

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.

SOS Committees

Do you like to write? Interested in telling the history of National Park Seminary? Want to inventory the archives? Help with a fundraising event? Clean a statue? You can do any of these things—and more—by joining one of SOS's committees. We are always glad to have SOS members get more involved, and being part of our active committees is the best way. Here's a list of the committees with their descriptions and plans for the year:

Collections Committee – Collects, preserves, and manages historical materials and artifacts related to the NPS site and makes them available to the public through displays, publications, lectures, and tours. Priorities include inventorying the archives, transcribing student letters, conducting oral histories, and creating a list of all NPS students and faculty.

Education Committee – Communicates the history of the NPS site through tours, programs, publications, and special events. In addition to guiding the monthly public tours and private group tours, and presenting quarterly educational events in the ballroom, this committee will also organize a special house tour.

Development and Membership Committee – Develops and implements strategies to ensure financial viability of SOS through fundraising, relationship building, and membership development. Activities include increasing membership focusing on NPS residents and friends of SOS, developing communication relationships with neighborhood groups, and conducting a fundraising event in the ballroom.

Sculpture Committee – Conserves, restores, and helps maintain the NPS sculpture and educates the community and public about its artistic and cultural heritage. Specific priorities for the year are restoring the pair of zinc lions, refinishing the pair of iron lamps, cleaning the three largest stone statues, and raising funds to restore additional statues.

Communications Committee – Develops and coordinates all forms of communications to further the SOS mission and promote activities. This committee produces the quarterly newsletter, manages the SOS website, posts to Facebook, and supports other committees' communication needs.

Contact SOS at info@saveourseminary.org or 301-589-1715 to join a committee or find out more about how you can help save our seminary through hands-on involvement.

Site News

The winter months are usually quiet ones around the seminary, but this season there has been quite a lot of real estate activity. As a sign that the economy and housing market are picking up, several of the unrestored buildings were sold. The unique Spanish mission sorority house, whose exterior was restored a couple of years ago, was bought by an individual who will complete its renovation as a single-family home. Three other buildings—the stable, men’s quarters, and carpentry shop—were sold as a single parcel to a developer who will renovate them as residences.

The large parcel on the other side of the glen that includes the villa and castle was also sold to a developer who is planning a sensitive reuse of the site. The gymnasium, the building we are most concerned about because of its deteriorated condition, is still in limbo as to its redevelopment, but we are hopeful a sale will be forthcoming soon.

An important interior restoration project was completed in President’s House in November. The large stained glass window on the grand staircase landing was restored with most of its original glass and new matching glass for damaged or missing pieces. The window was slightly reconfigured for more energy efficiency, but it is still very close to the original layout.



Some people may have seen recently what looks like a wooden road through the middle of the glen. This is a temporary road for the water and sewer utility to repair a deteriorated sewer pipe. Although a number of small trees were removed for this work, now the glen looks more open as it did during the Seminary years.

Treasures in the Archives

SOS was always puzzled by the broken piece of a marble hand holding some unknown object that likely came from a statue—until an “aha” moment recently. In researching the statue of Hope that we brought out of storage and placed on the campus last summer, we found a photo of an almost identical statue in a cemetery in Pennsylvania which was intact, and realized this broken piece was Hope’s left hand holding the anchor at her side. Mystery piece solved! Hope is still missing other parts, however, as you can see.



The hand of Hope found



SOS Calendar of Events

We have planned a busy year of activities, so save these dates!

Ballroom Events

Saturday, March 9, 7:30 pm

Castles in the Movies – The life of famous dance couple Vernon and Irene Castle will be portrayed in a 1939 movie by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Irene Foote Castle was a student at National Park Seminary in 1908-1909, where she started a craze for the “bob” haircut and was later expelled.

Tuesday, May 14, 7:30 pm

Past and Present Photo Tour – Take a photo tour of the National Park Seminary through its more than 100 years of history from a school to Army medical facility to deterioration and then rehabilitation to its current life as a residential community.

Thursday, October 17, 7:30 pm

Forest Glen Annex During the Korean War – Hear about the Army's use of the former Seminary during this war, including similarities and differences from its use during World War II. A short excerpt from a television show will show Army activities on the Annex in 1954.

Sunday, November 17, 3-5 pm

Young Ladies of Fashion - Come learn about the National Park Seminary students' daily attire, formal wear, hairstyles, and other modes of adornment—some not approved of. Models will sport NPS-related garb and period clothing in a mini-fashion show!

Monthly Guided Tours

Our monthly guided tour schedule will remain the same as previous years, running from March through November on the fourth Saturday, and including one extra tour on a Sunday in August. SOS will feature special themes for three of these tours this year as an added bonus. The May tour will focus on the sororities, the July tour on our archives and collections, and the November tour on the Army era. Check our website for the exact dates of the tours at saveourseminary.org/schedules.

House Tour

Because our first historic house tour last September was so popular and successful, we are planning to hold another tour this year on Sunday, October 6, 3-5 pm.

Watch for more news and details as the date for each of these events approaches!

SOS Programs Online

If you have not been able to attend the SOS quarterly educational programs in the ballroom on the Seminary and Army history, you can now view the videotaped programs from 2010, 2011, and 2012 on YouTube via our website. Go to saveourseminary.org/gallery to connect to the program recordings.

Archives Donation

SOS received a generous \$1,000 donation to support our archives from the family of Ruth Corbett Dinger Barnard, NPS class of 1937, in her memory. Ruth was a proud member of SOS, and this contribution is a fitting memorial to preserving her history. The Collections Committee will determine the best use of this significant donation.

Sculpture Donations

SOS is grateful to all those who have donated to our fund for the restoration of the outdoor sculpture at National Park Seminary. To honor those who have been especially generous, we have hung a beautiful plaque just outside the SOS museum room in the main building listing their names. Those donors are:

Remembrance Level - \$2500 and above

In honor of Lenora Guseman Smith (NPC Class of 1941)

Donald and Ann Hall

Nancy Coleman

Renewal Level - \$1000 and above

Linda and Jonathan Lyons

Joyce Hamel

Josephine G. Farwell

Steven Laughton

Restoration Level - \$500 and above

Fred and Peggy Gervasi

Homer and Irene Hall

Katherine Coerver

Virginia Nuessle

David C. Jones

Carol Blimline



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