

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.

## Sculpture Project

In late June, SOS revived three seminary-era sculptures from years in storage and returned them to the campus. A team of member volunteers—Peggy and Fred Gervasi, Stephanie Rico, Frank Riley, and Bonnie Rosenthal—devoted five hours on a warm Sunday morning to scrubbing years of accumulated dirt from these valuable artifacts.

A small concrete reclining lion, once part of a matched pair, is now at its original location on the stairway of Aloha House at the Porch of the Maidens. Unfortunately its twin was stolen shortly before this one was put in storage.

The dramatic marble statue of the Nymph and Faun from Greek mythology is now temporarily located on the lawn near the ballroom driveway. Further removal of a glue-like substance on portions of the statue is needed before it can be moved indoors to a main hallway below the ballroom level.

The third sculpture, another marble figure referred to as the young girl, was placed in the small park between townhouses on Cassidy Street, across from the gymnasium. SOS volunteer Stephanie Rico researched for images of similar statues and discovered that the seminary statue is a traditional example of the Victorian symbol of Hope, identified by an anchor. Though missing her raised arm and the shaft of the anchor, the curved end of the anchor is still recognizable. Special thanks is due to SOS member Lee Babcock, owner and renovator of the Swiss chalet, for lending his time, talent and front-end loader to move Hope from storage to her new location.



Nymph and Faun

## Site Happenings

The end of June brought bad news to the seminary site when a violent storm passed through the Washington, DC area and caused many power outages and tree damage. A large tree next to the chapel split into two, and one half crashed through the roof of Aloha House, piercing the bedroom ceiling of one of the condominiums on the second floor. No one was hurt and damage was limited to the roof and bedroom. Otherwise the seminary suffered only some other minor tree damage from the destructive storm.

The carpenter's cottage, a simple early 20<sup>th</sup> century house on the original seminary property near the stables building, was demolished by the Army after standing empty and deteriorating for many years. This house was on land retained by the Army when the seminary was transferred for redevelopment, and was not included in the official seminary historic district.

Some good news is that the renovation of the American bungalow on the fountain circle is progressing well and now has a completely new palette of light green shingle siding, very dark green window trim and porch columns—and a bright red front door!

Spring weather always brings lots of growth to the glen and its walkways. About a dozen or so residents of the seminary spent a warm Saturday morning in mid-May cleaning up both the overgrowth in the glen and general trash around the site. Before redevelopment started, SOS sponsored such landscape cleanups, so it's good to see residents volunteer to keep the glen accessible and enjoyable to walk.

## Treasures in the Archives

SOS recently acquired an item we always hoped to obtain—a school uniform. This acquisition is only a partial uniform, though, of the blouse in a vivid blue silk with the NPS logo on one sleeve. In remarkable, almost new condition, it is fashioned in the classic middy style.



The blouse bears the label of the local upscale retailer, Julius Garfinckel & Co. of Washington and Paris, which at the time provided the uniforms to the students of National Park Seminary. In the 1934 NPS catalog, there are many images of the girls wearing this style of blouse. After looking at the sepia-toned world of the catalog, it is breathtaking to actually see a piece of history that is fresh and rich in brilliant blue silk.

We plan to display this blouse at one of our future ballroom programs.

## The Forest Glen Annex in World War II

The National Park College was closed in 1942 in order for the Walter Reed Army Hospital to use the campus as a facility for convalescing soldiers, which they called Forest Glen Annex. But which soldiers were sent there, and what exactly did they do on the campus during the war years?

Patients were sorted based on their ability to recover and be returned to duty. It was those patients who were not going to return to duty, but could be returned to society with a few months' training, who went to Forest Glen.

And what facilities did they find at Forest Glen? First, they found room for 1,156 patients, with additional housing for 75 single officers, 80 nurses, 120 enlisted men and 40 servants. They also found a number of activities designed to keep them busy and rehabilitate their injuries, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, a music department, and dance classes.

Patient treatment capabilities included a laboratory, a dental clinic, ear, nose and throat and eye clinics, an artificial limb fabrication shop, and a pharmacy.

Services available to patients and off-duty soldiers included a post exchange, a barbershop, gas station, tailor shop, library, a bike loan program, a telephone center, post office, and movies—shown in the gymnasium every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. The 40-member 304<sup>th</sup> Army Service Forces Band was assigned to Forest Glen in 1943 and billeted in the Odeon. Religious support was provided for Protestants and Catholics by assigned military chaplains, while Jewish soldiers were provided services by local rabbis, with services every Thursday night.

By August 1945 the Army had built five one-story cinder block buildings near the gym as training and administrative facilities to provide soldiers new skills before they left the service. The largest building was constructed on the former seminary playing field and housed an auto shop, machine shop, carpentry shop, and a radio and electric shop. A small building held the administrative offices for the rehabilitation program, while another housed the music department, including individual soundproof practice rooms. Two other larger buildings contained a crafts shop and classrooms for training in typing, sign painting, drafting, and business machines.

Convalescing soldiers playing softball in April 1945 at Forest Glen. Sports participation was an important part of rehabilitation to help boost morale.



Although the war ended in August 1945, activities at Forest Glen did not subside. As the Army demobilized and closed hospitals at other installations, patients were transferred to Walter Reed and continued to arrive from hospitals in the former theaters of war.

Patient populations ebbed and flowed as the Army fought the wars in Korea and Vietnam. But it wasn't until 1976, when the "new hospital" was opened on Walter Reed's main campus in Washington, DC that the last patient left the Forest Glen Annex, and it transformed into an administrative and research facility with limited officer housing.

## **SAVE THESE DATES!**

### **Wednesday, September 12, 7:30 pm – 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.

### **Sunday, September 30, 1-5 pm – Historic House Tour**

SOS is presenting a special tour of several historic single-family homes and condominiums at National Park Seminary that will be open for viewing to share their history and showcase their successful renovation. The cost is \$25 per person. Funds raised by the tour will help SOS continue its mission to preserve historic NPS and engage the public. Watch for your invitation soon!