

# HERITAGE GAZETTE

FALL 2020

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF  
HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

## JOHN PHILIP SOUSA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IS GOING VIRTUAL!

**W**e are working with the United States Marine Corps Band to coordinate a livestream of the event.

"The President's Own" will pay homage to its 17th Director John Philip Sousa at his grave here at Congressional Cemetery, on the anniversary of his birth. This annual musical tribute will include Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Semper Fidelis." The grave site ceremony and tradi-

tional wreath-laying will be streamed online, visit our events calendar online for details on how to view the event.

The volunteer award ceremony is being postponed to a later (yet to be determined) date when we can all gather together and celebrate one another.

### NEW FACES AT THE GATE



Asia Elliott



Quentin Datcher



Antonio Coghill

To ensure that we were able to safely open the dates to our K9 Corps members, we had to make some changes to our operations. Gradually, we have been able to expand the operating hours from 8am to 8pm, Tuesday through Sunday. With that comes the need for more staff coverage at the gate. Jake and Eamon have headed back to school. Introducing our gate checkers!

*Continued on page 10*

**Join us for streaming concert for Sousa's birthday!**

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Over the past 15 months, in this space, I have taken to sharing some of the things that connect me to Historic Congressional Cemetery (HCC). More recently, we have called on you to share your stories as well. And they have inspired me. Inspired me to think about the myriad ways HCC touches all who encounter our special grounds.



Recently, I have been thinking back on my first visits to HCC nearly 20 years ago. At the time, I was a new resident of Capitol Hill. I had grown up in the District but across town in Woodley Park. When I returned to my hometown after time living in New Jersey, Zimbabwe, Michigan, and California (in that order), I was ready to set down roots. I purchased my first home near Lincoln Park. To me, even as a DC native, this area was as foreign as any of the cities I had lived in over the intervening decade. I knew no one on the Hill. I knew no one in my new job.

So, I moved into my new home in what felt like a new city. And I sought to build a community once again. Joining me in that effort was my two-year-old bearded collie, Cosmo. (More about Cosmo and his connections to HCC in a future newsletter.)

Ultimately, it was through Cosmo that I began building my community. Because he had a propensity for chasing loud objects (buses, motorcycles, ambulances), I needed to find someplace safe for Cosmo to run off-leash. And so, HCC became our haven, as it has for so many other dog owners over the years.

On our walks, Cosmo and I would join other dogs and their dog parents. More often than not—and this will be familiar to many of you I suspect—I knew the dogs' names but not those of the owners.

On one memorable night, I met a small mutt named Biko. His owner and I walked through the cemetery for nearly two hours, lost in conversation. I was still new to the Cemetery, so she showed me some of her favorite headstones. We talked about them and about us and, it seemed, everything in between.

Many of the headstones we visited that afternoon/evening are now part of the many amazing themed tours that are available as a way to explore the Cemetery. But one in particular stood out. It was located at intersection of Congress and Prout, a block south of the chapel.

There she showed me a matching headstone and bench. The headstone was simple enough. It featured the names of a husband and wife along with the words, "I Love You Always." The husband, James Anthony Colias, had died in 1989. Etched below his name was that of his wife, Tala Engel, with a date of birth but no date of death. (For those of you who know the spot, you may know them by their nicknames for one another even before I continue.)

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION  
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are deductible to the extent permitted by federal tax laws. Funding for the preservation and maintenance of Historic Congressional Cemetery is provided in part by the Congressional Cemetery Endowment, which was created with matching funds provided by the U.S. Congress and administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a memorable and interesting year it has been for everyone, including us here at Congressional Cemetery. We met our PPP loan obligations by hiring two new employees to serve as gate checkers during our complete open hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 8 am to 8 pm. They have enjoyed getting to know the human and canine members and help enforce our mask wearing mandate and social distancing at our only entrance and exit. Our latest phase also allows for K9 day passes that helps generate some much-needed income.

Our Director of Events, Sarah Kirspel, has spent sleepless nights figuring out we can have our events comply with city guidelines and social distancing. With a bit of creative changes like our popular Soul Strolls tours new routed in only one direction to avoid other group tours, a virtual Pride 5K and Dead Man's Run 5K, and movie nights with limited participation, the Cemetery is coming back to life this fall from what was a very quiet spring and summer.

We have two major monuments in the works that will add art and statuary to the grounds. One is planned to commemorate Civil War photographer Mathew Brady – complete with bronzes of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass and countless reproductions of Brady photographs, as well as a ceramic of Brady with a bronze camera focused on his gravesite. Board member Larry West and his wife will also join the crowd—albeit as their “last forwarding address” sometime in the future when they occupy the columbarium being incorporated into the site. Another large sculpture memorial is being installed as this goes to publication for Speaker of the House Tom Foley. Commissioned by his wife, Heather, it features a large polished stainless steel twisted “O” that will appear completely different from every angle.

The staff is slowly transitioning from weekly zoom calls to staff meetings outside onsite, a welcome change. Site sales are increasing as people make plans



**Paul K. Williams, President**

for their estate, tours are increasing, and Director of Preservation Margaret Canilang and two interns have made tremendous progress utilizing our hydraulic gantry to remove stones, install proper foundations, and replace all along the main entrance road. What a difference a few dozen up righted stones make!

One of the few good things to come out of the pandemic is that my husband Greg and I learned that our two cats can live aboard our sailboat with ease! It took a few days to get used to strange noises and a rocking floor (it did us too), but our eventual plan of living aboard full time is now possible.

I hope you stay safe and that your family members stay safe as well. We're all in this together.

—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

*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 CONNECTION PROJECT CORNER

**Carole Komenda**

**Annapolis, MD**

Congressional Cemetery is special to me because for many years I lived in the residence at the gate house with my mother and father, Alfred Rhea Johnson, who was Superintendent of the Cemetery from early 1950 until his retirement. It was quite an experience to live there and I have many stories of living there. I remember first moving in and seeing gravestones out the kitchen window. I worked in downtown D.C. and would sometimes take a cab home when working late. I always had trouble getting the driver to stop at the gate. My bedroom was in the room by the bell tower which was tolled when a funeral procession entered the front gate. Quite a wake up for late sleeper. Both my mother and father are buried there. I know he would be so pleased with the work you are doing to preserve and care for the Cemetery. He was very devoted to it and very aware of the history there. In the day before computers he did identify many buried there. I remember him telling of J. Edgar Hoover coming to the office with his detail of agents checking it out first. We also looked forward to the Marines coming every year to the grave of Sousa. So much of the grounds are special to me. I loved the statutes and wonderful art all over the grounds especially the stature of the little girl said to be the first traffic victim in D.C.\* I even learned to drive along the Cemetery roads.

**Karol Hatch**

**Newport Beach, CA**

My 4th great grandfather, William Wirt (U.S. Attorney General for Presidents James Monroe and John Quincy Adams) is buried in the Cemetery. My brother and father are named Wirt, my grandfather was William Wirt named after William Wirt, as was his father and grandfather. We had the pleasure of visiting the Cemetery in November 2009 while in DC. I took

some photos of my kids in front of William Wirt's headstone on our visit (pictured) and your staff was very helpful in finding the site! We are also familiar with the unusual incident that occurred with William Wirt's missing remains, which were subsequently reclaimed and identified through work done by the Smithsonian. We all thoroughly enjoyed our educational visit to the Cemetery!

PS \*Fun fact. My daughter, Erin (in photos, and 5th great-granddaughter of William Wirt) just graduated from Vanderbilt and moved from our hometown in CA to downtown DC this week to begin her job with Deloitte. We plan to come visit the Cemetery again soon now that she lives there!



**Photo of my children  
(November, 2009)  
Left to Right: Kyle,  
Erin, and Danny  
Hatch**



**Photo of 3 Wirts  
(October 1996)  
Left to Right: Wirt  
Charles Baker Jr.,  
my brother, Wirt  
Charles Baker Sr.,  
my father, William  
Wirt Baker Jr., my  
grandfather (age 94  
in the photo /died  
2001).**



## WHAT IS THE CONNECTION PROJECT?

Congressional Cemetery is a special place to us. We hear stories all the time of connections people have with the Cemetery. Some are typical and others are more non-traditional. Some people have one big reason they love the Cemetery and others have a bunch of little reasons. We would love to hear what makes Congressional Cemetery special to you.

You can visit <https://congressionalcemetery/connection-project> to start the process. From there, you can fill out a simple online form, download a document to work on at your own pace, or print it out and deliver it to the gatehouse. We want to make this as easy as possible to share your connections with us. The questions include:

*What makes Congressional Cemetery special to you?*  
*Why do you visit Congressional Cemetery?*  
*What is your favorite spot at Congressional Cemetery?*  
*What is your first memory of Congressional Cemetery?*  
*Do you have any other stories or memories that you would like to share?*


Share your story (or stories) with us. You can share as many or as few stories as you like. These writing prompts are just to help get your creative juices flowing. Tell us the ways that you love Congressional Cemetery. Now is your chance to share any other stories that you may have or ways that you are connected to Congressional Cemetery. Many people have multiple connections, so don't be shy.

## A NEW INSTALLATION

This fall construction of Speaker Tom Foley's sculpture monument began. It should be completed by early spring (granite base). Installation was done by Eastern Memorials on September 17, 2020.

FOLEY, Thomas Stephen, a Representative from Washington; born in Spokane, Wash., March 6, 1929;

graduated from Gonzaga High School, Spokane, Wash., 1946; A.B., University of Washington, Seattle, Wash., 1951; J.D., University of Washington Law School, 1957; lawyer, private practice; appointed deputy prosecuting attorney, Spokane County, Wash., 1958; professor, Gon-

zaga University Law School, Spokane, Wash., 1958-1959; appointed assistant attorney general, State of Washington, 1960; assistant chief clerk and special counsel of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Senate, 1961-1963; elected as a Democrat to the Eighty-ninth and to the fourteen succeeding Congresses (January 3, 1965-January 3, 1995); unsuccessful candidate for reelection to the One Hundred Fourth Congress; chair, Committee on Agriculture (Ninety-fourth through Ninety-sixth Congresses); majority whip (Ninety-seventh through Ninety-ninth Congresses); majority leader (One Hundredth and One Hundred First Congresses); Speaker of the House of Representatives (One Hundred First through One Hundred Third Congresses); awarded the title Knight Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II in 1995; Ambassador to Japan, 1997-2001; died on October 18, 2013, in Washington, D.C. 



**Monument for Speaker of the House Thomas Stephen Foley**

United States House of Representatives-History, Art, Archives, <https://history.house.gov/>

## CONSERVATION CREW AT WORK

With a rocky start to 2020, the conservation crew was finally able to get back to work at the beginning of July and has made progress with their goal of conserving one of the oldest sections of the cemetery. The northwest quadrant of Section 3, also referred to as \_\_\_\_\_, has 540 markers that are in need of treatment. These treatments range from simple solutions such as cleaning and mortar repair to more complex projects such as iron pin removal, drilling, and new foundations.

Margaret and two interns, Kathleen and Jenna, conserve markers twice a week with help from David, community service workers, and volunteers.

Over the past 2 months,

- 113 stones cleaned
- 20 new foundations set
- 12 stones repointed
- 12 pins removed/drilled
- 2 plot fences painted


Tackling repairs headstone-by-headstone in one area of the cemetery is an efficient method of conser-



Margaret at work with interns, Jenna and Kathleen

vation and reduces the amount of time spent relocating equipment and monitoring the status of treatments. Despite obstacles caused by COVID-19, the crew has completed the repairs of ninety-nine markers and are 18% through the northwest quadrant of

Section 3 in just two months with a limited schedule. The work continues, and the crew longs for the days of a full work week to accomplish even more.

If you are interested in helping with our conservation goal, please reach out to Margaret at [mcanilang@congressionalcemetery.org](mailto:mcanilang@congressionalcemetery.org) 



Here are some examples of the projects worked on this summer



# WELCOME TO OUR DIGITAL ARCHIVE INTERNS

BY DAYLE DOOLEY

This fall, Congressional Cemetery welcomed not one, but two, digital archives interns. They will be completing a number of projects which include creating an organizational system for historical headstone image files as well as a method for collecting new images and establishing a presence for the Cemetery on Google Arts and Culture. We are excited to see what they can do!

## PLEASE WELCOME LIBBY WRUCK AND SAM TENEYCK!

Sam TenEyck has recently come aboard the Congressional Cemetery team as an intern responsible for digitally archiving and organizing a whole lot of data. Sam feels as though he is a good fit for this position because he loves organizing things. Sam is studying History, Political Science and Public History at University of Maryland Baltimore Campus. And if he were president, he would make May national pizza month.



Sam TenEyck



Libby Wruck

## GET THE WORD OUT! CHANGES FOR THE NEW HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY APP

Historic Congressional Cemetery's app is changing with the times. We are getting the word out to our families and visitors – our mobile app is now installed directly from our website onto devices to replace the older version of the app. The app can easily be downloaded from this page on our site:  
<https://congressionalcemetery.org/records-search/>

Our new application is a progressive web app which can be downloaded directly from the cemetery's website and onto a mobile device. The code base supporting those old Apple and Android apps is officially retired which will throw an error when users try to access the old version of the app.

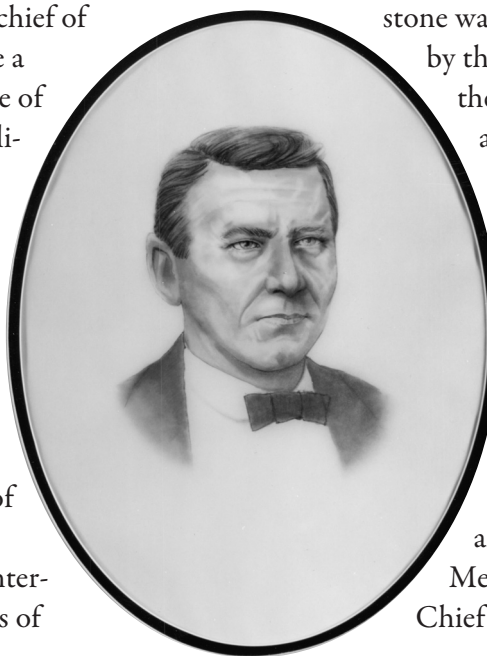


## WILLIAM PATRICK WOOD, CHIEF, U.S. SECRET SERVICE (R65/S248)

BY MARTIN W. HASKELL, JR.,  
PAST PRESIDENT – 2001 AFAUOSS

For almost a century, visitors to Historic Congressional Cemetery could come across the grave of William P. Wood, a soldier and sleuth who was the first chief of the U.S. Secret Service, and not have a clue who was buried there. The grave of Mr. Wood, a Civil War-era personality whose exploits were the stuff of adventure novels, was marked by only a simple piece of granite engraved with his surname “Wood”. He died almost penniless at the United States Soldiers’ Home in Washington, D.C. following a dispute with the government over rewards he claimed, one of which was a \$20,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of master counterfeiter William Brockway. Thousands of dollars of claims from that case and others were before Congress at the time of Wood’s death. Chief Wood was born in Alexandria VA, on March 11, 1829, where his father was an engraver and die sinker. He would follow in his father’s footsteps and became one of the most expert model makers, die sinkers and mechanics in the country. Wood was a man of masterful personality, active and keen intelligence, and undoubted courage under all circumstances. He never betrayed a trust and exhibited a marked degree of faithfulness and tenacity of friendship. His most

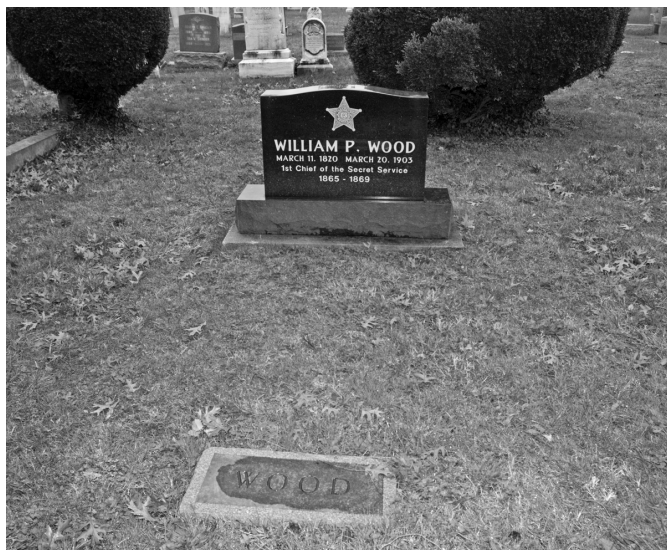
marked characteristics were persistence in all his undertakings



Photograph of William P. Wood

On May 30, 2001, a donated black granite headstone was placed on Chief Wood’s gravesite by the Association of Former Agents of the U.S. Secret Service (AFAUOSS), attended by the current director, Brian L. Stafford, four previous directors of the Secret Service and other Washington, D.C. notables. This headstone not only notes Chief Wood’s tenure with the Secret Service, but also acknowledges his previous careers as the commandant of the Old Capitol Prison, a veteran of the Civil War and a daring cavalry officer in the Mexican War. During the Civil War Chief Wood repeatedly slipped behind enemy lines to gather intelligence and aid Union prisoners of war.

Wood successfully distributed nearly a quarter of a million dollars in Confederate money to the prisoners who were able to buy food and clothing. He was also an active “conductor” on the underground railroad, as he aided hundreds of runaway slaves escape safely from the south to Canada and New England. The confederates were determined to capture and hang him. In 1903 the Washington Star noted, “Dozens, perhaps scores, of times he escaped from apparently inextricable dangers by his extraordi-



Granite Stone “Wood” at Congressional Cemetery

nary nerve, adroitness and audacity, coupled with prodigious physical strength and activity.” During the Mexican War, Chief Wood served under General Sam H. Walker, a noted Texas Ranger, whose command soon became the Third Regular Cavalry.

Although the Secret Service is recognized today mainly as the agency that protects the President of the United States (POTUS), and other government officials as well as former presidents, its original mission (and still a mission) was to stamp out counterfeiting which was rampant during and after the Civil War—See “A brief history of U.S. Currency”, later in this article. When President Lincoln was assassinated, Wood was in Cincinnati searching for counterfeiters. He was summoned to Washington, D.C. and was first to identify John Wilkes Booth as Lincoln’s assassin. He secured confessions from Dr. Samuel Mudd, who provided medical attention to Booth, and Mrs. Mary Surratt, who owned a boarding house frequented by the conspirators. Wood was on Booth’s trail when the

assassin was shot by a soldier as Booth emerged from a burning barn in Virginia. Chief Wood was also a dogged investigator and interrogator. Master counterfeiter, William Brockway, was questioned by Chief Wood for five days before confessing and turning over the engraved plates used in printing the counterfeits.

Chief Wood wrote to and instilled in his operatives, “Each man must recognize his service belongs to the government through 24 hours of each day” and “continuing employment in the service will depend upon demonstrated fitness, ability as investigators and honesty and fidelity in all transactions.” At the memorial dedication, former Director Stafford said, “Those things are all still here with us. He (Chief Wood) laid such a strong foundation” for future Secret Service agents. 🍷



Memorial Monument with Uniformed Division Officers, 2001



### (AMAZON) SMILE!

Did you know that your shopping on Amazon can benefit Congressional Cemetery?!

Just go to AmazonSmile for any Amazon purchases and choose:

Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery as the recipient! A portion of your purchase will go directly to support the Cemetery.

### SOUL STROLLS HAPPENING!



Soul Strolls will feature a new format, limited groups, and a revised traffic flow for a safe and fun event!

We did some serious “soul” searching when it came time to decide what to do about our favorite event of the year. With the mission in mind to make it safe AND fun, we have made some tweaks.

The SAFE part: We are going to have one way in and one way out. Ticket holders will enter from the main gate and depart after their tour straight out the

17th Street gate (after using the strategically placed portable restrooms, if necessary). Face coverings will be required at the entrance, exit and any time being 6 feet apart is not possible. We have made the group sizes smaller and to comply with the DC regulations, we are going to be more strict about ticket times, because we are only allowed to have so many people in the Cemetery at any given time. We had to cut out the Public Vault for the VIP area and decided to do away with VIP altogether because we want to discourage groups gathering and make sure that people stay 6 feet

away from others not in their party.

The FUN part: You will still be able to have all your spooky fun this fall. Our actors and docents have been hard at work to make this one of our best years yet. The residents of the Cemetery this year are all connected to women and African-American stories – something we have not been able to explore before! We are so fortunate to have such a variety of stories to tell, and it can be hard to narrow it down. We will still have a bar, tours can start off with some libations. Since the end is not at the begin-

ning and the bar is on a one way path, we have added an “intermission bar” halfway through the event, for a second round to finish off the tour.

Tickets for the event can be purchased here: <https://congressionalcemetery.ticketleap.com/soul-strolls-2020/>

Get them soon, they are selling fast! ~



## FROM THE CHAIR FROM PAGE 2

Across from the headstone was a bench. Oh, the bench! Simple yet whimsical. Facing the road, the phrase: A Lifetime Together Wasn't Enough. On the other side of the bench, facing the headstone, the nicknames: Poopsie and Baby Pie. It makes me tear up and smile today just like it did 19 years ago to think of that bench. In just a few words, the love of Tala and James is conveyed so clearly and so forcefully. And, honestly, I still feel a bit like a voyeur, imagining Tala and James whispering those nicknames to one another like school children even as they grew older together.

But the words on the bench were only half of the story that makes this my favorite spot at HCC. The second part was the human element. During our walk, Biko's mom shared with me that several times a week, she would walk by and find a woman in her 70s sitting on the bench for an extended period, her caregiver by her side or nearby.

It was Tala. Visiting James. Poopsie and Baby Pie together, because a lifetime together wasn't enough.

Somewhere during that first walk together, I fell in love with Biko's mom. I didn't realize it at the time. In the days and weeks that followed, I returned at around the same time in search of her. Cosmo and I walked the length of the Cemetery with various other dog friends and their parents. I stopped by to visit Tala and James' special place. Months went by and my hopes faded. In our lone conversation, Biko's mom had mentioned that she might be moving away from DC. So, I figured that she had moved.

As it turns out, I was wrong.



**Bench of Tala Engel and James A. Colias, R61/S259**

More than nine months after that initial Cemetery tour, I heard someone yell out for Biko. I did a double-take, since I had only ever known one dog named after the transformative South African anti-apartheid leader. It was indeed the same mutt named Biko and the same mom to Biko. We were both at the ends of our walks, but we just started walking and talking again. We passed by James and Tala's spot. We fell in love.

Biko's mom and I dated for a number of years but then parted ways. We still remain friends, today, though, long after both Cosmo and Biko have passed away. Tala, too, has departed us and has rejoined her beloved James. Whenever I am at the Cemetery, I always visit that spot, spend time on that bench and reflect on the power of love. And just like the first time, I find a smile coming across my face and tears welling up in my eyes.

—Joel Samuels, Chairman of the HCC Board

### CALLING ALL FORMER APHCC BOARD MEMBERS

We are making an effort to better stay in touch with our former APHCC Board members. We have done our best to track down the addresses and contact information for former board members, going all the way back to 1976! A lot has changed since then, people have left the area or moved on, and we do not always get new contact information. If you or someone you know has participated on the Board and did NOT receive an invitation to the HCC Board Reunion for March, please contact the office to give us your updated contact information.

*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

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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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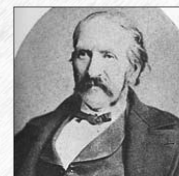
## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>October 2</b>           | Cinematery: Dinner and a Movie: "O"        |
| <b>October 3</b>           | Skeleton Crew 5K                           |
| <b>October 16 &amp; 17</b> | Soul Strolls: Twilight Tours               |
| <b>October 23 &amp; 24</b> | Soul Strolls: Candlelit Tours              |
| <b>November 6</b>          | John Philip Sousa Birthday Virtual Concert |
| <b>November 10</b>         | Tombs & Tones Virtual Book Club            |



(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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