OVT including **Ben Cleveland, Joseph Winston, Martin Gambill, and William Lenoir.**

Truly the fall workshop was a great way to wrap up 2015! Our successful year was due largely to the excellent working relationship with the National Park Service, the planning and programming of our Director of Interpretation, **Steve Ricker**, our volunteer Annual Marchers, and the OVTA Board of Directors. I really appreciate this team and think we have one of the most talented and dedicated groups that I've every witnessed in a non-profit organization. A huge thanks for all you do! **Huzzah!**

I would like to wish you and your family happy holidays, and hope to see you at our Annual Meeting in January.

## Nominating Committee Report:

The Nominating Committee has met and makes the following recommendation for the OVTA Board of Directors 2016-2018:

OFFICERS: President:: R G Absher Secretary: Mary Bohlen

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Joella Johnson Barbour, Scott Bowen, Albert Dale, Mark Halback, Dan Hopping, Ronnie Lail, Bryant Lindsey, Mel McKay, LeighAnn Snuggs, Gary Walrath, Ralph Martin, Roger Byers, and Teresa Howell

Officers and board members will be voted on at the member meeting on January 30, 2016 in Asheville, North Carolina.

**Together we serve to PROTECT, PRESERVE and INTERPRET  
the route of the Campaign to the Battle of Kings Mountain.**

**Proposed Bylaw Change**

The Finance Committee recommends a change in the Bylaws to make the OVTA Bylaws match the IRS documentation and expectation. Our Bylaws must match the IRS documents and expectation. The IRS lists our accounting Period as ending on December 31.

Our Bylaws lists a fiscal year that ends September 30 in the middle of the annual march. This made good sense when we were a small organization and most of our Board were on the march. Now that we operate throughout the year, it makes operating with a budget very difficult. The first part of the 2015 march would be on last year's budget with the end of the 2014 march.

Current Wording:

**ARTICLE V. FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Association shall begin on October 1 and end on the following September 30.

Proposed Wording:

**ARTICLE V. FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Association shall begin on January 1 and end on the following December 31.

**Board of Directors Officers:**

President - RG Absher  
2014-2016

Vice President - Tom Vaughan  
2015-2017

Secretary - Mary Bohlen  
2014-2016

Treasurer - Leigh Anne Surber  
2015-2017

**Board Members with term**

**2015-2017:**

Donna Absher  
Alan Bowen  
Chivous Bradley  
Randy Curde  
Rick Humphries  
Aggie King

**Board Members with term**

**2014-2016:**

Joella Johnson Barbour  
Scott Bowen  
Albert Dale  
Mark Halback  
Dan Hopping  
Ronnie Lail  
Bryant Lindsey  
Mel McKay  
LeighAnn Snuggs  
Gary Walrath  
George Cobb  
Myra Cook  
Sheba Harris  
Steve Ricker



***The OVTA Board of Directors  
would like to wish you and yours a  
very Merry Christmas and a Happy  
New Year!***

## SUMMARY OF THE MARCH

Much to the likings of 1780, this year's marchers traveled the trail in very wet conditions. Weather in no way prevented many successes and firsts along the trail on way to the 235th Anniversary of the Battle of Kings Mountain..

Fortunately, the rains let up so the waters could rescind for river crossings. OVTA reenactors were joined for the first time ever by the Tennessee State Guard in crossing the Watauga River at Sycamore Shoals. Two additional crossing firsts were the crossing of the Holston River at Choates Ford in Bluff City, TN and the crossing of the Catawba River in Morganton, NC.

As is done every year, reenactors shared the story with many students along the trail; however, this year's March on Main in Gaffney, SC made a first when reenactors were joined by more than 100 students of the Gaffney High School Jr. ROTC and Drum Corp.

The inclement weather actually enabled OVTA travelers of the trail a small amount of down time so many were able to make their first visit to Fort Thicketty—a newly acquired property set for preservation that you will be hearing more about in the upcoming months.

Firsts for the 2015 would not end when we reached the top of Kings Mountain the morning of October 7th. For the first time in history, reenactors were permitted to fire muskets during the morning ceremony and for the afternoon program, OVTA members were able to tell the stories of the men at the Battle of Kings Mountain on Kings Mountain.

There were so many wonderful 2015 stories to share from each community along the trail that we have begun compiling those stories, articles and photos to present a Report from the March at the April meeting. If you have a story that you haven't provided to us, please send to Mary Bohlen, OVTA secretary, or LeighAnn Snuggs, chair of the marketing committee, no later than February 28, 2016.

**OVTA**  
**1780 Muster Place**  
**Abingdon, VA 24210**  
(276) 525-1050  
info@ovta.org

Visit us on the web at  
[www.ovta.org](http://www.ovta.org)

Like us to follow us on Facebook  
by searching Overmountain  
Victory Trail Association

### Are you receiving our emails?

If you aren't receiving OVTA emails, please contact Mary Bohlen at 704-880-1712 or [mbohlen47@gmail.com](mailto:mbohlen47@gmail.com)

Please complete the following and return to the OVTA to join or renew membership. Membership questions? Call the OVTA office at 276-525-1050 or Mary Bohlen 704-880-1712

Make check payable to:  
OVTA, 1780 Muster Place, Abingdon, VA 24210

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- INDIVIDUAL \$15**    **FAMILY \$20**    **SUPPORTING \$75**    **DONATION**    **LIFE \$500**
- YOUNG PATRIOT \$5 (18 & UNDER) \$5**    **CONTACT ME (BEQUEST/ENDOWMENT/GRANT)**