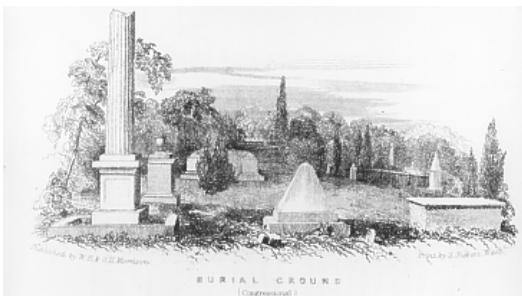


# Spring 2002 Newsletter



The Association for the Preservation of  
Historic Congressional Cemetery  
Established 1807

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## Annual Meeting w/ New Flair: 2002 Spring Festival

For many years the board of Congressional Cemetery has dreamed of offering our members and neighbors an opportunity to join us in celebrating our American heritage. The time has come. We are pleased to present a **Spring Festival** in celebration of our rich past and our bright future.

We are preparing an afternoon of entertainment programs including historic portrayals of noted persons interred within our walls, tours of Revolutionary War heroes, a stone restoration demonstration, a John Philip Sousa musical performance, photography shows, a sampling of the RuthAnne Overbeck histories project, and presentations of our goals and plans for the coming years. **The date is Saturday April 20, 2002, on the grounds of Congressional Cemetery. The program will run from approximately 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.**

Our historic guests will include Elbridge Gerry, just back from the Continental Congress, Mathew Brady, fresh from the battlefields of Bull Run, and Joseph Nicollet, returning from the frontier for a short time. Joining them: Pushmataha, in town for treaty negotiations, Anne Royall, our favorite travel writer & scold, and our local "entrepreneur," Mary Hall.

The Annual Meeting itself will run from 10:30 am to 11:30 am in the chapel. The meeting will include a wrap up of activities in 2001 and a peek ahead at 2002 and our long range plans. We will also recognize the contributions of our volunteers, office staff, and our Congressional heroes, Congressman Walsh and Senator Dorgan.

## Scarlet Crow & Senator Dorgan Come to aid of Congressional: *\$1 million matching endowment & \$250 K for planning studies*

The spirit of Scarlet Crow, aka, Kan Ya Tu Duta, appears to have beckoned North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan from across the Great Divide to come to the aid of Congressional Cemetery. On a visit to the gravesite of the great Dakota warrior early last year, Senator Dorgan was moved to create more opportunities for Congressional to help itself. Senator Dorgan sponsored an appropriation that set aside a one million dollar matching grant for perpetual care at Congressional. Like the 1997 million dollar appropriation, this too will be held by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and used solely for general maintenance of the grounds.

These two matching grants are designed so that every dollar we place into the endowment fund is matched by a Trust-held dollar plus all the interest the Trust dollar has been earning from day one. The total endowment is now \$2,090,000.

But matching those grants has been no easy feat. To date we have matched only \$200,000 of the first grant. That gives us a "working endowment" of some \$400,000 on which our disbursement is based. The interest off that working endowment only nets us enough resources to mow the lawn about four times. So we have our work cut out for us.

The other piece of that same legislation brings us a much needed evaluation of the needs of our physical plant. While our Strategic Plan sets out our long range goals in a number of areas, the exact requirements of those projects, not to mention the costs, have remained elusive. The Dorgan legislation authorized the Office of the Architect of

*(Continued on page 2)*

the Capitol, in conjunction with the National Trust and the Association, to undertake engineering studies to turn those strategic plans into tactical plans.

Under the guidance of Board Member Kevin Hildebrand, the Architect's office, the Trust, and the Association will select three qualified candidates to bid on the engineering studies work. We hope to have the studies completed by Fall or early Winter of this year.

### **SAT Grant to Begin in April Conservation Team to Live On Site**

Our Save America's Treasures grant will finally get underway this Spring when the Dean Ruedrich Company arrives from North Carolina to begin restoration work on several gravemarkers in our yard.

The SAT grants are a public/private partnership sponsored by the White House Millennium Counsel and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in conjunction with Historic Preservation and the National Park Foundation. The Association had been working on matching the Trust's \$53,000 grant for a few years now and is happy to have finally "met its match." The total SAT endowment of \$106,000 will enable the Ruedrich crew to give some long overdue attention to the Marion Kalhert memorial.

In an effort to steer as much effort into the restoration project as possible, the Ruedrich crew has agreed to bunk on-site in the gatehouse, saving us the cost of hotel accommodations. While not as sumptuous as the Lincoln Bedroom across town, our Craftsman Style gatehouse should do fine. Special thanks to volunteer Paul Etter for repairing the washroom upstairs.

### **Board Notes Passing**

It is with sad but fond memories that the Board notes the passing of a former member of the Association. Ms Sharon Lewis was associated with Congressional back in 1980s. It was here that she discovered her passion for photography, which led her down an award winning new career path. We extend our condolences to her family.

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### **Lutheran Brotherhood's National Join Hands Day Comes to Congressional**

Northern Virginia's Lutheran Brotherhood focused its National Join Hands Day on Congressional Cemetery. The fourteen sets of joined hands broke out the rakes, spades, and wheelbarrows despite the intermittent showers. The June 16<sup>th</sup> volunteer effort cleared away much of the overgrowth on the slate walkway that runs from the gate on E Street to the Public Vault. The group hopes to return again this June to work its way further down the slate paths.

### **Visit to Woodlawn Cemetery**

Board Members Linda Harper, Melvin Mason, and Patrick Crowley crossed the Anacostia River to pay a visit to Woodlawn Cemetery. Woodlawn is in the midst of very hard times and has not been able to maintain its yard in four years. Our hike through the brush and overgrowth was stopped because the *paved* road became impassable. Very few tombstones are visible through the weeds and trees that have sprouted throughout their yard. Nature is clearly reclaiming its territory.

It was a stark reminder that yard maintenance cannot be foregone. While many visitors enjoyed the "wildflower" look of our own yard a few years back, it quickly gets out of control and reaches a point where the cost of regaining control is out of reach. We were reminded that our own lawn mowing funding must remain a high priority for which we need our members' regular support.

### **Annual Spring Clean-Up Brisk Weather Dampens Turnout**

Our Annual Volunteer Spring Clean-Up began under a cold cloudy sky on Saturday, yet about thirty intrepid souls came out to rake, prune, bag, scrape, and toil for five hours. Hoping for warmer weather we had shifted the date to April 6<sup>th</sup> this year but to no avail. Although we fell far short of last year's record turnout of 80 volunteers, our crew had the yard in terrific shape before the end of the day.

Lest we get the impression our volunteers are slacking off, keep in mind that the K-9 members made a sweep through the yard just last month to clear away the winter "leftovers." All in all, the yard is looking pretty trim as we head into the Spring growing season.

## **New Grass Mowing Contract Funds Needed Despite Lower Bid**

Lawn care maintenance, i.e., mowing the grass, has always been the monster in our operating budget. Last year, Village Turf had the best bid and did an outstanding job for us. Our request for bids this Spring brought back three candidates with impressive offers. Board Member Fred Davis took the lead in reviewing the offers and, with the executive committee, recommended a new contractor: Lawn Restoration, Inc.

The new contract will begin in a week or two when the grass is within striking range. Although the new bid is lower than last year's per/cut contract, it still adds up to a big bill that we have to pay every two or three weeks. As always we rely on the contributions of our membership to keep up with the grass cutting operation.

One of our more environmentally conscience members suggested we bring in some sheep to shear the lawn. Although the border collies among our K-9 membership applauded the proposal, the Board opted to stay with the more urban approach for another year.

## **Virginia Tech Adopts Congressional Landscape Design School at Work**

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute's Department of Landscape Architecture, headquartered in Old Town, Virginia, has crossed the Potomac River to take on Congressional Cemetery as a long range student-led project. Under the guidance of Professor Ron Kagawa, about twenty landscape design and engineering students are working on a master landscape plan for the cemetery.

We're not talking flower boxes here - this is big time planning with three-dimensional topographical maps, water resource and drainage studies, arboreal analysis, land use history research, and aerial photography.

The semester-long project is just the beginning. We expect the master plan to focus our landscape priorities by setting realistic project guidelines, timetables, and budgets. Once the master plan takes shape, we can start to fill in the plan with smaller projects to bring it to life. We hope to begin fundraising toward the specific pieces of the project next year.

Look for the Virginia Tech display at our Spring Festival on April 20.

## **New Member Joins Board**

The Association is pleased to welcome a new board member, Dawn Warfle. Ms Warfle is the Director of Educational Programs at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Ms Warfle brings with her years of experience in developing educational programs and historic preservation. Association Board Member Paul Reber, who was also the director of Decatur House, took a job with Old Salem Village in North Carolina and stepped down from our Board in 2001. In addition, Board Member Steve Mirsky, has decided to step down from the board as well. No replacement is in line just yet.

March is election month for our board members and this March's Board Meeting saw the re-election of Carolyn Cheney, Patrick Crowley, and Dawn Warfle to the Board. (Ms Warfle assumed Mr. Reber's seat which was up for re-election this year.) The Executive Committee was also re-elected to their positions. The Executive Committee is made up of the Chair, Linda Harper; the Vice Chair, Melvin Mason; the Treasurer, Sandy Schmidt; and the Secretary, Patrick Crowley.

## **Wedding Bells at Our Chapel**

Three couples have chosen our little chapel as an ideal spot to celebrate their weddings. We had one last year and one in March, with another planned for May of this year. Often overlooked, our chapel is really a quite charming and peaceful respite from the surrounding city. It will seat about fifty or so guests and offers a unique setting for making a lifetime commitment. Rev. Judith Davis, Board Member and Rector of Christ Church, oversees liturgical services in the chapel.

## **Maple Trees in Bloom**

Although long-time Board Member Dick Stock has been laid up in recovery for a bit, the maple trees he planted along Henderson Street in Congressional Cemetery (otherwise known as 19<sup>th</sup> Street) made it through their first winter and we can happily report they are all in bloom. The eleven trees line the road from the north brick wall to the brick pathway at site 100. Dick's passion for big hardwood trees is well known and the impact of his work will be with us for generations. Many Association members and his fellow parishioners at Christ Church wish him well.

## **Congressional Joins CHAMPS**

The Board voted to join CHAMPS, the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals. CHAMPS was founded to promote and develop business and the quality of life on Capitol Hill. It organizes group advertising campaigns and joint community efforts all cross the Hill.

Congressional Cemetery was the recipient of a CHAMPS grant last year for \$2,000 to replace the sign at our front gate, which is on its last legs. The actual replacement of the sign is awaiting the uniform signage designs being drawn up by the Virginia Tech landscaping group.

## **Jim Oliver Photography Feat 3,000 Page Daily Log**

Jim Oliver, past chairman of the Association, has never been known to shy away from a big task, yet his latest undertaking is indeed impressive. Jim has photographed all 3,000 pages of the Daily Log Book. The Log covers the years 1898 to 1982. The day-by-day record of activity at Congressional covers the detail of interments over the years: who was interred, what it cost, what funeral home handled the services, the place of residence, age of the deceased, and cause of death. It's a wealth of information that we can now make available to researchers.

The next phase of the project is to find volunteers to transcribe the information into data bases where it can be readily searched and sorted. If you've got some time on your hands and enjoy database work, please contact Sandy Schmidt through the gatehouse office.

## **New Staffing at Gatehouse**

When our very popular volunteer coordinator Bob Dean went back onto retirement last year, the board had some large shoes to fill. Fortunately, near at hand was our database volunteer Bill Boswell. Bill offered us a personal service contract (as had Bob) to do bookkeeping, database, and other general office chores. Bill was soon handling everything that came through the door and we realized it was a two-man job. Joining Bill is Joseph Lockley, recently retired from the Agriculture Department. Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:30 am until 2:00 pm.

## **Association Sets Goals Set for 2002**

The Association Board established our "new year's resolutions" back in January to help set our priorities and guide our efforts through the year. The nine priorities listed below may be a challenge for our all-volunteer board but we'll do our best.

- ? Make significant progress in matching the Congressional Endowment
- ? Continue regular grass cutting
- ? Staff the office 5 days per week
- ? Communicate better with the Association membership and public in general with regular newsletters
- ? Establish and educational program with regular classes and lectures
- ? Establish a regular program of stone resetting workshops
- ? Recruit additional volunteers to better support the Association's priorities
- ? Reestablish and promote site sales
- ? Develop new brochures and graphics

## **Check Out Our New Web Site**

If you haven't seen our new web site, jump up and run to your PC now. It is truly an awesome web site created by our very talented Board Member Sandy Schmidt. With over 12,000 obituaries, it has to be the most content driven cemetery web site out there. The amazing amount of data in the web site is testament to many years of hard research Sandy has spent gathering the many stories that Congressional has to tell.

One of its fun features is the Then & Now collection of Photos. Sandy placed recently-taken photos next to old photos, some over 90 years old. Of interest is the background in the old photos that reveal the historic landscape that has been largely lost. If you have any old photos of Congressional Sandy would love to get a copy to add to our collection. She also welcomes any obituaries or family histories of those interred at Congressional.

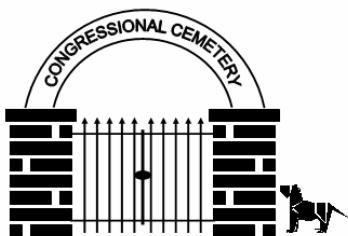
The site also includes groupings of figures such as Revolutionary War veterans, Native Americans, members of Congress, explorers, and the like. Check it out:

[www.congressionalcemetery.org](http://www.congressionalcemetery.org)

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## **K-Club Raises \$19,000 Special Effort by Dogwalkers**

A special fundraising effort by the dogwalking community at Congressional raised a very impressive \$19,000 toward the Million Dollar Matching Grant Endowment in the summer of 2001. The drive, headed by Board Member Patrick Crowley, established the K-Club based not on the notion of K as in K-9s but on those other Ks, as in \$1,000 Ks. Contributing dogwalkers could join the K Club,  $\frac{1}{2}$  K Club or  $\frac{1}{4}$  K Club (\$1,000, \$500, and \$250).



Each contributor received a handsome dark green Congressional Cemetery Puppy Pouch. Borrowed from golf club paraphernalia, the pouch is about 10" by 4" and attaches to a belt with a clip. It has a zippered pocket, a mesh pocket, and an interior slip pocket for whatever small objects you may need at hand. We have several pouches still on hand with the "dog at the gate" logo. Send in your K-Club contribution and get your Puppy Pouch before they run out!

### **Mason Brothers Plan Stone Resetting Workshops**

Brothers Melvin and Tom Mason hope to establish a regular series of gravestone resetting workshops this summer. The seasonal heave and ho of the ground under the gravestones eventually sets them at unstable angles that leave them vulnerable to toppling. And we have hundreds that either have toppled or are on their way.

The resetting requires some serious equipment and a few hours work to reset the foundations before placing the stones upright again. The first workshop for this season was on April 6<sup>th</sup> during the Spring Clean-Up. Look for future workshops on our web site. Volunteers are always needed.....

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## **Physical Plant in Rough Shape There is Much Work to Do**

If you visited the grounds this week you would notice the grass is neatly trimmed and the lawn freshly raked. You might think we have things well in hand. However, much of our physical plant needs some really serious work. The outdoor water system is just about shot, the slate roofs on the chapel and gatehouse are at the end of their rain-shedding abilities, and the facades of most of our brick crypts are crumbling, as is some of our brick fencing. Our roads present a jarring gambol, we have hundreds of markers to reset, the maintenance garage is splitting in half, and the chain link fencing has several sections that need replacement. There is much work to be done.

We hope to place price tags on these projects by the mid-year 2003, when the engineering studies performed under the auspices of the Architect of the Capitol office are completed. But finding the resources to actually do the work remains a daunting task.

As the diagram on the next page illustrates, we have a ways to go on fundraising for the maintenance endowment; funding the restoration work is another mountain to climb. The Board hopes to form committees soon to get started on raising the funds needed to do the restoration work outlined in our Strategic Plan, which is available on our web site.

We need the skills of those willing and able to spread the word about our wonderful assets and our much delayed needs. The Association needs help in the following areas:

- ? Matching the Maintenance Endowment
- ? Building a Restoration Endowment
- ? Funding for a full time Executive Director
- ? Funding to develop an Education Program

### **Kiplinger Foundation Makes Second Big Donation**

The Kiplinger Foundation presented Congressional Cemetery with a second contribution of \$12,500 in May of 2001 matching the same amount contributed in February of 2000. We are truly blessed to have such generous supporters in our corner.

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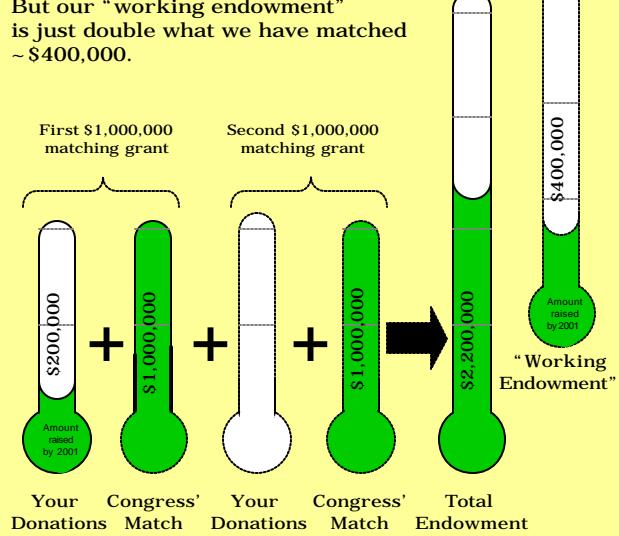
## Matching Grants Need Help

It has been a very good year for us in regard to building up our maintenance endowment. Through a series of donations and the K-Club Drive we were able to add \$40,000 to the Million Dollar Matching Grant to bring our total contribution to \$200,000. That means we currently earn the interest off of \$400,000. But we have along way to go before we reach a comfort zone that keeps our lawn in shape. Can you be an angel and consider making a donation to help us meet our match?



### About those Million Dollar grants ...

Our maintenance endowment holds the two million-dollar grants from Congress plus the \$200,000 we have raised - for a total of \$2,200,000. But our "working endowment" is just double what we have matched ~ \$400,000.



So far we have raised \$200,000 toward the matching grants. This year, our goal is to raise another \$250,000 ~~ But we can't do it without your help.

Your generous donations will help maintain this national historic landmark.