

SAVE OUR  
SEMINARY



AT FOREST GLEN

# SOS NEWS

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SOS News is the newsletter of Save Our Seminary, the nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the historic National Park Seminary and engaging the public through education and advocacy since 1989.

## **Next SOS Program in Ballroom**

**Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 7:30 pm –**

### **The Army Years at Forest Glen: Soldier Care During World War II**

We have learned in previous programs about the physical changes the Army made to the Seminary campus when Walter Reed Army Hospital took over the school in 1942 to provide a rehabilitation center for wounded soldiers. But we've heard little about what life was like for the patients at the Forest Glen Annex.

Join SOS Board Member Donald Hall as he explores life at the Seminary for the patients – who they were, who decided they would go to Forest Glen for care, and the types of care provided to them, including medical treatment, therapy, and recreational activities. The focus will be on the World War II years at this unique military medical facility, although the facility was used for patient care through the Korean conflict and the Vietnam War.

Mark your calendars and watch for a reminder about this program in early May – or respond now to [info@saveourseminary.org](mailto:info@saveourseminary.org) or call SOS at 301-589-1715.

The next SOS programs in the ballroom will be held in the fall:

### **Wednesday, September 12 – The Seminary Sculpture Collection**

The Seminary's outdoor sculptures are a varied mix of subjects, styles and materials, including a bronze Joan of Arc, a three-tiered marble fountain, and a pair of now-headless griffins. Come and learn the history and significance of the sculptures that still exist today.

### **Wednesday, November 14 – Who Were The Seminary Students?**

People often ask SOS: "Did anyone famous go to school here?" The answer is YES! We'll tell you who they were and let you know what happened to these students after they attended NPS.

## Site Happenings

The early and mild spring weather has helped the owners of the sorority houses make good progress on their homes. The pagoda now has a completely redone concrete terrace to replace the one that was collapsing. Interior walls added or covered by the Army on the first floor have been removed, and the intricate decorative wood screens that extend about two feet down from the ceiling are once again exposed.

The American bungalow has been a busy place, with the roof replaced, all the Army additions removed inside, windows in the process of being restored, and framing up for the new rooms. It's wonderful to see the upper floor wide open as it was originally so that the peaked ceiling and large stone fireplace are even more impressive.

The chalet work continues inside also, to stabilize and shore up the areas that started to bow in the large expansive rooms. This work required the temporary partial removal of the top floor, which then opened up the view to the floor below, as it was during the Seminary years.

## More Sculpture Out in Spring

SOS will start the sculpture restoration work for this year with the cleaning of three statues – a reclining lion, a young woman, and the Nymph and Satyr. SOS member volunteers who were trained by a professional conservator last year will lead the cleaning process. Once cleaned, these statues will be placed in their original or near-original locations. Come and visit the site in a couple months to see where they are!

## Treasures in the Archives

SOS acquired this striking lithographic poster in February from an eBay seller in Corning, NY. The poster is in very good condition and the colors are still quite bright. It shows a seminary student at the now demolished Forest Glen train station with a large blue hatbox on her lap, sitting on one of her three steamer trunks either on her way to the Seminary or on her way home.



The poster probably dates from the period 1899 to 1901 based on the student's clothing and hairstyle, as well as the presence of Kappa House (the Windmill) built in 1899 and the absence of the Odeon theater built in 1901. SOS will soon have reproductions of this 22" x 16" poster available for sale.

## Naughty and Nice Program

On March 14, 51 people attended the first SOS program of the year entitled *Naughty and Nice: More Stories from the Seminary Girls* in the NPS ballroom. Board member Anne Brockett pored through the SOS archives for photos and anecdotes of the Seminary students on their best and worst behavior. Letters, yearbooks, catalogs, scrapbooks, and diaries provided first-hand accounts of Seminary life through the eyes of a good girl, a spoiled girl, and a homesick girl, along with faculty and parents. Some of the many topics touched on included money, drinking, smoking, and sneaking out.

One interesting aspect of the school was its view on food. The students ate in the elegant dining room for all three meals. They were expected to dress for dinner, and each table had an assigned hostess who managed the girls' etiquette. With the exception of fruit and nuts, food from outside was forbidden. The school was very strict on this matter and inspected all incoming packages to remove anything deemed unhealthy (i.e., candy and cakes). One student enlisted her mother's help to evade this rule by having her send cakes in a box with bricks that was labeled "books." Another recounted that when the girls went into Washington, DC to shop, they would order candy be mailed to them in corset boxes because they knew those wouldn't be opened!

Other naughty tales involved topless sunbathing on the roof of the Villa, a huge water fight in Senior House, and sneaking in and out a window below the ballroom without being caught by the night watchman. One enterprising student who did not own a car, or even know how to drive one, managed to convince a classmate to help her steal one and drive into Washington to visit her boyfriend. They didn't know how to get there, so they drove on the railroad tracks because they knew the tracks would eventually lead them downtown!



A "naughty" NPS girl rides one of the many statues on the grounds.

After relating these stories, the evening ended with footage from the alumnae reunion in May 2010, hosted by SOS. Hearing the students' stories in their own words capped off an entertaining and enlightening evening of learning about the pranks and devilish behavior at a school renowned for its refined young ladies.