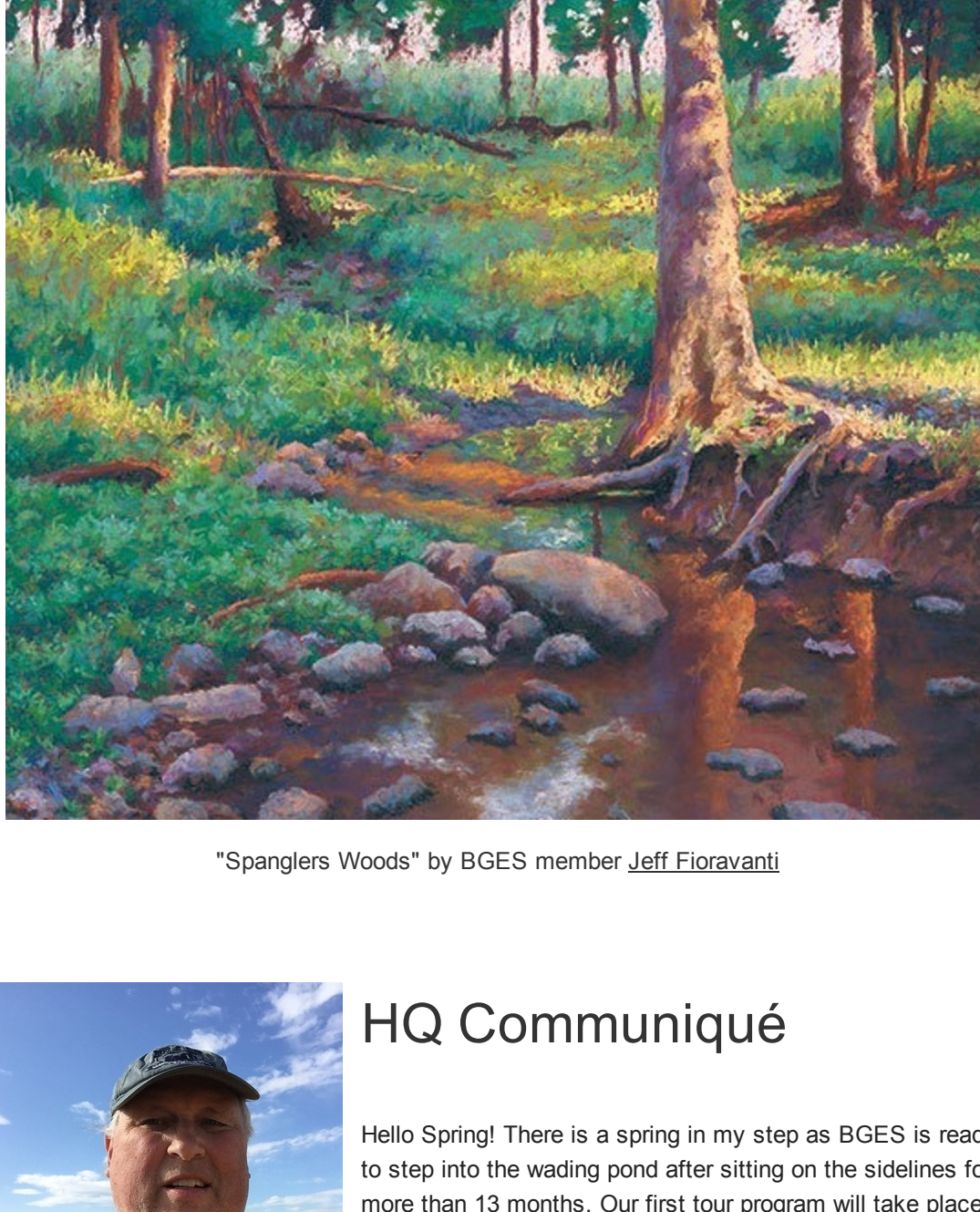
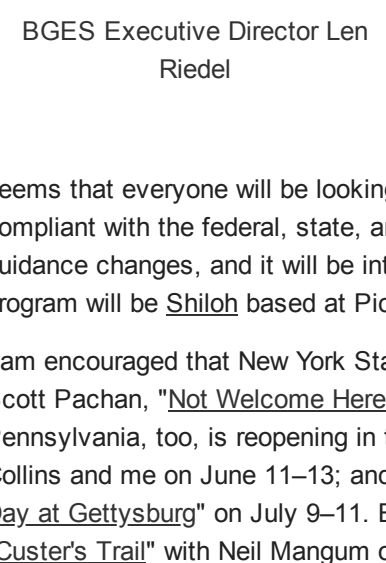




April 2021



"Spanglers Woods" by BGES member [Jeff Fioravanti](#)



BGES Executive Director Len Riedel

HQ Communiqué

Hello Spring! There is a spring in my step as BGES is ready to step into the wading pond after sitting on the sidelines for more than 13 months. Our first tour program will take place in Dalton, Georgia, on April 21–25. We will be doing the first part of the Atlanta Campaign with Robert Jenkins based out of the LaQuinta Inn and Suites. The program includes two tours—[The Battles of Dalton: Chapter 1 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign](#); and [The Battles Around Resaca: Chapter 2 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign](#)—which have been rescheduled from 2020 and are being executed back-to-back. Like every other business, we are working within many constraints, and it

seems that everyone will be looking over our shoulders, and so we will be conservative and compliant with the federal, state, and local guidelines. These will ebb and flow as the government guidance changes, and it will be interspersed with a good deal of common sense. Our second program will be [Shiloh](#) based at Pickwick Landing on May 12–15 with historian Greg Mertz.

I am encouraged that New York State is reopening some 60 days before our Saratoga program with Scott Pachan, "[Not Welcome Here: Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne Invades New York](#)," Pennsylvania, too, is reopening in time for the "[Gettysburg 101](#)" program being presented by Dave Collins and me on June 11–13; and Scott Hartwig's program "[A Historian's Reflection on the First Day at Gettysburg](#)" on July 9–11. Before heading into July, we also are looking forward to "[Custer's Trail](#)" with Neil Mangum on June 20–29; and "[All's Fair in War: Streight's Raid and Forrest's Bluff](#)," with Brian Wills and Norm Dasinger on June 25–27.

The gold standard is certainly going to be vaccination. It is the federal gold standard, and insurance companies are looking at how those coins are used. BGES is building out from vaccinated people, so immunized people are receiving the greatest flexibility in being allowed to participate. If you are not vaccinated, you can participate, but you have to social distance and cannot ride with the vaccination train. The "science" says that those vaccinated are not going to get sick or hospitalized with Covid, but they can be carriers, and so in a mixed crowd those without protection are liable to be exposed by a nonsymptomatic person who has immunity. Our liability insurance allows us to do these programs provided we comply with official guidance—thus minimizing the likelihood of legal action should someone contract the virus on the tour. We will use masks, sterilization measures, social distancing, and temperature checks. All will wear a hunting vest: One color represents a vaccinated person, the other color an unprotected person. This visual confirmation—a regular feature for hunters during hunting season—allows people to be visually aware of their own space and the vulnerability of others. While I agree these are extreme measures, please respect that each person has their own thoughts and reservations about the virus. It is out of an abundance of caution that the board of directors has permitted us to conditionally restart our educational programs. Of course we expect to shed restrictions as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. Without these measures, it could be another three or four months or longer before we could resume our tours.

Vaccines are now widely available, and to enjoy the pleasures of immunity you will have to provide the written documentation of immunization, having been completed no later than two weeks before the program you are attending. Is it a pain in the butt? Of course it is. But so, too, has been the past year, and this is a small price to pay to return to the arena. I am sure you will agree.

We are working on registration forms now, and you should keep an eye out at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.

A few more tidbits before I close.

BGES members accomplished a herculean task between December and yesterday. We entered December owing \$25,000. Our Kettle Appeal raised nearly \$10,000, and so impressed one of our members that he put up a challenge grant of \$7,750 to be matched dollar-for-dollar to take the BGES completely out of debt. More than 70 members responded to a Facebook and written challenge to bring us nearly \$10,000 and counting. With the challenge met, the check was released and BGES paid off its \$25,000 December debt in full last week. Thank you—it feels mighty good.

The BGES Video Archives project has posted more than 100 videos and nearly 200 BGES members have signed up to enjoy unlimited access and use of them and the other 200-plus that are going up this year. We add a new program every week with 3 to 8 lectures added. We have raised about \$26,000 of the projected budget of \$32,000 for this first phase. We will raise the remainder by the end of June.

Finally, we have opened a free YouTube site that has three set lectures from the Video Archives as a teaser, and a dozen interviews conducted by me with the historians who will be leading our tours this year—all free and ready to view now. There is even an interview with me that lasts about an hour and gives you some candid insight into BGES its history, its successes and failures, and how we navigated Covid. It has played to good reviews

So much to do. Next is catching up with membership management that took a back seat the past two months. Some of you due to renew in February, March, and April have yet to be asked. I will ask this week, and in return ask your goodwill and timely reply. You have always come through, and the ask is one of the pleasures I enjoy. Look for it in the mail if you are due.

To those 1,400 or so reading our emails, thank you. Nine hundred are not members or are past due members of the BGES. We would surely welcome your membership support. Do so at our website under membership—it is self-explanatory. Till the May flowers arrive. . . after the April showers.

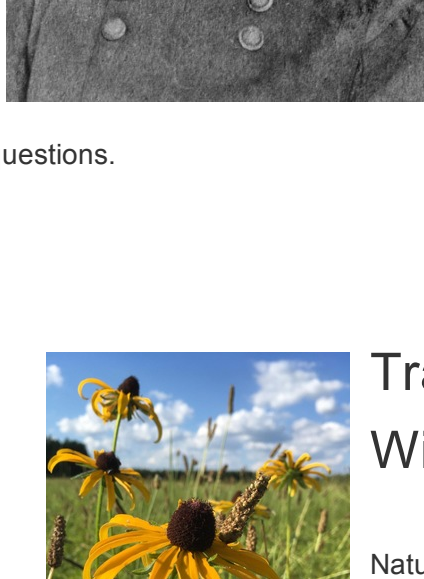
Thank you for your interest,

—Len Riedel

BGES Executive Director

April Happenings: The Spring Campaign

Welcome to the April 2021 issue of *Holding the Line!* This month we hear from Brian Steel Wills and Norm Dasinger and their upcoming tour that follows in the footsteps of Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his capture of Union Gen. Abel Streight's force. The tour is slated for June 25–27, 2021—this is one you won't want to miss. Executive Director Len Riedel recently read *Dee Brown's Civil War Anthology*. What did he think? Does he recommend it? As spring blooms around us, we visit some battlefields offering primo wildflower hikes. And last but not never least, we feature a BGES member who is making a difference by offering Civil War tours—from England. Enjoy!

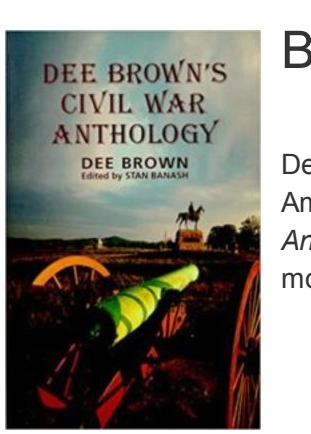


Tour Talk: All's Fair in War, with Brian Steel Wills and Norm Dasinger

Nathan Bedford Forrest's pursuit and capture of Union Gen. Abel Streight's Union force was controversial from the start. Was it a poorly conceived attack against southern resources or a clever distraction from Grant's master plan to take Vicksburg? We met up with the leaders of an upcoming BGES tour that explores these age-old

questions.

[Read More](#)



Travel Guide: Spring Wildflower Hikes

Natural expanses that once saw the ferocity of war are now peaceful escapes with the added gift in spring of ... wildflowers! Where are the best wildflower hikes?

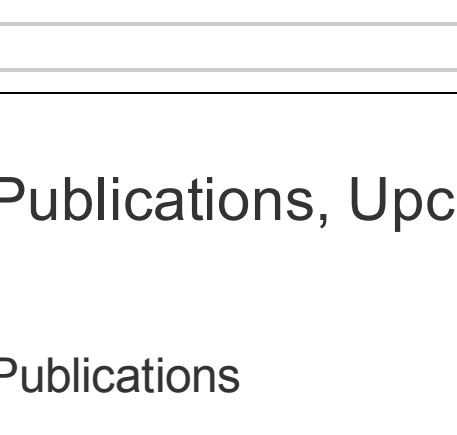
[Read More](#)



Book Review

Dee Brown is a big name in the world of Western writers. Among his 30-plus books is *Dee Brown's Civil War Anthology*, which BGES Executive Director reviews this month. Does it hold up to the author's legendary reputation?

[Read More](#)



Members Making A Difference

Hailing from across the pond, this British historian operates a Civil War tour company based in England.

[Read More](#)

Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

Publications

BGES Authors: Civil War scholar Scott Patchan is, above all, an expert in northern Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. He's written a number of books showcasing his expertise, which across the board received rave reviews on his high standard of research, attention to detail, and level of analysis. These titles are all welcome additions to your Civil War libraries: *The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont* (1996), *Shenandoah Summer: The 1864 Valley Campaign* (2007), *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* (2011), *The Battle of Piedmont and Hunter's Raid on Staunton* (2011), and *The Last Battle of Winchester: Phil Sheridan, Jubal Early and the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign* (2013).

In Camp Along the Monocacy: The "In Camp Along the Monocacy" newsletter has been temporarily suspended while Len gets the Dispatches and Video Archives settled. Look for it again by the summer. To see what you are missing, click [here](#) (and scroll down) to visit the archives of the past newsletters.

Upcoming Tours

See latest schedule [here](#).

April 21–23, 2021: "The Atlanta Campaign on the Weekends: The Battles of Dalton—Chapter 1 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign," with Robert Jenkins, from Dalton, Georgia

April 23–25, 2021: "The Atlanta Campaign on the Weekends: The Battles Around Resaca—Chapter 2 of the 1864 Georgia Campaign," with Robert Jenkins, from Dalton, Georgia

May 12–15, 2021: "Shiloh, Bloody April" with Greg Mertz, from Pickwick Landing State Park, Tennessee

June 2–6, 2021: "Not Welcome Here: Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne Invades New York," with Scott Patchan, from Lake George, New York

June 11–13, 2021: "Civil War 101: Gettysburg," with Dave Collins and Len Riedel, from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

June 20–29, 2021: "Custer's Trail," with Neil Mangum, from Bismarck, North Dakota

Upcoming Zoom Presentations

Get to know the historians making a difference for our 2021 programs via lively Q&A or lecture every Wednesday at 8 p.m. Each program will be announced the day after the previous interview was conducted and will require registration to receive the sign-in credentials and the instructions.

April 5, 2021: Scott Patchan and Gary Ecelbarger, Phil Sheridan in the Valley Interview

April 12, 2021: Len Riedel, 1775 WARI Lecture

April 19, 2021: Tim Smith, Vicksburg The Grand Assaults Interview

April 26, 2021: Len Riedel, The Battles for New Orleans Lecture

BGES Video Archives

BGES has been busy posting our video archives—BGES Field University lectures from the past—on the BGES website as well as YouTube. To date, 100 lectures are posted online, with 16 additional on the YouTube channel, including 12 from 2021 tour leaders talking about their upcoming tours. You don't want to miss these vintage and contemporary lectures celebrating the best moments of BGES and the most revered historians through the years.

Sign up to view the archives [here](#) (BGES members only), and sign in [here](#) to view the YouTube channel.

AmazonSmile

When you order goods from Amazon, you can benefit BGES in the process. One-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon—if you sign up at smile.amazon.com. On your first visit you will be prompted to choose BGES as your charitable organization.

BGES also has a charity list on Amazon for needed items. Go [here](#) for the prompt.

Investors' Reports

Detailed reports for donors and prospective donors are available for download from our website on [Our Mission](#) page.

BGES Recruiting Station

Membership

As a member of BGES, you will be part of a community devoted to saving our Civil War. You will receive our e-newsletter, updated info on upcoming tours, and access to some of our greatest historians. [Join here](#).

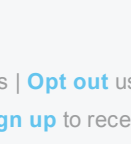
Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

Dubose's Rangers

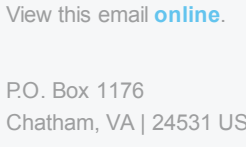
We would also like you to consider joining the [Dubose's Rangers](#) (formerly the QuarterGurad Program), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis. The program is named in honor of the late David Dubose, who passed on February 17, 2021. He donated to BGES over 400 times in his life including every month from June 1996, and he has made provisions to continue donating every month in perpetuity.

BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

What Will You Be Remembered For? Be part of BGES's future by making an endowment or legacy gift. [Contact us](#) if you would like to make an endowment or legacy gift.



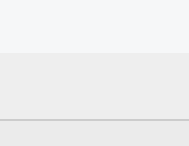
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