

# Orange Oracle

An electronic bulletin from the Orange County Historical Society

## Blair honored at annual meeting

Longtime Society staffer Jayne Blair was surprised to be called up to the front at the annual business meeting last month. President Ray Ezell said, "The Board wanted to recognize you and recognize your invaluable contribution to the operation of the Historical Society." Blair staffs the Research Center on Caroline Street from 1-5 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and now, sometimes on Thursday. She first came here in 2009. "This is my play pen," she

laughed.

Following the annual meeting, the Board elected officers. Ray Ezell will continue to serve as President of the Society. The new Vice President is Mark Hoerath. James Luther will continue as Treasurer and Carla Passarello agreed to serve again as Secretary. The annual meeting was livestreamed; it can be viewed by clicking on this link: [https://www.youtube.com/live/cCfL4uyd-pZO?si=cFaYEDujx4\\_P6sFw](https://www.youtube.com/live/cCfL4uyd-pZO?si=cFaYEDujx4_P6sFw)



PHOTO BY PHIL AUDIBERT

Historical society president Ray Ezell recognizes staff member Jayne Blair at the Jan. 23 annual meeting.

## Meet the new board members

### May Crenshaw Saxton

A native of Orange County, May and her husband Mike retired to Orange after being in other areas of the country for 40 years. Family roots and love of local history drew them back to this region. May was an elementary school teacher for 30 years. Currently, she volunteers with the Love Outreach Food Pantry and serves as the Society's volunteer coordinator. She is also a member of the Society's Education Outreach Team. She is a past trustee of the Graham Cemetery Association and a past board member of the Virginia Genealogical Society. May looks forward to serving as a board member; she hopes to promote awareness of the importance of local history. This will be May's first term.



Saxton

### Mark Hoerath

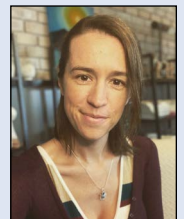
A consummate volunteer, Mark has lent his expertise and enthusiasm to Boy Scouts of America, the Washington DC Region Sports Car Club of America, Rapidan River Master Gardeners, and the Four County Players. Mark has also applied his marketing and communications skills to Baltimore City Public Schools, Johns Hopkins School of Health Services, Ohio University, and University Hospitals of Cleveland. Most recently he was advertising manager for the Virginia Lottery. With his experience creating/producing/directing TV, radio, and print communications, Mark spearheaded the video livestream upgrade to the Society's new auditorium. Currently, he lives in a historic house in downtown Barboursville. This will be Mark's second term as an elected board member.



Hoerath

### Jessica Thompson

Currently filling out the unexpired term of a former director, Jess is an Orange County native. She owns Paint It Orange on Caroline Street and has served as the president of the board for the James Madison Museum of OC Heritage for the past several years. She is familiar with the many needs of the community and is actively involved in supporting projects that benefit community members and local businesses. Jess has two children who both go to public schools here in Orange. Jess has been instrumental in helping forge a closer partnership between the Society and like-minded local organizations, in particular with the James Madison Museum of OC Heritage across the street. This will be Jess' first full term as an elected board member.



Thompson

# 2025 program schedule

*Dates and times are subject to change.*

## > No February Program

## > Sunday March 30, 3 p.m.

Prelude to Yorktown 1781- Lafayette vs. Cornwallis in Virginia

## > Sunday April 27, 3 p.m.

Military and Political Career of Gov. General James L. Kemper

## > Sunday, May 11, 3 p.m.

Religious Liberty in the Virginia Piedmont

## > Sunday, June 29, 5 p.m.

Rocklands Farm Museum (picnic)

## > Sunday July 27, 3 p.m.

History of the Montpelier Hunt Races (picnic)

## > Sunday, Aug. 24, 3 p.m.

Virginia Indians in the Piedmont

## > Sunday, Sept. 28, 3 p.m.

Germanna Archaeology (picnic)

## > Saturday, Oct. 18, 3 p.m.

Dr. John Leland & Virginia's Baptists

## > Sunday, Nov. 16, 3 p.m.

Virginia Indian Eel Pots

## > No December Program

All programs will be held at the Sandra and William H. Speiden Auditorium, 130 Caroline St., Orange, VA, unless otherwise noted. For programs being held in the auditorium, please be in your seats no later than 2:55 p.m. Livestreaming starts promptly at 3:00 p.m.



## James Madison's Montpelier year-end report

**By Krista Costello**

*Acting President and CEO*

**A**s you read through our year-end report, there are a few highlights that I want to share as a result of your support and participation:

- Empowered 112 teachers from 17 states and 30 law enforcement officers from Virginia and Maryland through the Robert H. Smith Center for the Constitution's immersive seminars.

- Welcomed more than 40,000 visitors to engage with "government by the people."

- Received a \$2.5M grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative that will support the development of a new permanent exhibition at Montpelier's David M. Rubenstein Visitor Center. It

is entitled, "The Most Sacred of All Property": James Madison and Freedom of Conscience.

- Awarded two matching grants: The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation pledged \$500,000 in unrestricted funds as a 1:1 matching gift to support a \$1 million investment in The Montpelier Foundation; and the Nancy Woodson Spire Foundation awarded a 1:1, \$100,000 unrestricted matching grant.

These milestones are not just accomplishments; they are a testament to the power of partnership and the shared belief in preserving our nation's history for future generations. Montpelier is not just a window to the past but a mirror for the present and a guidepost for the future.

## Mine Run 5K/10K Run/Walk, March 8th, 8:30 am. to benefit Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FOWB)

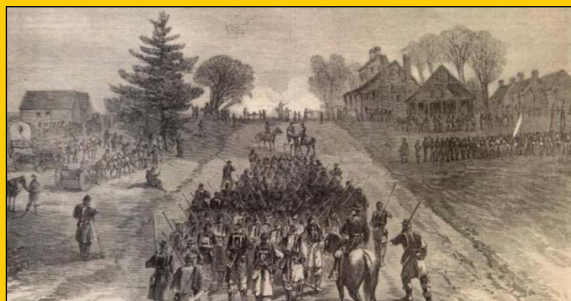
On Saturday, March 8, walkers and runners will come together to run/walk either a 5K or 10K course and discover the location of the Battle of Payne's Farm, which happened during the Mine Run Campaign in the late fall of 1863. FOWB is hosting this event in hopes that people will learn more about this special place. The site is owned by the American Battlefield Trust, which has graciously given FOWB permission to host this rally. Participants receive a T-shirt and a medal, and FOWB is offering sponsorships if individuals or organizations would like to have their names listed on the FOWB website or their logo on the T-shirts.

To sign up to participate in this rally, please register by going to [fowb.org](http://fowb.org) and scrolling down to the Registration Form in Latest News and Updates.



PHOTO COURTESY FOWB  
Paynes Farm

## History-to-Go



DRAWING BY ALFRED WAUD

### The Mine Run Campaign of 1863- Presented by Greg Mertz, retired National Park Service Historian

Greg Mertz spoke of opportunities missed in the late November-early December, 1863, Mine Run Campaign in Orange County. Recently, Mertz concluded a 40-year career working as a historian and interpreter for the National Park Service in Gettysburg, PA and Fredericksburg, VA. He has authored the book *“Attack Them at Daylight and Whip Them”*: The Battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862. In retirement, Greg conducts tours for Battlefield Tours of Virginia and serves on the boards of Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, the Brandy Station Foundation, and the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table. To view the program, click on this link: <https://youtu.be/wms-YufyVcl>

## Board briefs

### From the January meeting of the OCHS Board of Directors

Cold weather, rain and snow occupied the Board last month, with a roof leak, snow removal, and a heating and cooling system inspection and thermostat replacement demanding their attention.

Saturday, March 22 was set for the annual Board retreat this year. On the agenda will be:

- Long-range staff planning
- Budget planning
- Collection preservation



## 50 years ago: Page 1 of the *Orange County Review*

Feb. 6, 1975

The ruling on that mobile home park that was denied by the Board of Supervisors is being appealed to the Supreme Court of Virginia. In other news it seems that Orange is right in the middle of its neighbors when it comes to income ranking. Reporting on the 1972 tax year, the Department of Taxation says Orange came in behind Albemarle, Spotsylvania and Culpeper, but it ranked second in percentage (41.3%) of its population making \$15,000 or more.

Feb. 13, 1975

The subdivision ordinance continues to spark lively debate. The Board of Supervisors enacted an emergency provision to rule on subdivisions of up to 15 acres in size. In other news, the Special Ed program is born. Following a state mandate, the School Board agreed, “to provide services for handicapped children between the ages of 2 and 21.”

Feb. 20, 1975

The County registrar has purged 623 voters from the rolls. These are people who “have failed to vote in at least one election during the last four consecutive calendar years.” The registrar added that these voters may have died, moved away, or just failed to vote. They represent 11.3% of the electorate. Also, the long-standing Linden Farm rezoning dispute is resolved.

Feb. 27, 1975

It seems people weren't too upset about the voter purging. Six voters requalified. In other news, the Board of Supervisors advertised a public hearing on making the subdivision ordinance apply to subdivisions of up to 15 acres. Currently it only applies to three-acre subdivisions. Also, Woodberry Forest announced it would begin accepting female day students.

## Membership

Interested in Orange County history? Become a member of the historical society. Visit [www.orangecovahist.org](http://www.orangecovahist.org).