COLUMBARIUM GROTTO PLANNED FOR CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

The Board of Directors of Historic Congressional Cemetery approved plans to move forward for the planning of a large columbarium project at their January retreat this year. The project will solve several structural issues within the cemetery and the complex will be located in a surprising part of the grounds. By essentially creating real estate where traditional burials would not have been possible, the Association can respond to the fact that cremation rates and needs for a final disposition have surpassed 60% in the Washington, DC metro region. That figure is expected to grow among the baby boomers, who are choosing myriad cremation and green burial options that Congressional now offers.

President Paul K. Williams had an “ah, ha!” moment when he was sitting with contractors soliciting bids to repair a 1940s brick retaining wall on Prout Street at the 17th and H Streets side gate. Because of the existing burials behind the failing wall, an elaborate foundation would have to be designed to carry the weight underneath the current roadway—all costing $50,000 or more for an area of the cemetery that is almost completely full. In addition, that particular side gate was sacrificed to be moved and restored at its original location, the main front gate; it was temporarily replaced by a chain link fence.

“Why not make the costly replacement wall revenue generating?” Williams said out loud. While it sounded preposterous at the moment, he turned to the trusted Moody Landscaping firm with an idea to transform the barren roadway into both a retaining wall and columbarium grotto of sorts.

The roadway needs to be torn up anyway, and by creating just a slightly larger foundation, it can be leveled, and the retaining walls built with individual columbarium niches for cremated remains. In addition, the

Continued on page 9
When I first stepped foot inside Congressional Cemetery almost 20 years ago, I knew I had arrived someplace special. At the time, I was a neighborhood dog walker, and I had never heard of the cemetery until a neighbor mentioned it in passing. As my dogs Cosmo and Buster explored every corner of the cemetery, noses to the ground, I did the same ... well, more with my eyes than my nose.

I noticed new headstones each time I visited and—like all of us who—found favorites sites to visit along my varied routes. I would stop to read (and re-read) epitaphs. I think of that regularly now that my mother is buried at the cemetery, and I imagine dog walkers and other guests stopping by to visit her during their walks around the grounds.

Each of us has a different reason to love this extraordinary place. For me, it is the connection between the living and the departed.

Earlier this month, I was reminded of that connection – and why I love HCC – while driving along remote mountain roads in Georgia (the country, not the state). A close Georgian friend invited me to visit Shatili, a village of 22 people located along the Georgia-Chechnya border and inaccessible for up to eight months out of the year.

As our car made its way along a single-lane, unpaved mountain pass carved out of the side of the Northern Caucasus Mountains, we came across a dozen or more 4-foot tall rectangular stone monuments. Each had been carefully built out of slate taken from the mountain. Each monument had a pipe protruding from the front of the structure. Fresh spring water (straight from the mountain) flowed out of each opening continuously.

After driving past the third or fourth such structure, I asked my companion Mamuka the purpose of these structures as I had not been able to notice the details as we drove past. He explained that each monument is built to celebrate a life. These are not gravesites. There are no bodies interred there. And they are not markers like the ones we see by the roadside at the site of an accident. They are simply memorials to the departed. Each one includes an engraved picture of the loved one along with brief information about him or her. The flowing water is to sustain travelers along their journey, and there is often a cup left nearby for visitors to use.

Once we arrived in Shatili, we met Mikheil Chinchirauli, the village’s 70-year-old doctor/hunter/poet. Mikheil asked if we could drive to visit some of his patients who live in remote areas (note: remote is all relative when you are starting in a village of 22!).

Along the way, we passed a memorial, and Mikheil asked if we could pull over. He let us know that this was a memorial for his brother, and each of us drank a cup of water in his memory. He shared stories about the...
As spring turns quickly into summer at Congressional Cemetery, it is the time of year our Board membership rotates off those that have served for six years (two, three-year terms) and new Board members are voted in. We had the rector of Christ Church Cara Spaccarelli leave due to a transfer at the church to another community. She was instrumental while we renegotiated our long-term lease with the church (more below). Board Chair Sue Urahn didn’t rotate off the board, but stepped down as Chair, an outstanding job she did for many years past her initial promise! She continues to be a generous financial supporter, dog walker, and Board member until next year when her tenure is up. Board member and lawyer Joel Samuels took the Chair seat. New Board member Richard Greene joined the Board in March. A lawyer, he has volunteered and supported the cemetery as a dog walker and as a member of the K9 Committee for several years.

Spring also revealed the delightful visual of a record eighty family plots adopted by volunteers that have transformed former grassy and weed-infused family plots into a bevy of flowers, shrubs, and blooming trees. You can find these beautiful plots all throughout the cemetery now, and the sheer number of the plots make a tremendous addition to our bucolic landscape. Plus, we should see a record honey harvest this August as a result!

We are also grateful to dog walker Christine Cronenwett who donated the substantial fund needed to convert our particularly dangerous front steps at the gatehouse into an elegant and much-needed ADA compliant ramp! Concrete is being poured as this goes to press, and we were able to cause as little disruption to the front garden as possible. The contractor took a look at our newly restored front gate and insisted on creating a railing for the ramp that will take historic clues from the lower aspects of the gate itself. Just a day after the concrete set, we were thrilled to have a visit from a wheelchair-bound dog walker who had always wondered what the inside of the gatehouse looked like.

We have the finalized plans and are in the permitting process for the side porch, pedestrian walkways, and dog washing station that should begin construction this summer to finish off the much-needed upgrades to the gatehouse entrance.

July also marks my 7th anniversary here at HCC, and it continues to be a dream job—different every day, a wee bit quirky (you never know who might be on the other end of the telephone), but also remarkable to lead a terrific team of employees—9 in all, a record!

— Paul K. Williams

Information for your estate planning, bequest, stock gift, endowment match, or donation:
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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
HAVE YOU HERD? GOAT YOGA!

(Left to right) Yoga instructor Kelly Carnes, Prosperity Acres owner Mary Bowen, Chef Patrick Vanas, and HCC President Paul Williams.

It’s a thing! But it wasn’t always that way in Washington, DC. While the activity took storm across the nation and the world, the DC Health Department confronted us with a wall of lawyers two years ago when we applied for the proper license to host the fundraiser. Our permit was denied. Well, we warned them that it could be a feel-good story, or a story about Scrooge not allowing interaction with a herd of baby goats by an urban population that had a lot to learn and love about adorable little goats.

That latter story ended up on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. The bureaucratic wheels took two years to slowly turn, and voila! Goat Yoga was finally on the approved activity list. We are proud to have been the first site in Washington, DC to host this event, which raised an amazing $15,000 in just FIVE HOURS over two days in May. Mary Bowen of Prosperity Acres supplied the herd, just as she had done for our former weed eradication program with their adult counterparts.

50 participants took part in each 45-minute session, while 17 ‘kids’ interacted, cuddled, slept, and yes, climbed atop each pose. Volunteer activities included rounding up young escapees and returning them to the eager hands of everyone on site. Just when you thought that was enough, young goats are hungry, so we were able to sell tickets to —you guessed it—bottle feed baby goats in-between yoga sessions.

On a more serious side, several autistic children and adults participated, as did a child of a veteran and parent recently killed in Iraq. Let’s just say that baby goats hold some sort of magical power.

So, this time, it was a feel-good story that appeared on the front page of the Washington Post and was carried by local and national television stations across the country and abroad.

SUMMER TRANSITIONS

Farewell to Kymberly

After two years at HCC, Kymberly is moving on from her position as Grounds Conservation Manager. Dur-
ing her time at the cemetery, Kymberly preserved numerous vaults and monuments (including the Public Vault, Gadsby Vault, and Hyatt monument) and completed extensive research on interred individuals (see page 10 for the latest). She managed numerous large-scale volunteer events and also worked closely with many Boy Scouts on their Eagle Scout projects. In addition, she maintained and expanded the successful Adopt-a-Plot program on the grounds. Kymberly is moving to New York City to obtain her Master of Arts in Teaching of Social Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. We will miss Kymberly’s enthusiasm, hard work, and preservation experience, but know that she will go on to do great things in the education field. Best of luck, Kymberly!

Welcome back, Margaret!

Margaret Canilang (previously Puglisi) is returning to Congressional Cemetery this summer in a new capacity as Grounds Conservation Manager. After serving five years as HCC’s first Vice President, Margaret left the cemetery in 2017 to work at the Fairfax County Park Authority as a Preservation Technician. Margaret is now returning to the cemetery in order to focus on the numerous preservation projects on the grounds. She brings added experience from her time at the Park Authority paired with her extensive knowledge of the history and preservation at HCC. Moreover, Margaret is a die-hard cemetery nerd and we knew she couldn’t stay away too long. We’re excited to welcome Margaret back to HCC, and Lauren plans to con her into writing preservation articles for the newsletter again ASAP.

Summer Conservation Intern Jennifer Ketchum

Our new summer intern for Conservation is Jennifer Ketchum. Originally from Miami, FL, she comes to us from South Carolina after completing an Associate’s Degree program in Traditional Masonry from American College of the Building Arts in Charleston. The Traditional Masonry program covers brick masonry, architectural stone carving, and plaster – three skills that she hopes to further develop here at Congressional Cemetery. This is a second career for Jennifer; she retired from the US Coast Guard in 2014 after 32 years, having been stationed on ships and on land at many places in the US and overseas, including Alaska, Puerto Rico, Sweden, England, and Liberia. As a preparation for this internship, Jennifer worked on several restoration projects at the graveyard of Circular Congregational Church in Charleston. She enjoys masonry, most of all, working outdoors and seeing the results of hard work. She resides across the river in Arlington, VA with her husband Clement in an old house built by her Grandfather in the 1940s, and in need of many weekend masonry interventions. Her husband and two adult sons are all serving in the US Army. She enjoys architectural history, tennis, biking, and hanging out with her dog, Ash, who will hopefully one day evaluate her work at HCC.
On Thursday, March 2, 1905, a young man from out west found solace from the freezing weather that had gripped the nation’s capital in a local Turkish bath. The bath did not have its intended warming effects, but rather, he found himself seized by “severe chills,” enough that the attendants raised the alarm and had him transported to the nearest hospital, the George Washington University hospital at 13th and H Streets NW.

Six days later, small red spots began appearing on the patient’s mouth and tongue. While today vaccinations have ensured that nobody has to be afflicted with these symptoms, back then they were well-known for indicating the presence of a case of smallpox. Without further ado, the patient was transferred to the District smallpox hospital, located outside the city on the extension of C Street Southeast, by the marshy land leading to the Eastern Branch.

While there had been a smallpox hospital in Washington since 1854, the building the patient was taken to was relatively new, having been built some ten years earlier and been used on and off, as outbreaks necessitated, since then.

The transfer of a patient to the smallpox hospital was something of which the local newspapers took notice, with the Washington Evening Star, Post and Evening Times all reporting on the following day that W. F. Ludington, civil engineer from St. Louis, had been stricken. He was not the only person afflicted, as two others in town for Theodore Roosevelt’s inauguration had been taken to the smallpox hospital as well. This was enough of an outbreak to require the personal involvement of William C. Woodward, the district health officer. The Washington Post insisted that he “investigated the cases personally.”

Three days later, the Times broke the news that Ludington had died early that day. Adding to the pathos of the story, they reported that his wife, who had been at her mother’s sickbed, had not been informed until two days before the death, as Ludington had requested that she not be bothered. Only when he was in extremis did he consent. She had left Muncie, Indiana, as soon as the message reached her, but had arrived just before her husband succumbed to the disease. The following day, the Evening Star reported that the latest victim of smallpox had been interred at Congressional Cemetery.

So, who was W. F. Ludington? Or William P. Ludington, as the last dispatch from the Star had called him? Nobody of that name exists in the historical record, but there is a Walter S. Ludington, and it is Ludington’s grave marker at Range 25, site 43. (RSP)
under this name that the St. Louis Republic reported his death on March 13. Ludington, whose middle name was Stewart, was born in Indiana on April 23, 1873 to Harley Pulaski Ludington and Emily Cripe Ludington. He became an engineer, though sources differ as to whether he was a mechanical or civil engineer. He served in the Spanish-American war, and shortly thereafter married Maud (or Maude) Wyant. Sadly, she died some five years later; during her illness, she was nursed by Cora Mae Prindle, a widow with two daughters. After the first Mrs. Ludington’s death, Walter married the nurse.

He had come to Washington not for the festivities surrounding Roosevelt’s inauguration, as numerous newspapers posited at the time, but rather to get a patent for a steam regulator.

While Ludington was dead and buried, his infection was not. In order to ensure that she had not been infected with the dread disease, Mrs. Ludington was asked to remain at the smallpox hospital, and she was thus not one of those at the funeral. She was released on March 30th, having shown no signs of having been stricken. Sadly, the nurses who had taken care of her husband at George Washington University Hospital were not as lucky, with nine of them being taken to quarantine, and three eventually developing symptoms. While this was a real problem for their hospital, as those quarantined represented about a third of the nursing staff, all of them recovered and returned to work.

There is a bittersweet coda to this story: While she was nursing her sick husband, Cora Ludington was pregnant. On September 16, 1905, she gave birth to a boy whom she named Walter Stewart, after his deceased father.

Today, all that remains of Walter S. Ludington is a small marker at range 25, site 43 of Congressional Cemetery. Even in death, he couldn’t catch a break—his name is spelled “W. L. Ludington” on the marker.

The smallpox hospital from the February 11, 1899 Washington Evening Star (LOC)

brother, who had been a teacher in the local school (of six students). We also visited a young family who had three very active sons and a memorial not far from their house – just on the other side of a small wooden bridge over a fast-moving river. We learned that their memorial was for their fourth son who fell off that very bridge in 2003—at the age of 4—and died. They visit his memorial regularly, but so do neighbors, friends, and passers-by like us.

These experiences on the trip to Shatili reminded me of the very thing I love so much about HCC: we are a living cemetery. Every day, we celebrate the departed as we walk the grounds, whether with our pets or on our own. We cannot bring back our friends and family, but we can celebrate them, and we can invite others to join us in that celebration. I am thrilled to serve as the new Chairperson of the HCC Board, and I look forward to sharing my love for this place with all of you in the coming months and to hearing from you about your own passions for our amazing cemetery.

— Joel Samuels
“GAY IS GOOD”: CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY’S SPECIAL CONNECTION TO THE LGBT RIGHTS MOVEMENT

BY JEFFREY ROLLINS

June 28, 2019, marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. On June 28, 1969, New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. Raids on gay bars were common, but that night patrons resisted and fought back against the harassment. Demonstrations continued for five more days outside the Stonewall Inn and the surrounding area. The following year, a march to commemorate the Stonewall Riots was held on June 28, 1970. This tradition continues in cities throughout the United States as well as other countries to celebrate LGBT culture and continue to promote equal rights.

Due in large part to the national attention paid to the Stonewall Riots, many people think it was the birth of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights movement. In fact, the modern-day LGBT rights movement was born much earlier than 1969. In the 1950s, small groups of gays and lesbians began organizing in an effort to create safe social outlets, focus on discrimination issues, and gain acceptance from the general and professional communities. Called the Homophile Movement, this precursor to LGBT activism of the Stonewall era helped lay the foundation for the LGBT community to demand rights on a larger scale. Two people who were instrumental in this movement are memorialized at Congressional Cemetery.

Frank Kameny was an Army veteran of WWII. He received his doctorate in astronomy from Harvard in 1957, taught astronomy at Georgetown University for one year, and was hired as an astronomer for the Army Map Service. Frank’s position with the Army Map Service lasted only several months because he was fired for being homosexual. This firing was part of the Lavender Scare, which resulted in mass firings in the 1950s of homosexuals, both men and women, working for the federal government. Due to his firing and inability to find a job related to astronomy, Frank became “radicalized,” in his words, which resulted in a lifetime of LGBT activism.

At first, Frank fought his termination by suing the federal government. He lost, but continued advocating for others who were fired from federal service or discharged from the military for being homosexual. He also helped found the Mattachine Society of Washington, a gay rights organization. In 1968, Frank also coined the phrase, “Gay is Good,” which was a radical notion at the time.

Barbara Gittings was a student at Northwestern University in 1949, but dropped out after one year due to spending most of her time in the library or bookstores trying to find any information she could that referenced homosexuality. Barbara moved to Philadelphia and continued to research books and articles that dealt with homosexual topics. She also went to gay bars in New York City in search of other gay people but was not satisfied with the limited social outlet the bars provided. In 1956, Barbara took a trip to California where she met the founders of the first lesbian organization called the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB).

Barbara, now a member of DOB, returned to Philadelphia and founded the first east coast chapter of the DOB in 1958. She served as the editor of the DOB magazine, “The Ladder,” from 1963 to 1966. Under her editorial guidance, the magazine promoted greater visibility for lesbians by including the words “A Lesbian Review” under the title and putting photographs of group members on the covers. Ever the bibliophile, in 1970 Barbara worked with the American Library Association to change how LGBT books were cataloged and promote greater visibility for LGBT library professionals.

Barbara and Frank also worked together in the early days of the LGBT rights movement. Starting in 1965, they organized some of the first public protests by gays and lesbians which included picketing the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The protests in front of Independence Hall, called the Annual Reminders, were held on July 4 from 1965-69.

Because of Barbara’s and Frank’s early activism in the burgeoning LGBT rights movement, they are known as the mother and father of the modern-day gay rights movement. Barbara and Frank continued being activists for the LGBT community after the Stonewall Riots. They agreed to stop the Annual Reminders and focus on the first NYC Pride march in 1970. Barbara and Frank were also instrumental in convincing the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality as a classified mental disorder in 1973.

Barbara Gittings died in 2007. She, along with her partner of 46 years, Kay Tobin Lahusen, a fellow DOB member and LGBT activist, have a memorial bench in Congressional Cemetery. Upon Kay’s passing, Barbara and Kay’s ashes will be interred in their memorial bench. Frank Kameny died in 2011. He has an official memorial headstone in Congressional Cemetery that sits very near to Barbara and Kay’s bench. Frank’s footstone reads “Gay is Good.” Both Barbara and Frank embodied the meaning of this slogan and their legacies live on as people celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

Columbarium Grotto Planned  Continued from page 1

The project will be ADA accessible, create a scatter garden and benches, add trees and landscaping, and provide steps to 17th Street where a new pedestrian gate fashioned on our original 1856 gate and fence pattern is designed. Family niche blocks are designed for the center, with built-in benches for contemplation, all under a canopy of shade trees.

An ossuarium is also being planned for the center of the grotto, where remains can be commingled with remembrance engravings at an alternative price point. The wide entrance driveway outside the cemetery will be reduced to a pedestrian walkway, with planters on either side. This entrance has been blocked to vehicular traffic since the totem poles were installed further up the road in 2003.

While the design process is continuing, the project has gone from replacing a failing retaining wall at a cost of $50,000 or more to a beautification project that creates a bountiful new 776 cremation niches that, when sold out, will create an astounding $3 million in revenue over time.
His past winter, Grounds Conservation Manager Kymberly Mattern drafted an African American walking tour for the cemetery. While some information about African Americans interred at Congressional Cemetery had previously been conducted, there was room for more exploration (and there still is). One of the stops on our new African American walking tour is the Howard family.

Three generations of the Howard family are buried in a corner of the cemetery near an area known as the “doggy day spa.” Unfortunately, all of the members of this family lie in unmarked graves. However, the members of this family and the Howard family’s legacy have not been forgotten.

Before diving into the history of the Howard family, it is important to acknowledge the challenges in researching and writing about African American history. Much of African American history is considered to be “difficult history” because it includes countless instances of discrimination, prejudice, racism, segregation, and violence. These topics are necessary and important to address, but they are emotionally difficult to read, research, and write about. There is also little surviving documentation about African Americans—especially in early American history—because a majority of African Americans didn’t have the ability to read. The African Americans who could read likely had limited reading and writing abilities. Therefore, many of the surviving documentation about African Americans is portrayed through the lens of white Americans and white society. Skills, relationships, and forms of knowledge are consequently often overlooked because they are omitted from the surviving documentation. While we do have more information about the Howards than we do on other African Americans interred at Congressional Cemetery, the information we do have is limited; much of the information came solely from census records.

In 1864, Theophilus Howard Sr. worked as a sexton at Christ Church. Howard’s position as a sexton likely meant that he was freed. In 1864, Howard was drafted into the military to fight in the Civil War. Nothing is known about Howard’s time when he served in the military, but it is known that he survived the war. According to the 1880 census, Howard, who was about 62 years old at the time, worked as a “white washer.” Additionally, Howard could not read or write, and he was suffering from rheumatism. On April 1, 1891, Theophilus Howard Sr. died. In his will, Theophilus Howard Sr. left his “estate to his four grandchildren, with the proviso that if any become drunkards or gamblers or pursue an immoral life the proceeds of the estate shall be shared only by those who do not violate the moral law.”

His wife, Diana Howard, who was born in circa 1815, died from cardiac failure on May 14, 1885.

Together, Theophilus Howard Sr. and Diana Howard had at least one child, Theophilus Howard Jr., who was born in circa 1853. In the 1880 census, it was revealed that...
Theophilus Howard Jr., who was about 26 years old at the time, could read and write and he worked as a teacher. By 1880, Theophilus Howard Jr. was married to Mary Ella (Echdige) Howard, who was born in August 1860. By the time of the 1880 census, Mary Howard and Theophilus Howard Jr. had two children, Eugene, 3, and Alice, around 1. On December 8, 1883, Theophilus Howard Jr. died.

According to census records, after her husband’s death, Mary Ella Howard worked as a house servant in 1900, and as a laundress in 1910. Mary Ella Howard could read and write, and she owned a house in Washington DC. Mary Ella Howard died on February 24, 1937. When she died, Mary Ella Howard was living with her daughter and son-in-law, James F. Butler, at 35 Florida Avenue in Northeast, Washington D.C. Mary Ella Howard was the mother of Eugene, Alice, and Losceola Howard, all of whom preceded her in death. Additionally, she had a son, Herman W. Howard, and a daughter, Grace Howard Butler, who died later.

In 1905, the Howard family experienced two deaths: Eugene Howard and Alice Howard. Eugene Howard was born on February 11, 1877 and died on March 27, 1905 from pulmonary tuberculosis. In the 1900 census, Eugene was listed as a 22-year-old porter who could read and write. Eugene Howard’s obituary sheds some light on the role of religion on the family and indicates that the family was Christian: “Sleep on, our darling; We love thee well, But Jesus loves the best.” Alice Howard died on June 26, 1905 from military tuberculosis. Alice was born in April 1879 and worked as a house servant in 1900.

Eugene and Alice’s sister, Losceola Howard, died over twenty years later, on March 3, 1931 from cerebral hemorrhage. Losceola Howard was born in October 1881, and she worked as a house servant in 1900. She may have gone by the name “Cenie.” Additionally, she may have worked as a cook in 1910. Losceola Howard could read and write.

Herman Howard was born in July 1884 and died on May 31, 1946 from bronchial pneumonia. Herman Howard worked as a porter in 1900. In 1910, Herman, who was about 23 years old at the time, worked as a laborer at a government printing office. In his obituary, Grace Howard Butler was listed as his half-sister, and Marietta Howard was his wife. Marietta Howard is not buried at Congressional Cemetery. Grace Butler, who was born in September of 1894, is buried with the rest of the Howard family. It is not known who Grace Butler’s father was since she was born after Theophilus Howard Jr. died. Grace Butler died on April 9, 1972 from a pulmonary embolism. Grace Butler was married to James F. Butler, who died about two years before her on September 18, 1970 from carcinoma of the colon.

It is likely that there are surviving family members of the Howard family. If you or someone you know is related to the Howard family, please feel free to reach out to us. We would love to hear from you to learn more about the Howard family. As mentioned, none of the family members have marked graves. If you are interested in raising money to memorialize the Howard family, please email us at staff@congressionalcemetery.org.
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 19
Cinematernity: Jaws

July 23
Tombs & Tomes Book Club

August 9
Cinematernity: Stand by Me

September 7
Day of Service

September 10
Tombs & Tomes Book Club

September 13
Cinematernity: Get Out

October 5
Dead Man’s Run

October 18, 19, 25, 26
Soul Strolls

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