



Heritage Gazette

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY • SPRING 2013

Poignant Connections

Visitors often stroll into the cemetery gatehouse looking for something specific. They frequently come to see one of our many notables, typically visiting John Philip Sousa, J. Edgar Hoover, or Mathew Brady. At times, their interest is directed towards the Civil War, or perhaps the unique cenotaphs that distinguish the cemetery. Recently, however, many are coming to explore the War of 1812 connections, as several of Congressional Cemetery's 1812 veterans are integrally linked to some of the most defining moments of our nation.

As announced in the Summer 2012 newsletter, Congressional Cemetery is and will continue to be an active participant in the celebrations commemorating the bicentennial of the war. The cemetery is a prominent stop on the National Park Service's (NPS) Star Spangled Banner Trail. In addition, HCC was recently chosen to receive one of only sixteen interpretive signs that Cultural Tourism DC and NPS are placing at locations along the trail in Washington, DC and Alexandria. Congressional Cemetery is immensely honored to be a part of this network of historic sites; moreover, the recognition of the cemetery's close connection to the War of 1812 is both invaluable and justified.

Referring to the War of 1812 as a "forgotten war" is an apt description when you're speaking generally about the scope of American history. But with over 124 confirmed interments of 1812 veterans, many of them the key movers and shakers in the battles and events, it is hard to ignore the presence of this war in the cemetery. The bicentennial allows us all to take a closer look

and brush up on some of the finer details we may have forgotten from History 101. Congressional Cemetery is an excellent place to start, whether you're just beginning to explore the subject, reeducating yourself, or deepening your knowledge. Beginning on April 6, docents will begin giving monthly War of 1812 tours focusing specifically on the cemetery's residents and their actions in the war. They have a great deal to tell. Whether it be Tingey's order to burn the Navy Yard, Dolley's famous rescue of the George Washington portrait, Jacob Brown's (monument pictured here) defense of Sackett's Harbor or Macomb's victory at Plattsburg, there's a lot of material to cover. Do yourself a favor and attend one of these illuminating tours. You won't be disappointed.

Letter from the Chair

With the last remnants of winter behind us Congressional Cemetery is anticipating an energetic and busy spring full of events and new tidings. As I write this letter, the cherry blossoms are approaching full bloom and the cemetery is bursting with color. The vibrancy and beauty on the grounds certainly signal two other annual changes, changes in board leadership and annual dog walker registration.



My heartfelt appreciation goes to the board members who have served HCC for many years: George Chamberlain (Vice Chair), Clyde H. Henderson, III (Secretary) and Patti Martin (Head of the K9 Committee). Your commitment to the success of Congressional, your volunteer time, and your ideas will be missed. Filling their spots are Chris Kennedy (site owner, dog owner) who will become head of the K9 committee and former staff member Rebecca Roberts, who will work with us on special events and historical story telling. While we will miss the departing board members, I can't think of worthier people to fill their shoes.

The restoration of the Cemetery started with dog owners walking their dogs here in the late 80's. From that humble beginning, we now have 600 members in the K9 Corps. They walk the grounds and alert staff to safety issues and are an important segment of our community, providing both their time and expertise for many of our activities.

I would like to extend an open invitation to you all to visit the cemetery this spring, whether it's to join a tour, attend a special event, or simply wander the grounds and enjoy the beauty of the cemetery. The cemetery has a full schedule of events this upcoming spring, from Sousa celebrations and living history events to tree plantings and chapel concerts. And as always, warmer weather launches the tour season at the cemetery as the "Dozen Decent Docents" prepare for another busy few months (see Around the Gatehouse for more information on upcoming events).

I invite you this spring to celebrate all that is new and exciting at Congressional Cemetery.

— JOHN GILLESPIE



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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From the President

This April marks my ninth month as President of Historic Congressional Cemetery, and I couldn't be more pleased with the team that runs the day to day operations and maintains its National Historic Landmark status. Quite surprisingly, the cemetery can be an extremely busy place; it's not an unusual day to have up to 20 random visitors looking for gravesites, 50 phone calls, 25 volunteers, 2-3 contractors, a grant deadline, a site sale tour and a funeral to plan. It sometimes seems that our day is about 20% "other duties as assigned" as we all pitch in to accomplish some of the more bizarre tasks that reveal themselves at the most inopportune times.

Now that our team is fully entrenched to make all that happen, I've recently transitioned into a role seeking large and small grant opportunities and a general fundraising focus. I'm very excited to be able to announce to the general public



Funeral bell manufactured in 1894

on May 4th a major fundraising campaign for a long overdue and very public project: a new front gate and entranceway.

Well, actually, it is a plan to restore and reinstall the original, 1856 wrought iron gate that was at the main entrance until it was moved elsewhere in 1923 when the current gatehouse was constructed. It will be coined the Sousa Gate as John Philip Sousa IV will lend his famous family name to the effort.

Previously designed plans for the project had been approved by the Commission of Fine Arts, calling for the integration of the curved "Congressional Cemetery" sign that serves as our logo. We've had a new team further modify that design to include pedestrian access gates, recreation of the original fence, electronic opening and other security features, a new path leading to the gatehouse side door, completion of the paved road, and a new side porch for weekend gate checkers. On top of the porch will be a recreation of our original circa 1856 gatehouse bell tower and cupola that will once again provide a home for our newly restored funeral bell.

What funeral bell, you might ask? Good question. It's a cur-



1856 wrought iron gate

rently hidden yet historic gem of the cemetery. Manufactured in 1894 at the McShane foundry near Baltimore, it has been rung at Congressional for 119 years, but is now obviously showing its age and is rarely used. The 500 pound, 29 inch diameter bronze funeral bell is out of sight to the casual visitor, resting atop our one story vault safe on the east side of the gatehouse. Remarkably, archivist Dayle Dooley just recently discovered that the McShane foundry still exists, and can restore the bell in the exact same foundry where it was first made.

We have a busy schedule of events coming up as the cherry blossoms begin to bloom that will continue for the remainder of the year. Restoration of our most historic stones continues with the support of your contributions and those donated by our dedicated K9 community. I think I'll join you all in anticipation for our upcoming 2013!

— PAUL K. WILLIAMS

Around the Gatehouse



Uppity Women Tour

UPPITY WOMEN

Rebecca Roberts returned to the cemetery on a glorious day in March to give her famed Uppity Women tour. The tour itself was a great success, highlighting the many suffragists interred here at Congressional. HCC kicks off its official tour season on April 6, with free introductory tours every Saturday and monthly War of 1812 and Civil War tours. In addition, more special one-time tours like Uppity Women will be on the docket this spring. For more information and our complete schedule, check out our website at www.congressional-cemetery.org.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR LIVING HISTORY EVENT

On April 20th from 11 to 3, Congressional Cemetery is hosting a Revolutionary War living history event in conjunction with our annual meeting. We'll have a great group of reenactors and living historians here to interpret the history of the cemetery, themed tours, and firing demonstrations. In addition, The United States Army

Historic Trumpet and Flute Ensembles of the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps will be assisting with a wreath laying at the grave of Jacob Gideon and playing a short concert in the Chapel. Come join us!

SOUSA PALOOZA!

On May 4th, we will be celebrating all things Sousa with a day dedicated to one of our most notable residents. Come enjoy Sousa marches played by local bands and a talk given by John Philip Sousa IV. In addition, the Sousa family tells us that the great man himself had a famous spaghetti sauce recipe, so in honor of his culinary talents we'll be hosting a spaghetti sauce recipe contest. Think you can beat the March King? To enter the contest, email lmaloy@congressionalcemetery.org for a chance to have your recipe judged by John Philip Sousa IV. The cemetery will be bustling with music, food, and celebrations, so we hope you'll mark your calendars for the day.



PRIDE 5K

It's time to dust off those running shoes! Congressional Cemetery is proud to partner with DC Front Runners to host the inaugural Pride 5k Run and Walk on June 7th at 7 pm. The

race coincides with DC's Capital Pride weekend and promises to be an exciting and vibrant event that you won't want to miss. The course will wind its way through the cemetery and along the Anacostia River. Come for the run and stay for a post-race party with a few hundred other fellow runners. For more information and to register for the race, please visit <http://www.dcfrrunners.org/>.

A NEW PRESENT!



Thanks to a generous donor, HCC now is the proud owner of a deluxe golf cart! The golf cart was prominently placed at the top of President Paul William's wish list in the winter newsletter (see the current wish list on page 10). The donation was made in honor of the estate of Richard G. Hocevar. Look for this blue beauty on the grounds as it assists us with site sales, tours, and events.

DO YOU LIKE US?

The best way to stay up-to-date with the cemetery is to keep track of us through social media. Whether you like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter (@CongCemetery), or check in on Foursquare, we do our best to provide interesting and important updates through these platforms. We recently added an Instagram account as well (@CongCemetery), so please share your pictures of the cemetery while you're out and about. We'd love to have more likes and followers — won't you spread the word?



Bob Perry of Topographix

GPR PROJECT BEGINS

It's official! The ground penetrating radar (GPR) project at Congressional Cemetery began on March 26. Bob Perry of Topographix will be working on the project for one week every month. We're certainly anxious to see the results as Bob explores the cemetery acre by acre. If you happen to see Bob out and about on the grounds give him a friendly welcome to the ceme-

MEET DANIEL HOLCOMBE...AGAIN!

You may remember that we have already introduced Daniel Holcombe in a previous newsletter as Congressional Cemetery's most excellent intern. Daniel interned in the summer of 2012 and took charge of rebuilding the historic swales in the cemetery. Due to his work that summer, Daniel won the 2012 APHCC Volunteer of the Year Award. He now officially joins the team at Congressional Cemetery as the new Grounds Conservation Manager. Daniel brings with him a background in historic preservation with a degree from the University of Mary Washington, and will be managing the grounds of the cemetery as well as assisting Vice President Margaret Puglisi with stone conservation.



tery, and stay tuned for updates about his discoveries.

K9 CORPS ANNUAL MEETINGS

The much-anticipated Annual Membership Meetings for the K9 Corps ran from February through March of 2013. With over 14 meetings and 500 K9 Corps members in attendance, the cemetery was bustling with activity as members reviewed the rules and received their official K9 Corps membership tags.

Many thanks to all of the patient volunteers and dog walkers who helped the meetings go off without a hitch!

PSSST! WE HAVE A SECRET!

And we can't tell you about it yet. But please check our website and social media on April 24th to learn all the details and discover how you can make a difference and support your favorite cemetery!



K9 Corps member Patsy enjoying the cemetery

Leonard Matlovich

BY FRANK J. PIETRUCHA

Visit the late gay rights leader's final resting place... but please: don't dance on his grave.

His tombstone identifies him simply as "A Gay Vietnam Veteran." But Leonard Matlovich was not just another soldier or sexual minority. His bold actions a generation ago opened the door for debate about a gay man's right to serve in the armed forces with dignity and pride. From the front page of *The New York Times* to the cover of *Time* magazine, from major network news programs, talk shows, and podiums everywhere, Matlovich exposed the military's naked bigotry.

Long before the phrase "don't ask, don't tell" was uttered, Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich (July 6, 1943 - June 22, 1988) fought valiantly for gay men and women to serve openly in the military. His exemplary career in the U.S. Air Force — 12 years of extraordinary service acknowledged by a Bronze Star and Purple Heart — made him the ideal activist for the nascent lesbian, gay, bi-sexual & transgender (LGBT) movement of the 1970s — a role that suited him well.

Matlovich never had much tolerance for people who demonstrated a lack of tolerance

for others. He realized at an early age that the racial discrimination he experienced growing up was wrong - and promised to always speak up on the behalf of those who couldn't stand up for themselves. In the Air Force he had his first opportunity: he was asked to teach race relations classes to promote the integration of African Americans in a military that had a long history of discrimination. Matlovich's program was an instant success — so much so that the Air Force sent him around the country to coach other instructors. But his race relations classes were only



Leonard Matlovich's grave at Range 20, Sites 160-161

the start of his career as a champion of human rights. While encouraging others to accept African Americans as equals, Matlovich realized that he too was facing discrimination, much like the discrimination faced by the people he was trying to help.

Matlovich was the first person to bring the government's decades of discrimination in the armed forces against sexual minorities to national consciousness when he volunteered to tell his superiors that he was gay in order to create a test case. But unfortunately, the Air Force flunked Matlovich's test and demanded his discharge as a consequence. He fought the military in court for years, securing a ruling that the Air Force had failed to justify their discriminatory actions. In the process of his legal battles, Matlovich set an example that inspired a generation to join the fight against Pentagon prejudice and encouraged countless people to come out of the closet. He was ultimately asked to sign a document pledging "never to practice homosexuality again" in exchange for being allowed to remain in the Air Force. Matlovich refused.

Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich is buried at the corner of Congress and Prout Streets — just down the road from the gravesites of J. Edgar Hoover and fellow FBI employee Clyde Tolson. In life Matlovich was a lightning rod for controversy... and in death he has not been immune to rumor and speculation. Matlovich's long-time


friend Michael Bedwell recently put to rest several myths about the deceased civil rights leader in an email to Congressional Cemetery.

First off — Matlovich was not "dishonorably discharged" from the Air Force as many believe. The Air Force panel ruled him unfit for service and recommended a "general discharge." His base commander, Alton J. Thogersen, however, pushed for an upgrade to "honorable discharge" due to Matlovich's exemplary record. The Air Force agreed.

Another popular misconception addressed by Bedwell is about the powerful quote inscribed on Matlovich's gravestone. The statement, selected by Matlovich himself, was intended to be taken allegorically rather than literally. The epitaph which reads "When I was in the military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one" led many, including a *Los Angeles Times* obituary writer, to conclude that Matlovich had in fact killed Viet Cong guerrillas. Bedwell, who befriended Matlovich in 1975, assures us that the soldier is believed not to have killed anyone on any of his tours. Bedwell suggests the selection of this epitaph may have been influenced by Bruce Voeller, former head of the National Gay Task Force, who had a similar, anonymous statement on the wall of his office, and told Matlovich he thought the statement "fit" him.

Rumors also swirl about the aesthetics of Matlovich's

gravesite. According to Bedwell, he intended a simple gravestone bearing the now famous epitaph with two pink triangles and the "A Gay Vietnam Veteran" designation. Additionally, he requested the engraving of his last name at the base of the granite slab framing the grave. The elaborate granite grave cover was donated later by another friend. The granite bench, also a gift by the same friend, was also not part of Matlovich's original plan but has proven popular with visitors paying their respects. There's also been speculation that the grave cover, which looks like a slick dance floor, was dreamt up by Matlovich to encourage people to "dance on his grave." Bedwell considers that notion absurd as Matlovich was dead long before the grave cover idea was conceived.

In recent years the Matlovich site has become hallow ground for the LGBT community — especially for those who serve or have served in the military. Activist Dan Choi visited Matlovich's grave on several occasions before handcuffing himself to the White House fence to protest the government's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. But Matlovich's grave has also been the site for happy occasions as well. Gay Army Captain and Iraq veteran Steve Hill and his partner Josh Snyder were married there in May 2011. Bedwell says they chose this location to recognize Matlovich for all he did so people like Hill would be able to serve openly. 

Honoring Fallen Soldiers

BY MARGARET PUGLISI

Honoring the military dead took on a new significance with the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. Prior to this conflict, the majority of graves of fallen soldiers were simply marked with a wooden board without records of the interment. Due to the fact that Americans were dying at such a historic rate and the wooden grave markers could not be expected to last more than a few years, the need to provide proper memorialization became evident.

By 1873, the United States government elected to modify the material of the grave markers from wood to stone. With the use of granite and marble, the memorials were more resistant to weathering and deterioration. This is the time period in which the military stones at Congressional Cemetery begin to appear. The cemetery's archives have records of the "Interments in Congressional Cemetery of Persons in the Service of the United States" that indicate there were many burials prior to the legislation of 1873. It is safe to assume that the landscape was dotted with wooden markers that later deteriorated.

Congressional Cemetery has memorials that represent each development of the military headstone from 1873 until 1994.

The evolution was influenced by social issues of the various eras, aesthetics, issues of maintenance, and the transition from the regulation of the Quartermaster's General to the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1973.

Congressional Cemetery has witnessed the majority of the United States' conflicts and has received countless military heroes through its gates. The manner of memorializing the military dead has changed significantly from the establishment of the cemetery in 1807 to the present day. Materials, style, and special features differentiate veteran stones based on when specific options were allowed by regulations. Often military markers appear uniform and hard to distinguish, but by knowing the key characteristics and evolution of these memorials, you can decode more about the individual buried beneath the memorial. ~



1873

- Rounded top
- Shield
- Memorializes Union Civil War dead, Spanish-American War, veterans who died before May 1925
- Photo: Eli C. Lynn, October 1862, R84/S64



1906

- Pointed top
- Possible Confederate Medal of Honor
- Memorializes Imprisoned Confederates starting in 1906 and all Confederates in 1929
- The belief that the pointed top was to "keep Yankees from sitting on them" is debatable especially since the headstones were not designed by veterans of the Confederate Army.
- Photo: Stephen F. Pierce, June 1862, R85/S66



1925

- "Standard upright"
- Latin cross or Star of David allowed
- Marble or Granite (granite later discontinued in 1947)
- Photo: John Baptista, September 1929, R7/S97



1937

- Flat marble or granite (later discontinued in 1947)
- Religious symbol -1937-1973: Center top. 1973- present: Center Bottom
- With the establishment of memorial park cemeteries in 1915, restricting markers to flat slabs flush to the ground, there was a growing need for an alteration of the veteran headstone.
- Photo: Donald Knox Duvall, September 1999, R33/S107



1940

- Flat bronze memorial
- Not available from July 1942-Nov 1945 due to WWII
- 1940-1973: plain edges, top centered religious symbol, 1973-present: beveled edge, religious symbol bottom centered
- Photo: Philip P. Doherty, September 1983, R46/S95



1994

- "Standard upright"
- Granite option reinstated
- Personalization allowed
- Photo: William B. Dyer, January 1830, R34/S55-56

SOURCES:

Prechtel-Kluszens, Claire. "Headstone records for US military veterans." *National Genealogical Society Magazine*, Vol 39, Num 1, (2013): 30-33.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "History of Government Furnished Headstones and Markers." *United States Department of Veterans Affairs*. 1 February 2010. Web. 10 March 2013.

We are reviving an old section of the newsletter in order to regale you with stories from Congressional Cemetery's beloved K9 Corps. Stay tuned for tales about the pups and people who help ensure that Historic Congressional Cemetery is able to preserve the past as well as remain a vibrant part of the future.

Remembering the Good Times

Dennis Stanford works at the Smithsonian and is renowned for being one of the foremost experts on Paleoindian archaeology. But around Congressional Cemetery, Dennis is known for something quite different. Dennis and his wife, Pegi, are among the handful of original K9 Corps members who had been walking their dog in the cemetery for over 20 years. We also refer to Dennis affectionately as Santa Claus, due to the role he assumes each December at our annual Photos with Santa event.

For those who don't know the history of the K9 Corps, it started with a few intrepid souls like Dennis. Back then, locals knew that the cemetery was a good spot to walk their pups, but the cemetery itself was a not-so-nice place to be. Or as Dennis puts it, it certainly wasn't a place to be after dark. He recalls that "the weeds were so high that you could barely see many of the tombstones." And while a cop regularly parked his car at the far end of the cemetery, apparently he was always fast asleep, woken up only by the brave dog walker who happened to pass by.

By around 1995 the "K9 Corps", as it eventually came to be known, had grown enough



Gogi at the Halloween parade

that Dennis and a few friends started to organize. They created a roster, organized by dogs' names first. Then they created the first K9 tags in the Stanfords' basement. If you stroll around the cemetery today you'll notice that most member dogs all have a little tag hanging from their collars, marking them as official members of the K9 Corps. Dennis thinks that he still has the original dog tag around somewhere that simply reads "Congressional Cemetery #1" that was proudly worn by his dog Cody.

While the dog Dennis started exploring the cemetery with, Cody, is long gone, Dennis currently frequents the grounds with his two dogs Gogi and Rosie. Like many of the dogs in the K9 Corps, they have special stories. Just before Cody passed, Dennis

and Pegi attended a doggy Halloween parade in Lincoln Park. A cute puppy at the very end of the parade made a beeline for Pegi, climbing over two rows of other folks to get to them and promptly sitting in Pegi's lap. It so happens she was up for adoption, and the rest is history.

The Stanfords also adopted their other dog, Rosie O'bama, through rather unconventional means. While walking out the door to pick up his Santa suit for Photos with Santa, Dennis came out just as a man emerged with a scruffy and painfully-thin pit bull. After Dennis absentminded-

Continued next page



Dennis in his yearly role as Santa Claus

ly pet the dog, the man asked if he wanted her. Sadly, the man was being evicted and was on the way to take “Obama” (her original name) to the pound. Although for a while the Stanfords kept Obama with intentions of finding another family for her, they ended up happily keeping the newly named “Rosie O’bama with a Comma.”

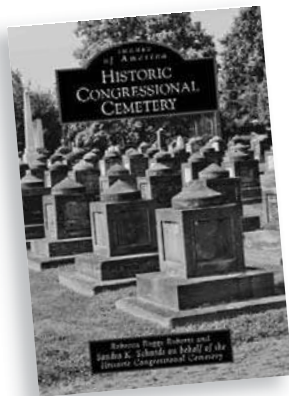
Dogs like Rosie and Gogi, and people like Dennis and Pegi, are some of the many reasons that Congressional Cemetery is such a special place to be. Dennis rightly credits the K9 Corps with bringing back Congressional Cemetery from the conditions in which the dogwalkers found it in the early 1990s. He also notes that in his opinion, “it’s the best cemetery in the country.” We tend to agree. 🐾



Your generous contributions to Congressional Cemetery make it possible for us to continue to preserve, restore, and enhance our historic grounds and markers. For a donation of \$500 or more, you will receive a stone replica of our most treasured and recognizable cenotaphs. It measures 3.5 inches square, and is composed of molded natural stone in exact scale of the original, imprinted on one side with our logo. A treasure certain to cherish for years to come!

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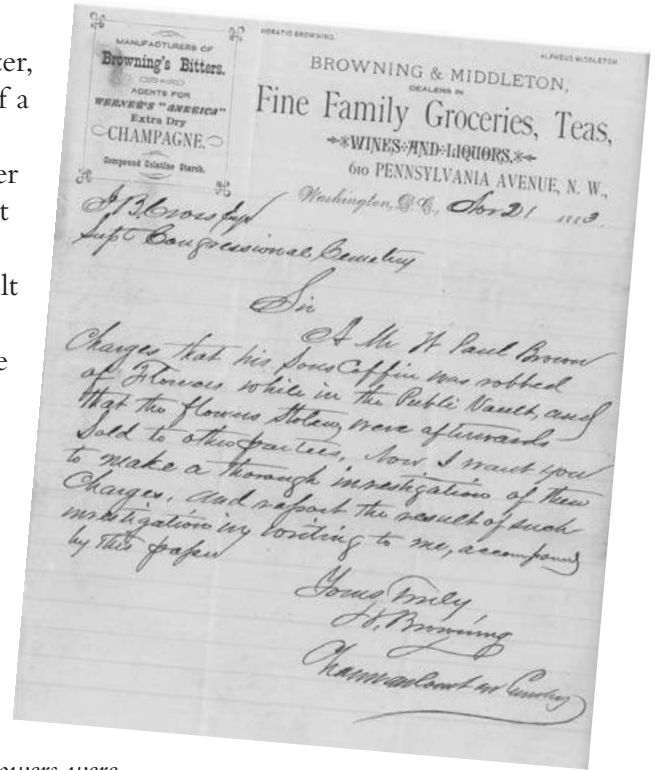
A Denied Accusation: The Sad State of Flowers

The Public Vault was built at Congressional Cemetery in 1835, providing a temporary resting place for the mortal remains of Congressmen and the public alike. As Cathleen Breitreutz notes in *The Developmental History of Congressional Cemetery*, Public Vaults such as Congressional's were a common feature in many nineteenth-century cemeteries. Most stays in the Vault were only for a few days, with the notable exception of First Lady Dolley Madison, whose visit sadly extended to over two years. Nowadays, the Public Vault is a popular stop on tours and is also used from time to time for celebrations and cocktail parties.

A few letters in the archives hint at the conditions of the Public Vault while it was still in

active use. One letter, written on behalf of a Mr. W. Paul Brown and dated November 21, 1883, claims that flowers were stolen from the Public Vault in order to be sold. Luckily, we have the response from the cemetery, which is quite blunt:

"The charge is extremely vague, no points-given to include the probable time of the robbery, or the person to whom the flowers were sold, but the inference is that they were taken immediately after the funeral while fresh,



otherwise they would not have been fit either to steal or sell as a few hours in the Vault in its then (Sept 1st) offensive conditions would have so impregnated them with its bad odor that no would have accepted them as a gift if offered. If not stolen at that time a few days would render them entirely worthless, blackened and decayed and so offensive to the sight as to the smell."

Although the response is guilty of more than a few run-on sentences, it certainly portrays a vivid picture. It's something to muse on the next time you are sipping a cocktail within the walls of this storied structure.



The multi-purpose Public Vault



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

Calendar of Events

APRIL 20

- Annual Meeting and Revolutionary War Living History Event

MAY 4

- Sousa Palooza!
- Cemetery Open House & Major Grant Announcement

MAY 5

- Notes from the Crypt Concert

MAY 11

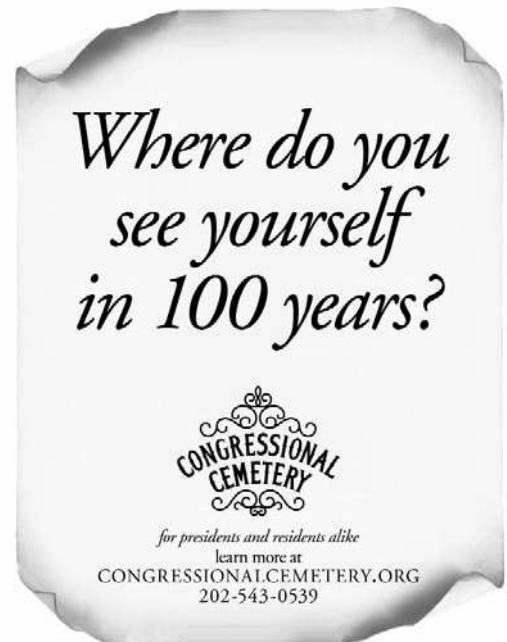
- Diplomats Tour

MAY 31

- Tim Krepp's "Spooky" Tour

JUNE 7

- Pride 5k



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