

SOS NEWS

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SOS News is the newsletter of Save Our Seminary, the nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the historic National Park Seminary and engaging the public through education and advocacy since 1989.

25 Years of Preserving the Past for the Future

House Tour A Great Success

On the lovely spring day of May 4th, SOS held its second House Tour since the buildings have been renovated, welcoming 180 guests to view some of the rarely-seen interiors of the National Park Seminary. Seven owners graciously opened their homes to let visitors learn how the Seminary's historic spaces have been redesigned and adapted to residential use.

The open properties included the Chapel, Miller Library, a new townhouse, three of the former sororities, an apartment and common space within the main building. At the Chapel, guests were treated to the sounds of a Steinway piano by the owner, a church organist. The Miller Library with its intact open floor plan and mezzanine wowed visitors as they envisioned its walls lined with books. A townhouse constructed in 2009 by the development team partner EYA offered a different, modern re-use of the campus. Owned by an avid art collector, the house also gave visitors a gallery-quality experience on three levels.

The Japanese Pagoda, Swiss Chalet, and Spanish Mission were the three sororities open for the tour. The Pagoda is fully renovated and occupied, while

the Chalet has been beautifully restored and is looking for a new owner resident. The Mission was in the final stages of renovation during the tour so guests could see the work in progress; it is now for sale.

Within the main building, a small apartment was created in a section of the former historic kitchen. Its loft bedroom fills an original large raised skylight, accessed by a spiral staircase. The tour culminated in the former Dining Room, now open to all NPS residents as the Community Room and Fitness Room. SOS provided refreshments there and an opportunity to view historic images of the campus.

You can access additional and historical information about each of the tour sites on our website at www.saveourseminary.org/tours/house/.

Besides being an educational view inside the renovated historic homes, this tour was also a fundraiser for SOS. Thanks to the many ticket purchases and sales of special items, our proceeds totaled \$6,500 which will help us continue to preserve and educate about the history of National Park Seminary.

Ballroom Events

Our next program in the Ballroom features an alumna of the Seminary on the big screen:

Movie Night

Saturday, July 12, 7:30 pm

Join us for popcorn as we show Universal Studio's 1940 adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous novel *The House of the Seven Gables* starring NPS graduate Margaret Kies Lindsay (class of 1932) in her standout career role. The film also features well-known actors Vincent Price and George Sanders.

Mark your calendar for two more events in the fall:

A Fine Education

Wednesday, October 8, 7:30 pm

We will examine the educational philosophy and academic program established by the Seminary founders. Discover how NPS students learned and what subjects they studied. We'll trace the academic transformation of National Park Seminary into National Park College as women's education evolved.

SOS 25th Anniversary

Sunday, November 2, 3:00 pm

Join us for a celebration honoring 25 years of Save Our Seminary's preservation and educational efforts with highlights of the challenges and successes. Come and toast our past accomplishments and future plans!

Past Programs on Website

If you couldn't attend our first program of the year in March entitled **All About the Ballroom**, or any of the other past programs, you can still enjoy them! They are listed on our website under Events and can be viewed via YouTube.

Adopt-A-Maiden Update

At the January celebration of the restoration of the two lions on the fountain circle, SOS announced the Adopt-A-Maiden for \$1,000 campaign as our next sculpture preservation priority. The maidens are the ten female figures that function as the pillars of the Aloha House porch. They are in need of paint removal, internal metal repair, and repainting, which will cost more than \$10,000 total, but the work will not start until it is fully funded.



Funds raised to Adopt-A-Maiden

\$10,000
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000

To date, we have \$6,000 in hand or pledged for the maidens' restoration. Donors will be honored with a small plaque above a maiden statue as well as on the SOS sculpture plaque in the main building. A couple of the donors have made their contribution a memorial to family members connected with NPS.

You can help save the Seminary sculptures by making a tax-deductible donation to adopt a maiden for \$1,000 or to restore other statues via our website at www.saveourseminary.org/support-sos or by mailing a donation to our address above, designating it for sculpture.

Site Happenings

Renovation of the Colonial house, the grandest of the sorority houses, is about to begin. While looking rather forlorn now with its broken and boarded-up windows, peeling paint, and invasive weeds, it will be brought back to its former beauty as a family residence, and will include half of the elevated walkway that connects to Practice House as living space.



Colonial house ready for renovation

While this piece of history is about to be restored, another piece was lost.

In May, the second of the two oak trees in front of Miller Library had to be taken down for safety reasons. The Seminary had planted an oak tree on each side of the front steps in memory of Dewitt Miller, the bibliophile for whom the library was built. A marble plaque is set in the sidewalk to mark this memorial planting. The current owner is thinking about replacing the two oak trees in the fall to continue the memorial.

Seminary Winners at Preservation Awards Event

SOS and Montgomery Preservation Inc., the county-wide nonprofit preservation advocacy organization, co-hosted the annual Montgomery County Awards for Historic Preservation on March 28. More than 150 people, including the

county executive, attended the celebration in the Seminary Ballroom.

SOS was pleased and honored to present the awards for residential restoration and rehabilitation to the owners of three Seminary houses—Lee Babcock for the Swiss Chalet, Paula Doulaveris and Richard Birdsong for the Dutch Windmill, and Gregory and Abby Wahl for the American Bungalow. This recognition for their dedication to preserving these charming but challenging houses was well deserved.

Treasure in the Archives

SOS was thrilled to discover in the donated files of Ric Nelson what is likely either the first or a very early class photo of National Park Seminary students. We assume some faculty members are also included in the photo as there are a couple of older women and at least one man. Unfortunately, there is no identification or date on this photo—but it is still quite a treasure!

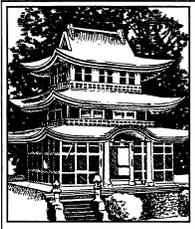
The attire of the girls, who are sitting on the front steps of the main building of the school, dates the photo to the late 1890's. Several of the girls are wearing a variety of interesting hats, including a tam and a sailor hat. In the stained glass of the porch gable, Ye Forest Inne, the name of the early hotel, is faintly discernible.

Ric Nelson was a neighborhood historian who spent years researching and writing about National Park Seminary and who contributed to the SOS book *Enchanted Forest Glen*. He passed away suddenly in early 2013, and SOS co-founder Richard Schaffer coordinated with his widow to collect and donate his Seminary files to SOS, for which we are very grateful.



National Park Seminary class photo, circa late 1890's

**SAVE OUR
SEMINARY**



AT FOREST GLEN

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