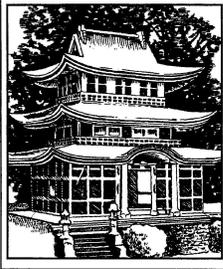


SAVE OUR  
SEMINARY



AT FOREST GLEN

# SOS ONLINE

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June – July 2008

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At the end of May, the preservation efforts at the National Park Seminary reached an important milestone – the first residents of an historic building on the campus moved into their new condominium units in Aloha House. The renovation of Aloha House maintained the basic floor plan of the original building, the rich variety of window styles, and the gabled roofline. A new design element is a third-floor terrace facing the gymnasium that was created by removing the roof of a staircase that dates to the Walter Reed era. Aloha's long history will be honored with enlarged historic photos in the main hallways and, at the entrance door of each unit, a handsome number plate with a profile photo of one of the caryatid statues that grace the front porch of Aloha. The building has seven condominium units, two of which have been purchased and are now occupied, with more to follow soon. It is also home to the condominium sales model and office, open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays and weekends, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Save Our Seminary: What's New?

Maintaining the public education component of the SOS mission throughout the Seminary renovation has been a priority for Save Our Seminary. Our monthly tours have continued and, despite construction equipment, a sometimes-muddy site, and security fencing, they continue to attract a large attendance – 110 in April, 52 in May, and 49 in June. To accommodate construction changes, our June tour began at a new location, in front of the Gymnasium. We will post future changes on our website, [www.saveourseminary.org](http://www.saveourseminary.org), under Tours, Dates and Directions.

As work on the Seminary's historic buildings proceeds, we have an opportunity to give our members an exclusive look at interior spaces that show the "before, during, and after" of the rehabilitation process. On June 25, SOS and the Alexandria Company hosted a construction progress tour for SOS members. Additional tours for members and new Seminary residents are scheduled in July and August. These invitation-only events are a precursor of the day when our monthly tours for the general public once again will include visits to beautiful interior spaces.

SOS is also beginning to plan its office and archive workspace, both of which will be located in the historic Main building. A professional museum planner volunteered his services to us, visited the site, advised us on space design and furnishings, and will

continue to work with us as we create a permanent home for SOS at the National Park Seminary.

We recently acquired several very important items from the estates of Tica Lowe and Roy Davis, Jr., the daughter and son of Roy Tasco Davis, the last president of the Seminary. A family spokesperson noted that the family appreciated the great importance of adding to the Save Our Seminary collection so that future generations can enjoy and learn from them. The donations include several pieces that were probably located in Seminary and, if not, are certainly very similar to what would have been found there – a large, floor-to-ceiling cherry wood china cabinet; a large, ornate wall mirror; and a brass cherub lamp, originally oil but converted to electricity. Also donated were numerous silverware items with the Seminary logo. Of special interest to future researchers are family members' letters describing the aftermath of the loss of the Seminary to the Army in 1942.

SOS also received a donation from the daughter of a 1913 Seminary alumnae that included about twenty letters from the student to her mother, three course catalogs (1911-12, 1912-13, and 1924-25), Athletics Department brochures (1911 and 1912), and photographs of student stage plays in the Odeon.

SOS purchased through an eBay auction a copy of a 1910-11 Seminary catalog, filling a hole in the large but not yet complete collection of Seminary publications.

#### *Construction Watch: What's New?*

In addition to the exciting news that Aloha House was completed and ready for occupancy, there are more signs of continuing progress. At Senior House, the deteriorated shingles on the front and side porches are being replaced with new cedar shingles that match the original, most notably in the unique wave pattern over the dormer windows. The new shingles will gradually weather and blend in with the stone and stucco elements of the Senior House facade.

Two new and very large air conditioner chiller units on the roofs of Main and President's House have been visually jarring addition to the historic architecture. The unit on Main was lowered six feet and is now partially hidden by a parapet. The unit on President's House is still being adjusted to decrease its impact.

Site work has started around Colonial House, the Windmill, and the American Bungalow to bring new utilities to these houses. This work required silt fences that will temporarily limit access to portions of the paths around the glen. The long-awaited restoration of the Spanish Mission sorority house at the corner of Linden Lane and Woodstock has just begun. During the Walter Reed era, substantial changes were made to the exterior that compromised its original style. The incompatible porch columns have been removed, and the windows are being stripped of many years of paint.

Illustrated “for sale” signs are up now at the Colonial House, the Windmill, the American Bungalow, the Japanese Bungalow, and the Spanish Mission. They will be offered for resale at different levels of renovation, from “as is” to completely renovated. Whichever option is chosen, the purchaser will be subject to the same strict preservation easements that govern all the historic buildings at the Seminary.

The Pagoda remains in use as the rental office for the apartments, which are located in Main. There is strong market interest in the 66 apartments and we expect occupancy to begin in September. The community room that will be available for all Seminary residents and the SOS office in the lobby area of Main is also scheduled to be finished in September.

However, the National Park Seminary redevelopment has not been unaffected by the problems in the current real estate market. The developers seem to be responding prudently to these changes. Conversion of the Power Plant, Practice House, and Firehouse into condominiums, which was to start this summer, has been put on hold while new investment funding is sought. Plans for the rehabilitation of the gymnasium into condominiums have been delayed until December and immediate stabilization of parts of the gym may not be possible. Although work continues, the completion schedule for the condominiums in the main buildings has been postponed to November, with phased occupancy likely to begin earlier.

#### *The Ireland Drive Carriage Trail: What's New?*

The Save Our Trail Coalition has been working closely with the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), the Montgomery County Parks Department, and Congressman Van Hollen's Office to preserve the public's access to the trail. Their task is far from complete, but they are getting some very positive results. Several months ago, the Army agreed to resolve the safety issues associated with the bridge that is closest to the Seminary redevelopment. Fixing the bridge will enable the Montgomery County Parks Department to accept ownership or a public use easement of the northern section of the trail. WRAMC has determined that the bridge can be repaired rather than rebuilt, giving us greater hope that most of its historic fabric will be retained. Work began on July 15 and the project supervisor expects to be finished by the end of August.

Meanwhile, the Save Our Trail coalition will continue its efforts to keep the entire Ireland Drive Carriage Trail and the adjacent woodlands fully accessible to the public. To join Save Our Trail or volunteer, contact Barbara Schubert at [SaveOurTrail1@aol.com](mailto:SaveOurTrail1@aol.com). And ask her for a copy of their wonderful new publication, *History of the Carriage Trail from 1774 to 2008*. It's a fascinating story of an important part of the National Park Seminary that should not be forgotten.

*Feature of the Month: Aloha House and the Porch of the Maidens*

In our last issue, we described the Seminary's caryatids – statues of draped female figures supporting a beam or arch. We focused on the caryatids that once formed the “Statuary Colonnade” supporting a glass-covered walkway connecting Aloha House, the Gymnasium, and Recitation House. The colonnade and Recitation House were lost in the 1960s and only two of these caryatids remain at the Seminary, now located along Ament Street near the new townhouses.

Fortunately, another group of caryatids remains intact at the Seminary – the ten statues on the Porch of the Maidens connecting Aloha House and the Chapel. These maidens are beautifully draped and hooded in the Art Nouveau style with Ionic capitals above their heads. They form the support columns for the brick arches that start at the *porte cochere* end of Aloha House and continue to the end of the Chapel next to Main.

Aloha Cottage, as it was first known, was built in 1898 as the home of John and Vesta Cassedy, the founders of National Park Seminary. As the photo below shows, in its original form it was an attractive and unpretentious house, in a style that included Colonial, Queen Anne and Bungalow elements. Its porch with its round wood columns was connected to a walkway to the Chapel.



The Original Aloha Cottage

The Cassedys named their home Aloha, the Hawaiian greeting, so that the students of the Seminary would always feel welcome in their home.

By 1901, Aloha had been substantially expanded to include a three-story dormitory wing for the younger, or junior, students so that Mrs. Cassidy could keep a close watch on them. Within a few years, a simple wood porch with columns to match the original cottage and a second-story balustrade was added to the full length of the building.



Aloha Cottage (right) and the Dormitory Addition (left)

With the arrival of Dr. James Ament in 1916 as the new president of the Seminary came the most distinctive changes to what was now referred to as Aloha House. With the Cassedys gone, the entire building was used as the junior students' dormitory. Ament updated the simple frame structure with Classical elements. The clapboard siding was covered with more formal looking stucco. An elaborate porch of brick arches with concrete caryatids and a Classical balustrade with urns replaced the simple wood porch. With its caryatid columns, the porch became the Porch of the Maidens.

When the Seminary was taken over by Walter Reed Army Hospital in 1942, Aloha House began a new life as a support facility for the recuperating soldiers, providing space for therapy services and offices. Serving such functions throughout the Walter Reed years, the building was last used as a childcare facility for military families until it closed in the late 1980's or early 1990's. Now Aloha House has been returned to its original use as a home for the new residents of National Park Seminary.



The Porch of the Maidens

An attractive poster with a beautiful color image of a one of the caryatids is available through our website store at [www.saveourseminary.org/store.html](http://www.saveourseminary.org/store.html).