

HERITAGE GAZETTE

FALL 2019

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

NEW PET SECTION—KINGDOM OF ANIMALS

After a few years of research, planning, and budgeting, HCC is pleased to have opened a new section for pets called “Kingdom of Animals.” Appropriately located across the street from the popular “Doggie Day Spa” where a natural spring comes above ground, the separate new section is 12’ by 100’ and contains 399 individual pet sites for the inurnment or burial of cremated remains. The first and only of its kind in Washington, DC, it is defined by a solid wood fence along the rear forest and a low, curved wrought iron fence with two gates on the front.

Each individual site measures 18” square and can accommodate up to 12 cremains. Each purchase includes a granite flat marker of your choice, with a free engraving of the pets’ names. All pets are welcome – dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, goldfish, you name it!

In addition to the individual sites for pets, we have created a series of myriad granite columns that will mark communal graves, specific pet types, or HCC K9 Corp members. One column will be dedicated to our beloved K9 Corps members, whose cremated remains can be buried along with their canine friends from the cemetery.

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View of
Congressional’s
new pet section

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Five years ago, at this very time of year, my mother — Susan Samuels — passed away. A lifelong smoker, she suffered from COPD. As with so many afflicted with that disease, my mother's health became progressively worse over the years. As her health declined, she regularly engaged me in conversations about what would happen when she died.



As many of you may know, these kinds of conversations often prove to be circular. On one level, they can be quite substantive — grappling with mortality, loss, fear. On another level, they can be logistical — where things are in the house, how to finalize certain matters, where — and indeed whether — to be buried. Often, the two levels intersect.

In our case, these conversations became a rite of passage each time I visited with my mother in her final years. I would sit on a step in her bedroom as she would run through a range of topics — where to find old family photos, which jewelry was costume and which was real, how to find things she had hidden around the house. Going over the same topics each time made for occasional (or even, regular) frustration to me.

But, over time, I have come to understand that these conversations were therapeutic for her as she grappled with letting go in every sense of that term.

One subject came up on every visit — where to be buried. The one thing she knew was that she wanted to be buried in Washington itself (and not Virginia or Maryland, or anywhere else for that matter). Having spent most of her adult life in the District, my mother viewed herself as a Washingtonian to her core. Indeed, for a number of years, she had even served on the Board of Directors for what is now the Historical Society of Washington, DC.

So, while she could be unsure about some topics, she was certain of one thing: her body would remain in Washington when she died. That was the one and only piece of certainty when it came to the subject of my mother's burial.

And so began a monthly ritual of conversations about a range of burial options in Washington. I became all too familiar with the cemeteries of the city... not because of any research on my part but just from listening to her cycle through options.

And yet, in all those years, one cemetery was never mentioned — Congressional. When my mother died, and my father and I were left to decide where she would be buried, I reached out to the cemetery to see if it was an active burial community. I am quite sure I began the call by saying something to the effect of, "I know you are a historical cemetery, so you probably don't have any active sites, but..."

Of course, I was wrong. As I listened to Margaret Puglisi run through myriad options over the phone, I knew I needed to see the grounds in per-

Continued on page 7



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

With the hot and dry summer in mind, it is a relief to see our young trees thrive despite mother nature's efforts to the contrary. We have had Casey Trees plant over 200 trees in the past seven years, and they will be adding 50 more the first Saturday in September during our 9/11 Day of Remembrance with the aid of a few hundred military volunteers. This is in addition to several hundred memorial trees and donated trees from groups such as the Chestnut Society of America; their little grove of pest resistant Chestnut trees have grown from two-foot-tall sticks to a six-foot tree in just two years. Roadways and pathways in the East End now are lined with trees and will soon have a welcome shade canopy.

For several years, the cemetery has been investigating a solar installation project located on land until recently we didn't even know we owned – behind the fence between us and the D.C. Jail. Turns out we own to the top of the berm, and it is an excellent location for a solar canopy. A Board subcommittee has completed the due diligence and a lease is in negotiation that will provide significant funds for the cemetery that would be guaranteed for 15 years. In addition, the power sold back to the grid can be offered to low-income Capitol Hill homeowners. A new iron fence valued at \$400,000 will replace the current deteriorating chain link fence, and landscaping underneath a part of the canopy will offer shade, resting areas, paths, and landscaping features to enhance the entire East End.



If you visit our website, you may notice a new format! It's a new and updated version of our website first created seven years ago and contains all of our popular pages and pictures, with a more appealing aesthetic. We've also incorporated our blog, online store, and a robust new events page.

Fall also means the staff is gearing up for a very busy event season from October's Dead Man's 5k Run to Soul Strolls, with tickets already on their way to selling out. Mark your calendars for the Marine Corps concert to mark John Philip Sousa's 165th birthday on November 6th with an awards ceremony beginning at 10:30 am.

— Paul K. Williams

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

Legal Name: The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

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Telephone: 202-539-0543

Tax ID Number: 52-1071828

Please contact us for wire instruction or banking information

AROUND THE GATEHOUSE

HCC FAMILY REUNION



HCC Family Reunion.

On June 1st HCC held its first Family Reunion for descendants of those buried at the cemetery as well as current site owners. HCC staff invited attendees to bring documents and records to augment the cemetery's family files. In addition, archivist Dayle Dooley pulled historic records and site information for perusal and lectured about the records at the cemetery. We enjoyed hosting this first gathering and hope that it will be the first of many. Wish you could have been there and want to know about plans for 2020? Email staff@congressionalcemetery.org to ensure you're on the notification list for next year's reunion.

HCC ACQUIRES A NEW URN ARK



You may not think the funeral business continues to constantly evolve, but it does. New products are meeting the demands of the increased cremation rates, including urns made of salt and other biodegradable materials

meant to dissolve quickly, even some that include a sapling that will sprout after burial. While these are certainly a welcome addition to the vast array of options, they presented another problem — what if it was pouring rain during the time the urn was carried from the service in the chapel to the site in the cemetery that could be located up to a mile away?

Enter our newest funerary acquisition, the Urn Ark. It is a beautiful and dignified carved wood table with a

concealed glass box that securely holds any size and shape urn. HCC will rent the Ark for use at the service and it features two side drawers for flowers and portraits. Following the service, two pall bearers lift the handles on either side of the glass box and lift it off its platform and carry it to the site of inurnment or burial. The urn stays protected from the elements and from what can be an awkward transport to the site, all while providing a new level of sophistication to the service.

DEAD CALM: HCC'S NEW WEATHER STATION



The cemetery recently installed a sophisticated weather station behind the gatehouse that is not your typical basic instrument. As you can see from the map, we are

connected to a series of select stations located

throughout the world to convey our current temperature, humidity, rain, and trends to monitor and compare climate change. The system also 'learns' our local weather patterns over a short period of time to be able to predict upcoming weather in the cemetery, which is especially helpful with our conservation efforts when lime based paint and mortar needs certain conditions to cure properly.

Rain totals will assist grounds crew when water is needed on our new trees and plants.

It will also more accurately predict upcoming weather for events, outdoor movies, and funerals to aid in determining if we need to move activities indoors or cancel them all together. Perhaps the most important aspect is the lightning detector which records ground strikes and frequency up to 15 miles away with alerts on advancing storms before our events — and to keep inside President Paul Williams, who has been struck by lightning — twice.



POOLING OUR RESOURCES



Our sprawling 35 acres have several mossy green water spigots. Some work well enough but are subject to malfunction with one wrong turn of the wrist. Some spigots work but spray water causing waste and some spigots don't work at all.

Malfunctioning spigots cause a muddy mess, but the excessive waste of water goes against the conservation work Congressional Cemetery has done and is a waste to the larger community in which

This could be us!!

the cemetery belongs. Spigots that don't work at all cut into productivity of projects ranging from masonry to gardening. The broken spigots make more work for the cemetery's Adopt-a-Plot volunteers who generously give their time and money to help upkeep the numerous family plots of the cemetery. It can be a trek for volunteers to find a functioning spigot to water plots.

Our goal is to have all the old spigots on the grounds converted to new durable and easy to operate lift handle spigots. Each one costs \$6,000. The installation of these spigots also come with cement platforms that keep the area free of pooling water and mud.

It is an ambitious goal but one worthwhile for the future of the historic grounds of Congressional Cemetery and I encourage you to scribble "HCC spigots" on the memo section of your donation checks if you would like to help raise funds for this project. I see every day the concern and generosity of the Congressional Cemetery communities and I know with the pooling of our resources, we can create a wave of change on the grounds.

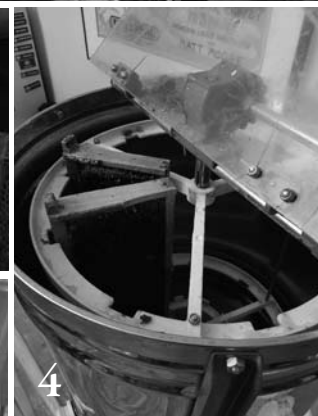


But we need your donations!

HONEY HARVEST

Congressional Cemetery kicked off the fall season with a Honey Harvest at the end of August. Toni Burnham has been leading this popular event for the past nine years in which attendees literally take the honey from the hive to the jar. The event included a tour of the cemetery's apiary and hands-on harvesting experience. Twelve participants learned how to remove wax caps from the honeycomb, extract honey using a centrifuge, and jar the finished product with the help of four Capitol Hill beekeepers. Toni shared with the attendees that Congressional Cemetery is the perfect site for bees due to the open green space and variety of flowers and trees available for the colonies.

The harvest produced approximately 10 gallons of honey, filling 300 jars that can be found at Congressional Cemetery's gift shop in two different sizes. Be sure to pick up your 2019 honey before we sell out!



1. Starting from the hive
2. Volunteers processing the honey
3. Removing the wax seals
4. The honey enters the centrifuge
5. Sweet, sweet honey

MARGUERITE LAMOTT DUPONT LEE

BY LAUREN MALOY

When you come across a name such as Marguerite's, you might expect a certain type of person: blue-blooded, wealthy, and perhaps a little old-fashioned as a result. And to a certain extent, Marguerite Lamott DuPont Lee was very much a product of her prestigious name. Born to the wealthy DuPont family from Delaware and married into the Virginia Lees, much of what she accomplished in her life was due to her circumstances and her birthright. But there was more to Marguerite than meets the eye, as the saying goes.

I ran across Marguerite's story when I first started working at Congressional Cemetery, and I became enamored with her. Rebecca Roberts, a fellow Marguerite groupie, clued me in to her incredible story. Ms. Lee's story elicits admiration because while parts of her life follow an established and predictable timeline, other aspects are completely unexpected. It seemed that although she outwardly conformed to many societal stereotypes for much of her life, she also found a way to do exactly what she wanted.

Marguerite grew up in the Wilmington area of Delaware near the DuPont family powder mills. Her childhood was disrupted when she was just 15 years old, when both of her parents died within the same year. Marguerite's mother, Charlotte DuPont, was committed to an insane asylum, where she died in August 1877. Just a month after Charlotte's death, Marguerite's father Éleuthère died of consumption.

Charlotte and Éleuthère left behind five children, Marguerite included, and all the children lived in a house on DuPont mill property. Plans were made to break the family up and relocate the children, but the story goes that the family put up a resistance when

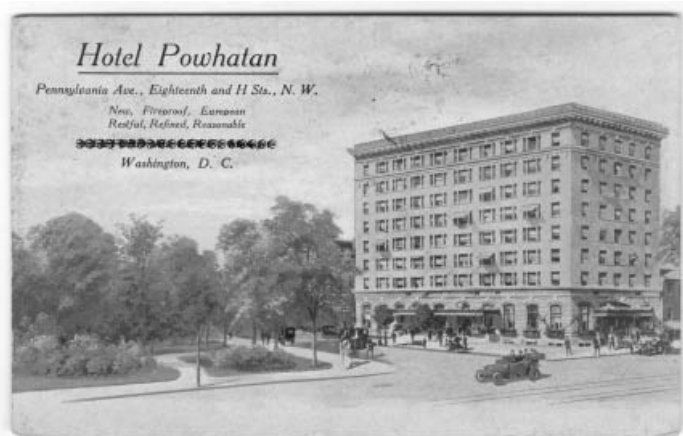
their uncle came to tell them the news. While the story may be apocryphal as it is a little too adorable, the children met their uncle armed to the teeth — Marguerite with a rolling pin, Alfred with a shotgun, Annie with an ax, Maurice a pistol, and Louis a bow and arrow. They were allowed to remain in the house together.

A few short years later, however, Marguerite married her wealthy cousin Cazenove Gardner Lee and moved to Washington, D.C. They lived in a large house on New Hampshire Avenue, NW and both lived the lives "high-society" people are expected to sustain. That being said, towards the end of their marriage Marguerite also became actively involved in the women's suffrage movement and marched in the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C.

Cazenove Lee died in 1912, and after his death Marguerite snubbed society and turned her energies to other pursuits. And not in the typical way that you might expect, doling out funds from the comforts of her own home to charities. Marguerite sold her New Hampshire Avenue home and moved to Georgetown to start a settlement house. Those of you who know D.C. may think to yourself, "Sounds like Marguerite moved to a pretty swanky part of town." But the Georgetown of yore did not resemble the manicured streets and high-end stores of today's charming neighborhood. Instead, Georgetown during Marguerite's lifetime was often referred to as a slum, which is exactly why Marguerite wanted to found a settlement house in the neighborhood. Settlement houses were common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Often founded by wealthy women, these houses provided educa-



Image courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library.




Powhatan Hotel

tional programs to the urban poor, mostly catering to women and children. The settlement house Marguerite founded included a kindergarten, a mothers club, and offered classes on social issues such as labor and suffrage.

Marguerite eventually retired from her work at the settlement house in the best way possible — she moved into a suite at the Powhatan Hotel. She collected and dabbled in other interests; specifically, she indulged her fascination in the supernatural and went

so far as to author a book on Virginia ghosts. Marguerite gave up fashion when she gave up on society and continued to wear old-fashioned Victorian lace-up boots, until the last Washington cobbler who knew how to make them finally died. Marguerite Lamott DuPont Lee died in 1936.

I was eager to learn more about Marguerite because I found her story intriguing — but really, I think everyone should. It's a lesson I think we all need to learn and re-learn, that the outward trappings of a person aren't the sum of who they are, or what their legacy should be. Let's all raise a glass to Marguerite, who bucked tradition, society, and expectations, and made her own way. 

SOURCES:

Engel, Andrew. "Marguerite Du Pont Lee — A Voice for the Poor." Hagley Museum Blog, January 22, 2014. <https://www.hagley.org/librarynews/marguerite-du-pont-lee-%E2%80%93-voice-poor>

Krepp, Tim. *Ghosts of Georgetown*. Charleston, SC: Haunted America, 2013.

Roberts, Rebecca. Uppity Women Tour of Congressional Cemetery.

Preface to *Virginia Ghosts*, 1966.

Chair Letter *continued from page 2*

son and in a fresh light — not as a place where I had walked my dogs or where so many interesting and diverse people had been buried, but rather as a place where my own mother could be interred and where, I too, might one day join her.

Later that same day, I walked through HCC with Margaret. I had walked those same grounds hundreds of times with my dog Cosmo. I had looked at headstones, markers, and benches. I had spent time in different parts of the cemetery.

But this was an entirely different experience. The distinct areas of the cemetery were almost like neighborhoods. I found myself looking down at the ground but doing so differently than I ever had before. And the location of trees now mattered as did the surrounding area.

Within an hour, we found the perfect spot for my mother. It would be nearly two years before her head-

stone would be complete (more on that in a future newsletter), but we had found her final home inside the District.

The experience of locating the right cemetery — and the right plot — for my mother reminds me of another thing I love so much about HCC: we are an active cemetery. Our cemetery has an amazing history and fascinating historical figures (some better known than others). And, at the same time, we are a place of rest for members of our community in all of the ways that we might define that. When I tell friends about HCC, I often say, "It is the home to some amazing people you have heard of, many you haven't, and my mom."

My mother and I spent nearly five years talking about where in Washington she might be buried when she died. Within one day after her death, the perfect place found her.

—Joel Samuels

A SUMMER IN REVIEW

BY MARGARET CANILANG

Our summer intern, Jennifer Ketchum, has proven to be an invaluable asset to Congressional Cemetery with her expertise in brick masonry and attention to detail. Her final projects include resetting the Trimble and Wright ledger stones and making sure infant Cynthia Susan Henshaw does not lose her delicate epitaph.

A curious set of marble memorials, the Matthew Wright and Matthew Trimble stones lay hip to hip with less than a centimeter to separate them, reminiscent of memorials for a married couple. But with different last names, they appeared to be unrelated. With a little research, it was discovered that Matthew Wright was a wealthy landowner with properties, homes, and stores throughout Prince George's County, Georgetown, and Washington, D.C. He died at the age of 80 in 1847. Matthew Trimble happened to be a very fortunate nephew of Wright, inheriting money and properties at the time of his uncle's passing. Yet he only lived for eleven years afterwards, dying at the age of 66.

While the marble itself was heavily soiled and



Ledger Memorials for Matthew Wright and Matthew Trimble



Lifting a ledger using our new gantry.

weathered, the foundation for the memorials was essentially nonexistent with sporadic piles of bricks placed underneath the ledgers, creating unnecessary strain for the fragile memorials. Jennifer's goal was to provide a sufficient foundation and masonry walls to support the load of the marble while also elevating the historic material away from damage potentially caused during routine lawn maintenance.

Using the cemetery's new manual gantry, Jennifer lifted the ledgers off their dilapidating foundation and salvaged any bricks worth reusing. The ledgers have a new concrete foundation in which to rest, and Jennifer is currently constructing the masonry walls to elevate the memorial. The cemetery's community service workers have been vital in the execution of this project and have given Jennifer the chance to lead a small crew through the process. The next steps include finishing the support walls and lifting the ledger stones back into place.

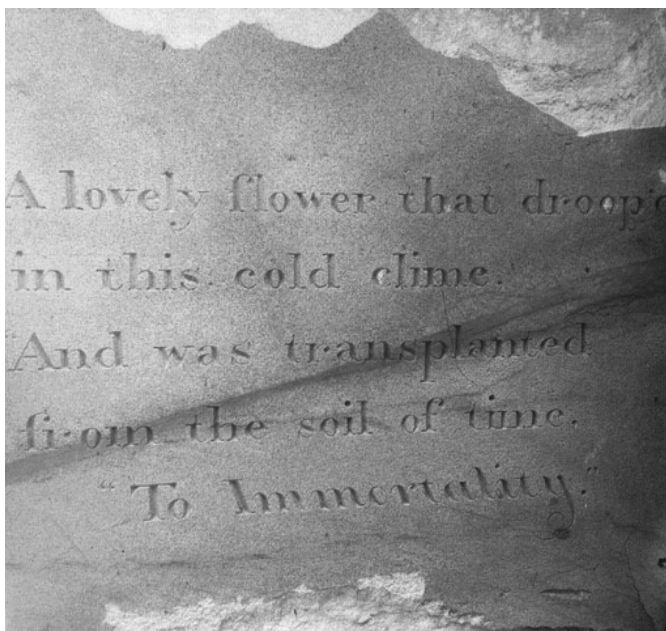
STONE STORIES

As Jennifer was preparing for the Wright and Trimble memorial repairs, she became deeply invested in a nearby stone for infant Cynthia Susan Henshaw. The inscription reads:

Erected
To mark the spot
Where repose the remains of
Cynthia Susan
Daughter of
Joshua L. & Susan G. Henshaw
Born Decr 20th 1826
Died Sepr 24th 1827

A lovely flower that droop'd
in this cold clime,
And was transplanted
from the soil of time,
to *Immortality*.

The monument shows indication of deterioration typically seen in sandstone such as discoloration from pollution and pitting, but by far the worst is the delamination threatening the baby's epitaph. The base of the obelisk is experiencing severe loss of stone perhaps due to its horizontal orientation, contact with rain pooling from the obelisk, or simply an inferior



piece of sandstone. As a result, water makes its way to the block of sandstone housing the inscriptions. This delamination may have started with a small crack, and over the course of many years' worth of freeze and thaw cycles, developed into a greater issue. Luckily, this memorial caught Jennifer's eye before any damage to the inscription occurred.


In the coming weeks, Jennifer will prepare the surfaces, cracks, and crevices for an injection grout to fill the voids and finish with a color-matched mortar to seal the openings. This technique will reduce water infiltration to avoid the freeze cycle that may ultimately pop the inscription from Cynthia's sandstone monument.



Jennifer surveying her work.

Not only has Jennifer been involved with stone repairs during her time at Congressional, but she began her internship by leading an effort to organize the gatehouse basement, shed, and East End garage. Every time we head to the shed, grab the tool we

need, and get straight to work, we thank our lucky stars for Jennifer's knack for organization.

Tune in to the next newsletter to see the results of Jennifer's final projects in Around the Gatehouse. 

CAT LOVERS

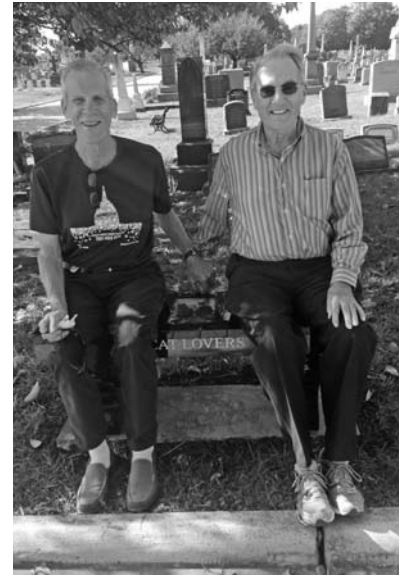
BY MARK MCELREATH

A few years ago my husband Bert Kubli and I purchased for ourselves a memorial bench located at what's called "the gay corner" of Congressional Cemetery. Since we've had the bench, we've had hundreds of thoughtful and often delightful conversations with family and friends about the bench and all that it means now and in the future.

Bert and I live on Capitol Hill. Bert is a retired federal worker from the National Endowment for the Arts. I'm a retired journalism professor from Towson University. Both of us are veterans: Bert served in the Air Force; I served in the Marine Corps. We've been together now as a couple for almost 20 years – the last 10 years as a DC-married couple. Both previously married, we each have two grown children and, between us, nine grandchildren.

Bert and I enjoy visiting our bench because the cemetery is frankly, a joyful place to be, primarily because it is managed by caregivers who want it to be a comfortable place for community members to gather — for yoga classes on the grounds, musical performances in the chapel, 10K foot races that start and end at the cemetery, and lots more community-oriented activities (not to forget the goats).

One aspect of Congressional Cemetery that we love is its very popular dog-walking program whereby, for



Cady at Congressional Cemetery. Photo Credit: Catherine Ferguson.

an annual fee and volunteer-commitment, dog owners can not only walk their dog but also take their dogs off-leash while they are at the cemetery. So dogs are often seen bounding happily over the grounds, frolicking with other dogs. All the happy dogs really do make the place feel comfortable and alive, vital.

Bert and I like dogs, but we love cats. We have two Maine Coon cats. Bert and I had our full names, etc., chiseled across the bench's seating area. In the middle of the seating area is a rather large etching of our two cats. On the leading edge of the bench we had chiseled, "Cat Lovers," knowing full well that many a dog owner would see our bench and, we like to think, smile. We also knew in our hearts that many a dog would probably walk by, sniff and lift a leg; such is life.

Our memorial bench was mentioned in a recent edition of the travel magazine, Roadtrippers: <https://roadtrippers.com/magazine/congressional-cemetery-dog-walking/>. In the section of the article that focused on the corner of the cemetery where a large number of gay

activists and gay veterans are buried, the author writes:

"Proudly engraving your truth on a headstone is brave enough, but Herbert Kubli and Mark McElreath went one step further by marking their plot in the gay corner with a bench engraved with a photo of their two cats and the words 'Cat lovers'—a bold move in the middle of a cemetery crawling with dogs."

Our bench was also featured in an award-winning picture in a local pet-photo contest sponsored by Capitol Hill's monthly magazine, "Hill Rag," and published in its July 2019 issue. Titled "Cady at Congressional Cemetery," the photo was taken by Catharine Furguson. It shows a well-groomed dog (off leash) looking over its shoulder at our bench with either disbelief or disdain — it's hard telling which.

Bert and I are proud to be part of the Congressional Cemetery community. Long before either one of us departs this world, we look forward to many more thoughtful and fun conversations about our memorial bench. 🐾

Kingdom of Animals continued from page 1

Each side of the column can accommodate up to 20 cremains, with names and dates engraved on the column itself. Other columns are reserved for cats only, Capitol Hill pets, and citywide pets of all varieties. Individual column sides can be purchased by an individual for all their pets, or an entire column can be purchased by a family or group of friends.

Priced from \$400 to \$3,000, the section offers a dignified place to visit and remember beloved pets in the heart of Capitol Hill, where many of them enjoyed their golden years. Already covered in an excellent article in the Washington Post and by local television segments, the new area is already proving popular with residents and long-time dog walkers. 🐾



Bronze dog and columns for communal graves



Location of Kingdom of Animals

Yes!

I want to help preserve and restore Congressional Cemetery with a tax deductible donation.

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other _____

Special donation for the Endowment:

Anonymous ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to Congressional Cemetery

☐ Please charge my credit card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card # _____

Cardmember Name _____ Exp _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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☐ 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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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 5 Dead Man's Run

October 18, 19, 25, 26 Soul Strolls


November 6 John Philip Sousa's
Birthday

December 7 Photos with Santa



(Weird Al 2009-)

THE PLACE FOR LIVE, YOUNG GOATS.



(Alexander Rutherford 1814-1872)

AND THE PLACE FOR DEAD, OLD GOATS.

Green Burial Options
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