

**Park Ranger Jim Burgess** announces the preservation of the Davis tract, a swath of land near Manassas National Battlefield Park where the Battle of Second Manassas occurred 141 years ago. Supporters raised \$600,000 to buy the land.



PHOTOS BY MARGARET THOMAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

## Preserving a Piece of Civil War History

### Groups Celebrate Purchase of Land

By ERIC M. WEISS  
 Washington Post Staff Writer

Civil War preservationists, National Park Service officials and area homeowners took time last week, on the 141st anniversary of the Second Battle of Manassas, to celebrate a victory of their own: saving a key piece of the battlefield that was in private hands and up for sale.

Three years ago, neighbors looking to preserve a rural setting teamed with the Civil War Preservation Trust and state officials to save the 136-acre property known as the Davis tract. Quickly raising more than \$600,000, including more than \$100,000 from members of the Sudley Mountain/Stony Ridge Civic Association—much of it borrowed—the group purchased the land.

The groups gathered at the battlefield park headquarters Thursday to announce officially that the land is almost paid off and to unveil a plaque honoring those who contributed to the purchase.

The densely wooded tract west of the park is thought to be the site where, on Aug. 29, 1862, Union forces briefly broke through Confederate lines led by Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Because of the estimated 2,000 men wounded and killed during the assault, local historians and preservationists have said that the tract was the most important piece of unprotected land remaining from the two battles of Manassas.



John C. Hermansen, left, Mary Lekander and Bill Kilbourne applaud as Charlotte Turner unveils a plaque honoring contributors who helped purchase the 136-acre property.

"This was real history that needed to be saved," said Jim Campi of the Civil War Preservation Trust, who credited the homeowners group for much of the effort's success. "It was really their commitment to raising \$100,000 that made the difference. This is unheard of; it almost never happens."

In addition to money from the homeowners, the preservation trust donated \$300,000 and the state of Virginia contributed \$200,000.

"We know there was some fighting, troop movements, a lot of things happened there," said battlefield park Superintendent Robert K. Sutton. "There are pieces of the battle that are outside of our jurisdiction and that we don't have control over, and the Davis tract was one of

them."

Sutton said there was little the park service could do by itself. A restriction dating from 1980 prevents the park's growth without congressional authorization, and the National Park Service is perennially short of cash.

"For the park service, other than giving encouragement and a place to put the plaque, there wasn't much to do."

John C. Hermansen, president of the civic association, said many of its 50 homeowners borrowed to help raise the cash quickly.

One family donated \$30,000. Another homeowner donated a sizable chunk of stock in the Walt Disney Co., which once

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## Sheriff's Race, Campaigning Heating Up

### Candidates Tout Records, Opposing Goals for Office

By JOSH WHITE and STEVEN GINSBERG  
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With a little more than two months remaining until Prince William County voters head to the polls, the race for county sheriff is fast developing into the county's most contentious and compelling campaign, with the candidates offering nearly opposite views of how the office should be run.

The campaign's first few months were relatively quiet. Sheriff E. Lee Stoffregen III (D) tossed out a few early barbs at Col. Glendell Hill, superintendent of the county's regional jail and a newly sprouted Republican, but Hill didn't take the bait. Hill largely didn't answer Stoffregen's charges that he was a "puppet" of county administrators, instead citing his record of superlative evaluations—which were partly approved by Stoffregen, who sits on the jail's board.

Since then, however, both candidates have been working the political scene carefully, talking up their records and their goals for the office. Hill has been speaking about reining in Stoffregen's ambitious law enforcement efforts, which he says cause unwanted controversy in the county. Stoffregen has been touting those efforts as successes and has been vowing to continue to push them to make the county safer.

A tighter-than-expected Democratic primary victory left Stoffregen acknowledging that he needs to win back some support from his party, while the county's Republicans have been lining up behind Hill.

Recently, Hill jump-started his campaign with a brief speech to supporters at the county's Police Association Hall in Independent Hill, part of a fundraising celebration with family and friends that included a light buffet and a homey atmosphere: Children ran through the hall playing, gatherers sat at round tables chatting, and Hill introduced more than a dozen relatives to the crowd.

Perhaps the most notable thing about the event was the attendance list. U.S. Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.) spoke of Hill's integrity and experience; Board of County Supervisors Chairman Sean T. Connaughton (R) said that Hill is a "great man" who will bring professionalism to the office; Manassas Vice Mayor Harry J. "Hal" Parrish Jr. said his political family is behind Hill all the way.

In addition, Police Chief Charlie T. Deane—in civilian attire, with his wife—was announced to the gathering. Although he did not speak during the event and declined to comment afterward, it was Deane's first appearance at a political fundraiser in his three decades with the police department.

Stoffregen's relationship with the police force has been contentious and strained, and a long-simmering feud between the departments boiled over publicly during Stoffregen's latest term in office: The county's board held up his budget while trying to force a memorandum of understanding between Stoffregen and Deane. The board received the memo, but it is unclear what has changed as a result.

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