HCC at NPG

As a bronze, suffragist Susan B. Anthony seems warm, even approachable, characteristics she was not known for in the flesh. This depiction has none of the heroics of the artist’s most famous work, but is more moving, somehow. The artist is Adelaide Johnson (R61/S152), best known for her marble statues of Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the Capitol Rotunda. This bronze bust of Anthony is exhibited in the first floor “American Origins” collection of the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery. It is one of many depictions of and by HCC residents gracing that museum’s galleries. In fact, the whole space is infused with the sensibility of architect Robert Mills (R35/S11), who supervised the construction of the building in the 1830’s, when it served as the U.S. Patent Building.

If you browse the “American Origins” exhibit, you can’t miss the six-foot tall portrait of Belva Lockwood (R78/S296). Painted by Nellie Mathes Horne in 1913, Lockwood stands proud and regal in academic robes. The deep rich oils of this painting are almost as formidable as Mrs. Lockwood was.

Up at the top of the Portrait Gallery, under the restored nineteenth-century ceiling, is an exhibit called “Bravo!” featuring American stars of music, movies, and theater. Here you can find Harry Franklin Waltman’s oil painting of John Philip Sousa (R77/S163). Done up in mossy greens and browns, Sousa has an avuncular expression – a far cry from the formal expressions we usually see from the March King.

And of course, the National Portrait Gallery has a large collection of photographs by Mathew Brady (R72/S120). Many of

HCC at NPG

Continued on page 10
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

LETTERS TO THE CHAIR

On the morning of August 3rd, 2002, I dug my first grave. Oddly enough it was for a man I knew. Dick Stock was a wiry guy with a fondness for cigars. He was smart, and kind, and gentle. He was also a member of the board of directors and had helped me with an extraordinarily unpleasant task just a few months before. I felt I owed him. Although he was now gone, it was an important day for him. And for me.

I left my home early to be sure everything would be prepared correctly, to be sure nothing could go wrong. At the cemetery I opened the tool shed door and selected a pike, a spade, and a shovel; hoisted them upon my shoulder and walked about a block to a spot I had measured out the day before. At 7:00 am I placed my boot to the rusty spade and became a gravedigger.

A dozen years have passed since I took my seat in the then-dingy one-room cemetery office in March of 2000. I had been walking my little Saint Bernard here for a few years and taken an interest in various aspects of the grounds, mostly a frustration at the lack of maintenance and concern over the deterioration of the old brick burial tombs. I had heard there was an opening on the board of directors and mailed off a letter inquiring whether I could take the volunteer position. The board said yes. It transformed my life.

In that time I’ve taken on every task one could imagine there might be in an old burial ground. I’ve cleaned basements and toilets, led tours and given talks, heard complaints and given advice, negotiated contracts and written newsletters, held fundraising parties and applied for grants, marched in parades and crawled down storm water pipes, cut down trees and planted trees, researched death records and dug graves for people I know. The tasks were many and every week seemed to bring a new problem, a new discovery, a new opportunity. Most were interesting, many challenging, and a few unpleasant. I’d take on every one of them again without question. I love this place.

But if a cemetery teaches anything, it is that all things are temporary. Our Association by-laws, which I voted for along with the rest of the board, include a term limits provision intended to ensure fresh ideas and skills make their way to the board room. My term expires in March so, with this letter I take my leave. I am truly grateful for the wonderful gift this experience has been. I’ve met so many great folks who’ve welcomed me into their friendship, worked on countless fascinating projects, and, I’d like to believe, left some small measure of improvement to a national treasure.

This cemetery is not like others; it’s not a place of forlorn silence. It’s an active community center with moms and strollers, gardeners and dog walkers, and there’s a lively sense of history that flows through the air. It’s a place where, if you’re willing to listen, you can hear the footsteps of a nation and the pulse of its heartbeat.

I hope you’ll join me in preserving and protecting this unique and precious piece of our nation’s history.

Continued on page 8
seven lay people read the lessons, and our Director of Music, Charles Humphreys, conducted the glorious voices of five members of the Capitol Hill Consort accompanied by National Cathedral organist, Jeremy Filsell, playing our restored 100 year old organ. The chapel was decorated for the season with poinsettias, garland, and candles.

For the past 20 years, we have had about a dozen burials each year. On December 30th, we had our 25th interment in 2010, and the number of site sales doubled previous years. There is still room

~ Cindy Hays

From the Executive Director

inter is a challenging time for the cemetery and staff. Every time there is a forecast of snow, we pull out the sand, get our snow blower out of the east garage, and hope it is less than 6” so we don’t have to spend $3,325 on professional plowing. But winter also gives us time for planning our annual educational and historic interpretation programs and grounds projects and plantings.

In December, our guests enjoyed two performances of Lessons and Carols. Christ Church Rector Cara Spaccarelli opened and closed the program, and people want to spend time at Congressional Cemetery.

In March, Casey Tree Foundation and our volunteers will plant 40 new trees. Each will be available for a two-year adoption during which time they will need regular watering and care.

The volunteer efforts changes in the winter when it is cold. Jan and Ed McKenney have every name indexed all the newsletters back to 1983, and several people are working on the proprietor’s list, the new photos of stones are being added to the website.

We have fun plans for programs and tours this year, so if you are nearby, come join us.

~ Cindy Hays

Stone stories

newcomer to Congressional Cemetery will be struck by the beauty of many things, but perhaps one of the most noticeable is the conspicuous amount of stone spires pointing their way to the heavens. The hundreds of obelisks at HCC carry on a centuries old tradition of memorial marker.

The obelisk can be traced back to ancient Egypt, where it first symbolized the arms of Ra, the Sun God. The obelisk represented a sort of petrified ray, reaching up to the sky, perforating the clouds and breaking up negative energy. They were originally memorial stelae, a type of monolith, even before the Egyptians had developed their characteristic system of hieroglyphics. As the culture developed, so did the obelisk, eventually becoming iconic symbols of power and protection.

After the Roman conquest of Egypt, numerous obelisks were absconded with and taken off to glorify the authority and beauty of Rome. Eight of them can today be found in significant parts of the city, including the piazza in front of the Vatican, and in a small piazza behind the Pantheon at what was once the temple of Minerva. This particular obelisk was re-discovered and

HCC is a City of Obelisks

Continued on page 10
LESSONS AND CAROLS
Our lovely chapel, decked with poinsettias and aglow with candlelight, was filled with glad tidings and Christmas cheer for our first ever performance of Lessons and Carols. Music Director Charles Humphries has been insisting the acoustics in the chapel are wonderful — and he was proven right when the five glorious voices of the Capitol Hill Consort spun harmonies around the vaulted ceiling.

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
Kindergartners from Mary McLeod Bethune School joined us in November for Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. Program Director Rebecca Roberts handed out flowers, and told the kids they could honor someone they admired: a musician (John Philip Sousa), an artist (Adelaide Johnson), an athlete (Art Devlin), a president (John Quincy Adams), or a teacher (Ruth Ann Overbeck). When the kids had distributed their flowers, they flew homemade kites (a Guatemalan tradition) up and down the roads. The vibrant colors and happy young faces were wonderful bright spots in a dreary winter afternoon.

THE INDEFATIGABLE LAURA FIELDING
Intern Laura Fielding joined us in the fall and we are delighted that she has agreed to stay through the spring semester. Laura is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Library Science at the University of Maryland in College Park. She is continuing the seemingly endless task of making detailed, searchable photos of all our gravestones available online. Laura is usually in the gatehouse Tuesdays and Thursdays — introduce yourself if you get the chance!

RICHARDS FAMILY VAULT
Many of you have watched the restorations the Richards have been conducting on their family vault on Prout Street over the past couple of years. While conservation work was going on, the bones of the Richards’ ancestors were in the anthropology lab at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, where Douglas Owsley and his team got the chance to study them. When the vault was ready and the bones had been identified and sorted, the Richards’ replaced them in the vault. The original engraved marble slabs covering them will be re-installed soon.
From the Ground Up

Mrs. Thornton’s Holly Tree

If you walk in the Gerry gate, past the new monument for Robert Mosbacher (see page 11), across the way from Chief Pushma-ta-ha, you’ll find the graves of William and Anna Maria Thornton, nestled together in the shade. William Thornton (1759-1828) was the architect of the first Capitol building, which is why his gravestone is shaped like the Congressional cenotaphs. Anna Maria Thornton (1775-1865) is buried next to him in the box tomb. The shade is provided by a big holly tree (Ilex opaca) that was planted upon Mrs. Thornton’s death. A memorandum to her will states “The inscription on the Tombstone (in the Congressional Burying Ground) to be completed, with this motto added “United in Life, United in Death” — Some Holley [sic] Bushes, a Silver Pine, & an arbor Vitae to be planted, & the whole including the monument to W. Thornton to be neatly railed in, with Iron if not too expensive.”

We do have a receipt dated November 1866 for $4.50 for “Planting Evergreens in Wm Thornton’s lot at Congressional Cemetery.” Whether the pine and the arborvitae were ever planted, we do not know. And we have no record of the sites being railed. Perhaps the iron proved too expensive after all. But the holly tree survives. And this time of year, it is a spot of green in an otherwise dry and bare landscape. Its distinctive red berries are popular with many species of birds — especially after a few frosts have mellowed the bitter taste. They are pretty poisonous to humans, though, so no snacking!

Like many evergreens, the holly has been a symbol of life in mid-winter holidays since pre-Christian times. The thorny leaves were thought to “snag” evil spirits, and in European mythology, holly was associated with thunder gods such as Thor and Taranis. And of course holly decks the halls at Christmastime, as it has for centuries.

Many of our trees at HCC are even older than this one, and are reaching the end of their lifespans. If you would like to donate to the Tree Fund, please call us at 202-543-0539 or send email to staff@congressionalcemetery.org.
Welcome to Historic Congressional Cemetery’s Dead Man’s Run!, a bare bones race for dead serious runners who want to stay one step ahead of the ultimate Reapo Man.

Who: The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

What: A 5K benefit run

When: Sunday May 8, 2011, start time 8:00 AM

Where: Historic Congressional Cemetery, 1801 E Street, SE, Washington DC 20003

Why: For the restoration of America’s first national cemetery

COURSE:
The Run starts at the Chapel with the clang of the Tolling Bell, crosses the graveyard over freshly paved roads, passes through the east gate onto the Anacostia River Trail, heads south along the riverfront trail for ¼ mile, then back north to the East Capitol Bridge, then back along the River to the cemetery, and back up to the chapel. Strollers, baby joggers, skates and pets are not allowed on the race course. If you have any questions, please contact the race director, Patrick Crowley at 202-543-2962.

PACKET PICK-UP:
On Sunday, May 8, 2011 between 6:30 AM and 7:50 AM inside the Main Gate at Congressional Cemetery, 1801 E Street, SE 20003. Please pick up your t-shirt on race day, as we cannot mail it to you.

VOLUNTEERING:
We’re a cemetery; we have friends in high places. We’ll put in a good word for you if you volunteer on May 8th. We need volunteers for water stations, registration tables, parking guides, course monitors, clean-up crew, and the normal event managing tasks. You can sign up at volunteer@congressionalcemetery.org. So when the Grim Reaper comes knocking at your door, you can tell him, “Hey Beelzebub, keep moving, I volunteered at Congressional!” Volunteers get a free race shirt and our dying gratitude.

SPONSORSHIP:
Sponsors are guaranteed entry into the seventh ring of Heaven (or was that some other ring?)

As America’s first national cemetery, Congressional has an astounding story to tell. In fact, we have hundreds of great stories to tell. But we need your help: hundreds of fallen gravestones need to be righted, educational

This joint’s gonna come alive!
programs are begging for support, 500 more trees planted, and 19th Century archives need to be sorted & preserved.

Join the effort to restore America’s first national cemetery, become a sponsor of the Dead Man’s Run to ensure that this treasury of American heritage will be passed on to the next generation. You can make a difference—Be American heritage!

**WE OFFER FOUR LEVELS OF SPONSORSHIP:**

**PATRIOT $20,000**
Patriot sponsor will share the title space of the Run in all media creation and distribution, in addition to the benefits of lower sponsorship levels.

**FOUNDERS $10,000**
Founder sponsors will be encouraged to set up a station along the start/finish line to educate the community about their organizations, in addition to the benefits of each lower sponsorship level.

**BUILDERS $5,000**
Builder sponsors will have their entity’s logo imprinted on the race shirts and literature, be eligible to enter two 4-man teams in the Run, will receive VIP invitations to future APHCC events, in addition to the benefits of the lower sponsorship level.

**STATESMEN $2,500**
Statesmen sponsors will have the name of their organization included on the race t-shirt and be invited to donate promotional items to a race ‘goodie bag.’

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**CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY FIRST ANNUAL DEAD MAN’S RUN**

Sign up here and mail or do it online www.congressionalcemetery.org

Name_________________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________
Phone(s)_______________________________________________________
Email address ___________________________________________________
Date of Birth__________________   Age on May 8, 2011_____________
Gender □ M □ F        Team name______________________________
T-shirt size □ S □ M □ L □ XL
Check enclosed for $________________________

$20.00 before April 30, 2011 (mail in). $15.00 for Congressional Cemetery members & Congressional Staff Teams. On-line registration deadline is May 4, 2011.

**WAIVER**

Important: Each participant must complete and sign this form, agreeing to the waiver as described below. Incomplete entry forms will not be accepted. Only one person per application. Photocopies are permitted. Congressional Cemetery is not responsible for lost, late or misdirected applications. Absolutely no refunds or transfers of the entry fee are permitted.

**WAIVER (MUST BE SIGNED)**

I know that participating in the Dead Man’s Run is a potentially hazardous activity. I know I should not enter and participate unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to that official’s judgment of my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with participation in Dead Man’s Run including, but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather including high heat and/or humidity, traffic and the conditions of the road, all such risks being known and appreciated by me.

Having read this waiver and knowing these facts and in consideration of your accepting my application, I for, myself and anyone entitled to act in my behalf, waive and release any and all sponsors including but not limited The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, RacePacket, Washington Convention & Sports Authority, race officials, volunteers, and all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims of liabilities of any kind arising out of my participation in this event, even though that liability may arise out of my negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver, I grant permission to all of the foregoing to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings or any other record of this event for any legitimate purpose.

Signature of participant ___________________________ Date_________________

Signature of Parent (if under 18 years of age) IF ATHLETE IS UNDER AGE 18: My signature certifies that my son/daughter has my permission to complete in the Dead man’s Run, is in good physical condition, abides by the above waiver, and that race officials have my permission to authorize emergency treatment if necessary.

Make check payable to Congressional Cemetery and mail to

**Dead Man’s Run**
Historic Congressional Cemetery
1801 E Street, SE
Washington DC  20003
Over the past 30 years, three different watering systems have been installed in different sections of the cemetery. We needed water; we never had enough money; so each time we used the least expensive materials. Plastic is not long lasting: it freezes, it breaks, when a truck hits a spigots, the plastic coupling cracks and cannot be repaired. So we have been without water in the western half of the cemetery for a year.

Using the final dollars from the government appropriations and money from our conservation budget, we contracted with Fry Plumbing to build a new water system throughout the 13 blocks of the cemetery. Accepting the advice from Board Member, Ted Bechtol, and the head grounds keeper of the Capitol, and following our new mission to only make improvements if they are long lasting, we bit the bullet and authorized copper pipes instead of plastic. The Capitol has an underground watering system that was built with copper in the 1800’s. It still works.

We choose Victorian style spigots to match the era of so many of our stones, and now have 24 installed which will allow us to water trees throughout the cemetery when they are planted. The dogwalkers raised money to purchase a drinking fountain that includes a bottom bowl for the thirsty pups. We found a style for dog/wheelchair or child/person in the Victorian style. Our head plumber, Jeff Wilson, presented a new design for the turn-on button for the dog bowl to the manufacturer. Our two fountains are the prototype for the new design that the manufacturer will produce in the future.

A new Victorian spigot waits for new trees.
In his public life, Fielding Bradford Meek (R80/S60) seems to have largely lived up to his last name. Left almost totally deaf by a childhood illness, Meek spent a lot of time alone as a boy in the Indiana countryside, teaching himself about natural science. As a young man he joined the U.S. Geological Survey of Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, where he developed a reputation for being able to draw scientific specimens with accuracy and beauty. In 1852, when Meek was 35, he moved to Albany to study the paleontology of New York State. He was especially fond of invertebrate fossils, and collected a huge amount of information about them in both his sketchbooks and his capacious brain.

By 1857, The Smithsonian Institution was building a reputation among the nation’s natural scientists. Men like William Stimpson and Robert Kennicott came to Washington to study and add to the Smithsonian’s growing specimen collections. It was the perfect place for a curious self-taught paleontologist like Fielding Meek. He and the other bachelor scientists were invited to live in the empty rooms at the brand new Smithsonian Castle.

In his private life, Meek seems to have departed somewhat from his timid name. The Castle scientists formed a group called “The Megatherium Club”, named after an extinct species of giant sloth. Led by the 25-year-old Stimpson, members of the club greeted each other by saying “How! How!” which was the noise they decided an extinct sloth would make. According to an official Smithsonian history, the Megatheria “spent their days at the Smithsonian in the rigorous and exacting work of describing and classifying species, and afterwards they threw off all restraint.” They built trap doors between their rooms. They held sack races in the Castle’s great Hall. They serenaded the daughters of Joseph Henry, the Smithsonian’s secretary. They apparently consumed an impressive amount of booze.

The other members of the Megatherium Club came and went with their field work. Fielding Meek stayed at the Castle, gradually losing his hearing entirely. Fellow scientist Charles White wrote “Although he was never strong and often ill he never complained, was always cheerful, always hopeful, and always passionately devoted to his scientific work.” Just after his 59th birthday in 1876, Meek died of tuberculosis. His funeral was held in the Castle, and he was buried at Range 80, Site 60. His gravestone reads “Fielding Bradford Meek, Paleontologist” and features a pick and a quill, the tools of his trade.
Spotting cemetery residents in DC museums is like a secret treasure hunt for cemetery fans. In the American Art Museum (which shares the old Patent Building space with the Portrait Gallery), there’s a permanent collection of western artwork which includes a wall of oil paintings of Native Americans. One of the, listed as “Há-tchoo-túc-knee, Snapping Turtle, a Half-breed”, is better known as Peter Perkins Pitchlynn (R87/S294).

Have you found an HCC resident around town? Let us know at staff@congressionalcemetery.org.

**Stone Stories**

then erected in 1667 by Pope Alexander VII atop a stunning elephant base, sculpted by Bernini.

The towering figure of the obelisk worked its way into western culture as a novelty of Egypt’s impressive past. In the 19th century the shape picked up the nickname “Cleopatra’s Needle,” when three ancient Egyptian obelisks were re-erected in London, Paris and New York. These three monuments are of genuine ancient Egyptian origin, but are somewhat mis-named as they date to over a thousand years before the seductive queen’s lifetime.

During the Victorian age, use of the obelisk came into vogue as many non-Catholic churchyards felt that the cross was “too Catholic” a symbol, and began using classical, non-Christian imagery on their graves. The use of such symbolism continues today, though the impetus may be different. The symbolic representation of protection that the obelisk provides has carried through the ages, though the gods that originally gave that protection have traded places with today’s contemporary deities. Here at Congressional Cemetery, a stroll around the grounds will demonstrate that in every decade of the past two

Continued on page 11
Union Soldiers on the Move

Recently, Cindy Hays noticed the gravestone of one of HCC’s Civil War veterans was broken and illegible. Sadly, broken and illegible stones are not uncommon in the cemetery. But when they mark the grave of a veteran, the Federal Department of Veteran’s Affairs will repair them. Cindy contacted the proper authorities to seek a replacement for this Civil War soldier. That’s when things got complicated.

It turned out there was some confusion about whether this soldier was actually buried under the stone that marked his grave. Archivist Dayle Dooley found records from 1868, indicating that dozens of our Union Veterans had been disinterred and moved to Arlington National Cemetery. The faded ink in 19th century handwriting was not easy to read, but it looked like the soldiers on either side of the grave in question had been moved, but not the one with the broken stone.

Dayle dug deeper, and found a US army report from 1939 that detailed the names and circumstances of those that had been moved. All were Union soldiers. All had died in 1861 in Washington DC area hospitals. So they didn’t necessarily have ties to this area; they were buried at HCC because it was the de facto national cemetery before Arlington was opened in 1864.

But our soldier remained. The authorities at Arlington have verified that they have no record of him moving there, and our records indicate he stayed here. And the Veteran’s Administration is going to repair the stone and provide a plaque with the original inscription rendered legibly.

HCC’s newest obelisk

centuries, the obelisk has been, and still is, a venerated symbol for a departed loved one’s grave. Walking around the grounds, one cannot help but notice these tall, slender monuments, some dating to nearly the founding of this country. And just erected is a stunning new addition to the panorama of our cemetery, a magnificent 9 foot high, pink granite obelisk, erected to mark the final resting place of former Secretary of Commerce, Robert Mosbacher, who was buried in January 2010.

If one gazes across the undulating earth that is Congressional Cemetery, and sees each obelisk as a ray of light given by the god Ra, then one can truly say that the sun never sets on this little piece of hallowed ground.
Yes! I want to help preserve and restore Congressional Cemetery with a tax deductible donation.

☐ $25
☐ $50
☐ $75
☐ $100
☐ $250
☐ Other________

2011 Membership:

☐ $125 Individual
☐ $250 Family

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to Congressional Cemetery
☐ Please charge my credit card
☐ Visa
☐ Mastercard

Card # ______________________________________________
Cardmember Name ___________________________Exp______
Signature _____________________________________________
Name _______________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________
____________________________________________________
City ____________________________State______Zip________
Phone/s______________________________________________
Email________________________________________________

☐ My employer makes matching contributions. Please send me the matching gift form.

Thank you!

Please mail with your donation to the return address on the mailing panel or use the envelope inside this newsletter.

Reserve your place in American History

Congressional Cemetery is a non-denominational burial ground open to the whole community. Introducing burial niches next fall. Traditional grave sites are available in a number of price ranges. Call today.

Alan Davis, Cemetery Manager
adavis@congressionalcemetery.org
202-543-0539

Calendar

MARCH 26
9:00 am Tree Planting

APRIL 2
11:00 am Free Saturday docent-led Tours resume

APRIL 9
12:30 pm dedication of the new drinking fountains
1:00 pm Annual Meeting

APRIL 14
5:30 pm Civil Rights Heroes Tour

APRIL 24
6:00 am Easter Sunrise Service

MAY 8
8:00 am Dead Man’s Run

MAY 20-21
11:00 am Prohibition tour

MAY 29
10:00 am Blue Star Memorial dedication

Where do you see yourself in 100 years?

CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

Reserve your place in American History

Congressional Cemetery is a non-denominational burial ground open to the whole community. Introducing burial niches next fall. Traditional grave sites are available in a number of price ranges. Call today.

Alan Davis, Cemetery Manager
adavis@congressionalcemetery.org
202-543-0539

Thank you!

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