# HERITAGE WINTER 2018 ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

### PRESERVING THE PAST AT HCC

ongressional Cemetery has accomplished several large preservation and restoration projects during the past few years that have continued to make a lasting impact. For the first time in our recent history, the Board now routinely budgets up to \$200,000 a year dedicated solely toward our many historic preservation priorities, and 2018 was no different. Guests and family members now enter the cemetery under the original 1856 gate that was expanded and altered to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The roadway under the gate was also replaced this year with a herringbone brick pattern walkway and driveway; and



Wilson-Barton mausoleum, which is scheduled to be restored.

staff no longer fears the old days when hearses would bottom out crossing the many potholes that were once part of the entrance.

Looking forward to 2019, the cemetery plans on expanding the landscaping and pedestrian pathways at the main entrance to create a waiting place for tours and an enhanced dog water station. In addition, a volunteer from the Buildings and Grounds Committee is designing an architecturally appropriate side porch to greet incoming funeral possessions in inclement weather. It will also be a spot to house our many tour brochures, maps, and K9 notices.

Operating a historic cemetery can sometimes be a three-ring circus, especially with the myriad projects Congressional currently has in the planning and design stages, to partial demolitions and long-term plans to accommodate the ever-increasing cremation needs of baby boomers.

We recently accomplished the (non-historic) interior demolition of the 1892 Wilson-Barton mausoleum, which was deeded back to the cemetery in 1988 when the family removed their relatives for burial elsewhere. While the mausoleum has remained vacant ever since, the cemetery only recently determined through a structural report that it could be cleared of the

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### LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It is hard to believe that 2018 is nearly over, and at Historic Congressional Cemetery (HCC), the year has been packed with activity. As we all come together with friends and family to celebrate the holidays, and life slows down for just a bit, it's a good time to remember a few of the many wonderful things at HCC for which I am grateful.



First, for the many family members of those buried at Congressional who regularly visit and leave gifts of remembrance. The cemetery is very much a reminder of the strong and enduring bonds of love.

Next for the K9 Corps. Every day dozens of you visit HCC with your dogs. You volunteer in ways too numerous to list, you provide financial support for maintaining and preserving the cemetery, and the community you have developed over the years provides incredibly valuable friendship and support to countless members. I count myself lucky to be among you.

For Christ Church, which brings the blessing of the animals, the sunrise service on Easter and whose members help govern the cemetery, serve as docents and volunteer in many ways.

For the neighbors and visitors who join the tours, walk in the cemetery, sled when it snows, run in the races, come and watch movies, enjoy Soul Strolls and often leave generous donations.

For the volunteers who help maintain the grounds, adopt plots, harvest honey, take pictures with Santa, and lead tours, and for the generous donors who have made financial contributions.

For the remarkable staff of HCC, who keep the cemetery safe and beautiful, and make the challenging task of running a nonprofit that sells burial plots, oversees funerals, manages a dog walking program, holds dozens of events, raises funds and preserves a unique part of this country's history look easy!

And finally, I am enormously grateful for my fellow board members. They bring many different perspectives to bear as they govern the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery--they are dogwalkers, church members, site owners, neighbors, and representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Architect of the Capitol. But they all share a deep affection for the cemetery. They are generous with their time and their financial support, and HCC is a better place because of them.

It clearly takes a village, and I'm deeply grateful for each and every one of you. Have a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year!

—Susan Urahn

### Information for your estate planning, bequest, stock gift, endowment match, or donation:

Legal Name: The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional

Cemetery

Legal Address: 1801 E Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

Telephone: 202-539-0543 Tax ID Number: 52-1071828

Please contact us for wire instruction or banking information



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

1801 E Street, Southeast Washington, DC 20003 202-543-0539 www.congressionalcemetery.org staff@congressionalcemetery.org

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

s I'm sure many of you can agree, the past year seems to have slipped by very quickly. I'm proud to report that the team at Congressional Cemetery again raised well over a million dollars this year. During the past few years, we have consistently doubled the amount that we raised when I first started working here just six years ago, in July of 2012. We've worked on fine tuning events, expanding revenue generators, site sales, and grants and awards. And if you are reading this, we thank you personally for your contributions and donations. It takes a village, after all.

This coming year, we plan on launching an official membership program in the spring. We have initiated new software that will allow memberships to be renewed throughout the year, and we're working to establish different levels, advance and discounted purchase of tickets to our more popular events, and private, members-only events, receptions, and tours. Look for additional information soon.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee, as well as the Board and a newly formed sub-committee have recommended that Congressional be the site of a solar project! While still in the planning phases, the project would not be located within the cemetery itself, but rather on adjacent land that we have determined is actually the property of the cemetery; we suspected as such, but land surveys have proven so. The panels would be located between our property and the DC Jail, on a berm we've determined not to refer to as a grassy knoll. Currently, it's behind our fence and a bevy of weed trees, poison ivy, English ivy, invasive species, weeds, and even home to a very large groundhog. We would of course hire a herd of goats to clear the land, create a row of new green burial spaces, and be able to offer reduced electrical rates to those in need in our neighborhood, all the while gaining a yearly lease fee. It will be a temporary project, but one that indeed brings us into the future.



During the past several years, we've seen our water bills escalate from \$300 per month to nearly \$3,300 - each and every month. This is due to fees imposed to pay for an enormous tunnel project that will carry storm and waste water to the Blue Plains treatment plant instead of overflowing into the Anacostia River. While we want to pay our fair share, we don't have an irrigation system, and our road catch basins lead to the heavily forested area south of the cemetery. So, we've joined other cemeteries in the city, testified in front of the City Council, and made our voices heard through the Washington Post and other media outlets. Thankfully, the city responded, and we'll be able to apply for partial relief in January.

This coming year we will also be introducing a small and separate pet cemetery, located in a fenced area to our south. Look for updates on that coming soon.

And finally, we look forward to partnering again with Casey Trees to bring additional trees to the cemetery in the spring of 2019. Since 2009, in fact, we have planted 136 new trees from the non-profit, not including several dozens more donated from individuals and organizations.

Here is to a prosperous and busy 2019!

-Paul K. Williams, President

## **QUND THE GATEHOUSE**

### Brademas Mausoleum Dedication



The new Brademas mausoleum was unveiled on December 1. 2018 by Mary Ellen Brademas, whose husband, Congressman John Brademas, was interred in the new structure. Friends and family

Completed Brademas mausoleum.

members attended the event, followed by a champagne reception in the chapel. The newest family mausoleum

in the cemetery took nearly two years from design to build, and it consists of a solid red granite Doric Greek temple with bronze door. Artist Anthony DelGallo designed the large structure, and hand carved both the Congressional Seal and the medical Caduceus in matching solid red



Inscriptions on mausoleum.

granite. The mausoleum was built and installed by Eastern Memorials.

#### **SOUL STROLLS**

Soul Strolls, now in its fourth year, was another successful fundraising event for Congressional Cemetery. All four nights sold out, and HCC staff and volunteers were amazed — and incredibly impressed — at the record attendance on a very soggy Friday night. Our volunteer actors portrayed the infamous Beau Hickman, graverobber Maud Brown, tragic actress Mary Fuller, Revolutionary War veteran Montjoy Bayly, and



Commodore Thomas Tingey.



Cocktails in the Public Vault.

the inestimable Commodore Thomas Tingey. The Public Vault once again served as a venue for our VIP area, which was interpreted as an "Circa 1807" theme — the year the cemetery started. VIP guests enjoyed the company of Mrs. Tingey and John Gadsby while sipping craft cocktails. Many, many thanks to the legion of volunteers who made this event possible. We can't wait to introduce a new set of residents to you next year.

### YEAR END CONTRIBUTIONS



For many of us, the year 2018 certainly flew by and here we are at the end of the year already. Please consider a year end gift that can be directed to a preservation project or our endowment, which would be matched dollar for dollar for eternal giving. Use the envelope provided in this newsletter or visit our website at CongessionalCemetery.org where you can make a very easy donation using

# AROUND THE GATEHOUSE

the Donate Now button. We certainly appreciate your prior donations which have allowed us to focus on several major preservation and restoration projects such as the front gate, several family mausoleums, and literally thousands of stone repairs. Together, we can continue the momentum and make a difference within this beloved National Historic Landmark.

## Do You Have Relatives Interred at HCC?

We are forming a special group for those of you that have relatives buried at Congressional Cemetery! We're working on a clever name, of course, but we would like to recognize those that have family members interred here, both recent and ancient, that are part of our special community. We'd like to offer you discounts on our gift shop, rentals, events, and even host private tours. Look out for a special "family reunion" reception in the spring to bring you all together. If you are interested, please drop an email to



staff@congressionalcemetery.org or give us a ring at 202-543-0539. We know there are a lot of you out there!

We're also working hard now to establish a formal membership program for everyone who loves HCC in 2019. We're establishing levels and benefits to give everyone the opportunity to belong to this special community. Stay tuned!

### Preserving the Past at HCC

Continued from page 1

brick casket bays inside. With a recent new concrete roof installed this fall (with skylight!), it is now a water tight, 11-foot x 18-foot room. Plans call for restoring the historic granite façade this year and designing a new secure wrought iron gate. Niches for cremated remains will also be designed for the interior, creating a unique adaptive reuse project and a rare opportunity for those seeking a final resting place for cremains.

This past fall, we also had an "ah ha!" moment during a meeting to discuss a brick retaining wall at our 17th and H Street entrance, which had partially fallen due to the excessive amount of rain endured this summer. The remainder of the wall has been braced to prevent further collapse, and it was originally budgeted to simply be replaced. However, graves located behind the wall would have necessitated a complex foundation system that would mean removing and replacing the

roadway. Since the entrance is already blocked due to the location of our totem poles, we surprised even ourselves by suddenly proposing a columbarium wall to replace the plain brick wall. Eureka! Plans are underway to create an inviting grotto of sorts, with new landscaping and cremation niches. We hope these additional niches will not only more than pay for the wall replacement, but also offer yet another unique setting for a much-needed use.

Other potential preservation and development initiatives for the upcoming year will be prioritized at our January Board retreat. We look forward to letting you know where your donated dollars will be dedicated to help improve the aesthetics of the grounds and support the stewardship of this beloved National Historic Landmark.



## "IT WAS A SCENE I CAN NEVER FORGET": THE GREELY EXPEDITION

BY LAUREN MALOY

ashington, D.C. is now officially entrenched in winter, and it's unpleasant, to say the least. However, any mild discomforts are put to shame when compared to the disastrous Lady Franklin Bay Expedition. The members of this ill-fated entourage, better known as the Greely Expedition, suffered far worse a fate than dry skin and chilly toes. Twenty-five men departed Newfoundland for the Artic in 1881. In 1884, when the party was finally rescued, only seven remained – and only six made it back to safety. The first to perish was William Cross, who is buried at Congressional Cemetery.

The goals of the Greely Expedition were twofold:

first, to establish a research station to collect weather observations; second, to reach a new "Farthest North" — the highest latitude reached by explorers, and a record long held by the British. The expedition used Fort Conger, their camp on Ellesmere Island, as their home base. The trip was designed to take a year: the U.S.S. Proteus dropped the expedition off on the island and a relief ship was scheduled to arrive in the summer of 1882. However, a relief ship never came.

Anticipating problems, the expedition came with three years of supplies. However, after the relief ship still had not arrived in 1883, First Lieutenant Adolphus Greely made the executive decision to abandon Fort Conger and relocate to Cape Sabine, as the Army had planned to drop supplies at three points further south in case they were unable to reach the men at Fort Conger. The party endured a traumatic journey

south to Cape Sabine, and once they arrived, they were not rewarded for their sacrifices. There was only a small cache of supplies at Cape Sabine, enough to last only an additional few weeks.

From there, as the popular saying goes, things went from bad to worse — and this certainly was the case for William Cross. Cross was an engineer for the expedition, and overall was not well-liked by the rest of the expedition. His disposition was surly and he often overindulged in alcohol. His drunkenness — and the many incidents of falling into water that resulted — made it into the pages of others' journals. In August 1882 Greely wrote:



Members of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition. William Cross is noted with the arrow.

# AMERICAN HERITAGE

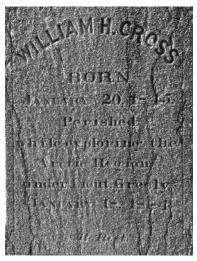
"The engineer is drunk today. He fell from the launch into the water, where he would have drowned if he had not been rescued by Brainard. I learned from Lieutenant Lockwood that he had stolen a portion of the alcohol which was sent for the launch for fuel on the late trip up Archer Fiord, and was drunk at that time. He evidently avails himself of every opportunity to purloin and conceal a portion of the fuel alcohol sent out with parties."

Alcohol problems aside, Cross also endured numerous other ailments over the course of three years. He suffered frostbite in his feet and his ear as well as a painful toothache that resulted in a swollen cheek. By the time the party arrived at Cape Sabine, Cross was already an unhealthy man. He persisted throughout the fall, but by January 1884, he grew weak and was unable to leave his tent. He died on January 18, 1884 of scurvy and malnutrition. On the following day, Sergeant Brainard described the services for Cross and noted poignantly:

"One cannot conceive of anything more unearthly — more weird and solemn – than this ghostly procession of emaciated men moving slowly and silently away from the wretched ice-prison in the uncertain light of the Arctic night, having in their midst a dead comrade about to be laid forever in the frozen ground. It was a scene I can never forget."

The situation did not improve for the rest of the party. Following Cross, men continued to die — of starvation, hypothermia, and drowning. One member — Private Henry — was even executed for stealing shrimp from the community pot. By the time a rescue party finally made it to Cape Sabine, only seven, near-death men remained — including Lieutenant Greely. One man died on the journey home from his wounds, leaving a remaining six men alive.

The remains of the fallen members of the Greely Expedition were retrieved at the time of the rescue. Cross' body was transported to his home of Washington, D.C., and he was buried in Congressional Cemetery. According to his obituary, 5,000 people cycled



Epitaph on William Cross' headstone.

through the Cross residence to view
William Cross' casket
prior to the funeral.
The victims of the disaster were lauded as
heroes.

For the survivors, however, the story was quite different.
Rumors of cannibalism tainted the reputation and the achievements of the Greely Expedition.

Many of the rescuers claimed that the recovered bodies showed evidence of cannibalism, and some families of the deceased upheld these disturbing claims. Greely continued to deny these rumors until his death.

To end on a gruesome note — while it is possible, and even probable, that cannibalism did occur, it is unlikely that William Cross' remains suffered this fate. As the first to die before starvation truly set in for the party, it is improbable that his fellow team members used him for that purpose. William Cross is buried in Range 90, Site 299. Though not well loved by his comrades, the courage he exhibited in going on this mission in the first place should be remembered, especially on wintery days like today.

#### **Resources:**

Website that includes summaries, photos from the expedition, and journals. *American Experience: The Greely Expedition.* https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/greely/

Bytes of History: William Cross articles and obituary: http://bytesofhistory.org/Cemeteries/DC\_Congressional/Obits/C/C\_PDF/Cross\_WilliamH.pdf

"The Greely Expedition. Alleged Cannibalism." Daily News. New York, August 12, 1884. https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/43815941



### THOMAS MANN

By Kymberly Mattern

hances are, you have passed Thomas
Mann's gravestone several times during
your visits to Congressional Cemetery as
it is located in a prominent location near the chapel.
You may or may not have noticed his stone before. I
encourage you to look for it during your next visit
because it is (in my opinion) one of the most clever
and unique stones at Congressional Cemetery!

Thomas Mann, who is a retired Library of Congress reference librarian, is still alive and healthy. Mann decided to pre-make his stone because he thought it would be "neat" to be buried under a card catalog record and his friend who is a stone-carver needed the work. His stone exemplifies what an old card-catalog record looked like. Following the Library of Congress rules, Mann documented his life on his stone.

Mann gave himself the title of "Librarian" and listed



Thomas Mann's headstone.

his birthplace of "Chicago" as his place of publication. His parents were listed as his "publishers" in the corresponding cataloging field. The "note field," which states "Revised edition, Baton Rouge, 1976" and "Washington, DC, 1980" mark the years of two big life-changing moves that Mann made. Mann has "Christian" listed as his first subject heading. The second subject heading is left blank in case Mann comes up with another subject heading for himself. However, Mann has contemplated leaving it blank because he thinks it "might encourage other librarians to think 'What would be the [second] subject heading that they'd apply to their own lives?" The "Z710.M3 is the call number for one of Mann's books, The Oxford *Guide to Library Research*, while the "025.5'24" is the Dewey Decimal Classification for the same book. "0221-1948" signifies Mann's birthday, and it is encoded in the form of an "ISSN" (International Standard Serial Number). "AACR 2" references the code of cataloging rules, Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd edition, which is currently used by the Library of Congress, and "MARC" correlates to another set of cataloging standards, Machine Readable Cataloging, used at the Library of Congress.

Just like in old library card catalogs, there is a hole at the bottom of the stone. In old library card catalogs (for those of you who don't remember), this hole was created so a brass rod could run through the cards to secure all of them in the catalog trays and prevent them from being displaced. At the top of the stone, there is a small circular depression, which is large enough to hold a coin. Mann wanted this because he wanted to encourage an urban myth that anyone—particularly librarians—would have good luck if they left a coin there.



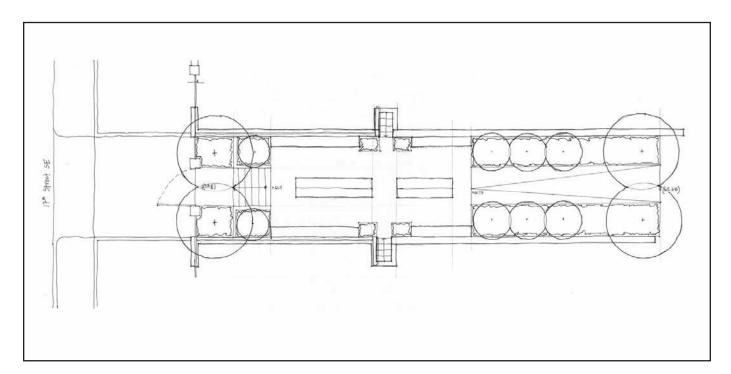
### **HCC IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS!**

ne of the many advantages of creating a detailed, digital map of each of our nearly 80,000 cemetery plots is the ability to determine which are vacant and currently for sale. Although our historic site is 211 years old, it might surprise you that HCC has just over 5,000 plots currently for sale! And while we have certainly seen an uptick in site sales during the past few years, at our current rate we will continue to have an inventory for nearly 100 years.

HCC is also the only certified green burial site in the Washington, DC metropolitan region, a designation bestowed upon us by the Green Burial Council. We allow true green burials anywhere in the cemetery. What does that mean? We don't require embalming or the use of a concrete vault. One can be buried in a plain pine box, wicker casket, or other natural materials. Occasionally, somebody requests to be buried just in a plain cotton shroud. We call that "clothing optional." Green burials are becoming more and more popular, and to witness a grave being filled in by hand with family members is truly emotional yet spiritual as well.

We're also creating new real estate, especially given the popularity of cremation, and we have several columbarium and inurnment sites already available, with many more planned for the near future. We plan on incorporating a new row of 75 green burial sites and located nearby a planned solar project on land not previously utilized.

### Landscape plan for Prout Street Columbarium Garden.





## AND THAT'S A WRAP: A RECAP OF 2018 **GROUNDS PROJECTS**

By Kymberly Mattern

Several significant changes occurred on the grounds this past year. In the spring, we hosted multiple volunteer groups. These volunteers created flowerbeds that lined the pathways leading to most of the mausoleums on Mausoleum Row. A filter fabric was placed to help minimize and prevent weed growth. Then, the volunteers planted multiple knockout roses and azaleas, two lilac trees, two willow shrubs, four peonies, and several gladiolus and buttercups before completing the flowerbeds by covering the beds with black mulch. This major project was just the first phase of the flowerbeds at Mausoleum Row. There are plans to build off of these flowerbeds starting in Spring 2019. Kymberly Mattern, our Grounds Conservation Manager, also created a paver pathway that leads to one of the mausoleums.

Another volunteer group in the spring focused on fixing and resetting small headstones in the section across the road from J Edgar Hoover's grave. This area of the cemetery does not typically receive much attention, so the work was much-needed and left a huge impact!

In May, we partnered with the National Trust for



Volunteer painting the fence at Day of Remembrance.

Historic Preservation to host a HOPE (hands-on preservation experience) volunteer event. This event focused on stone cleaning, resetting small headstones, working on improving the landscape in the eastern section of the cemetery.

In the summer, the restoration of the Gadsby mausoleum began. Devlin McDonald cleaned the exterior of the mausoleum, repointed the joints, and completed patch repairs. On the interior of the mausoleum, Devlin McDonald patched the plaster and repaired several marble plaques that were broken. Kymberly Mattern completed the restoration of the Gadsby mausoleum by cleaning the stairs and painting the interior of the mausoleum white.

The Public Vault was also given a makeover, thanks to the help of an Eagle Scout, Matthew Johnson. The dirt was removed from the Public Vault as well as a neighboring mausoleum. The dirt traps moisture, which can quicken the rate of deterioration of the plaster on the mausoleums. Most significantly, the interior of the Public Vault was painted white. The paint was a lime-based paint that allows the plaster to breathe properly and naturally.

In the fall, we hosted our annual Day of Remembrance event. The projects for Day of Remembrance included: painting the fence along E Street and Potomac Avenue, creating pea gravel pathways at the east end of the cemetery, completing a brick paver pathway, pruning trees, re-mulching mausoleum row, pulling weeds, cleaning stones, and clearing the historic cobblestone swales in the east end of the cemetery.

While a lot of work was completed this past year, there is still much that can be done to improve the cemetery. Kymberly Mattern is starting to plan volunteer projects for 2019. If you have any project ideas or would like to volunteer next year, please email her at kmattern@congressionalcemetery.org.



### THE HUNT FOR ALEXANDER HUNT

By Dayle Dooley, Archivist

s with most of my discoveries in the archives, I stumbled upon the story of Alexander Hunt's stone by accident. I received a request on Findagrave to edit the memorial for Alice Underwood Hunt. I checked to see if we had an obituary for her and found her husband Alexander Cameron Hunt (1825-1894), who had been a Governor of Colorado. We have extensive information on him including the following article:

Granite Boulder Placed in Congressional Cemetery to Gov. A.C. Hunt

This article appeared in The Evening Star on February 23, 1908.

"A granite boulder has been shipped from Colorado to Washington to mark the last resting place of Alexander Cameron Hunt, who was territorial governor of Colorado, 1867-1869."

The article intrigued me, so I investigated further.







Alexander Hunt

Alice Hunt

According to the article, the boulder was taken from the Ute Pass and weighs several tons. Although I have been actively involved here at Congressional on and off since the 1980s I didn't recall a red granite boulder weighing several tons. In selecting this stone, "General Palmer was inspired by a sentiment that must appeal to all familiar with the governor's connection with that Indian stronghold in the Rockies." After an extensive scientific study (I looked it up on Google) it appears the stone that is here is more likely one ton, but still is an impressive monument.

Alexander Hunt is buried in a site owned by his wife's family, the Underwoods. The inscription of on the obverse of the family stone reads: "Alexander Cameron Hunt of Colorado/ Crossed the Divide/May 14, 1894." If you're familiar with the cemetery and want to visit the stone, take the crushed brick path past the Totem pole and look to your right!

And yes, I did find an obituary for Alice Underwood Hunt - she didn't die until 1920, 26 years after her husband and for many years was interested in charitable work in Washington, DC, and was a founder of the Home for the Blind in Georgetown.

Yes!
I want to help preserve and restore Congressioanl Cemetery with a tax deductible donation.
\$25 \$50 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 Other
Special donation for the Sousa Gate Project: Anonymous ☐ Yes ☐ No
Special donation for the Endowment: Anonymous   Yes  No
Check enclosed, made payable to Congressional Cemetery
☐Please charge my credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard
Card #
Cardmember NameExp
Signature
Name
Address
CityStateZip
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.



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