SOS News
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SOS News is the newsletter of Save Our Seminary, the nonprofit organization dedicated to communicating the history of National Park Seminary and promoting preservation and public enjoyment of its buildings, artifacts, and landscape since 1989.

Seminary Stories
This spring has been an unusual and challenging one for us all due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because social distancing was mandated, SOS was not able to offer any tours of National Park Seminary or present our programs that were scheduled. Our major fundraising event for the year, the biennial Historic House Tour, also had to be canceled for the spring, and although we hope it might be rescheduled for the fall, that is looking less likely.

In the meantime, we have initiated a way to communicate the history and our activities with everyone safely through a series of online Seminary Stories. These stories are short videos about an item from our archives, a statue, a mini-tour of a building, or an important person connected with NPS.

Our first story was about the statue of Justice near the Italianate Villa and Castle buildings and the unfortunate graffiti damage to it. SOS responded quickly to remove the paint, but we are concerned about possible further damage to this and the other large statues on that side of the property which is still to be redeveloped. Here is this Seminary Story https://youtu.be/9unhNBUSeFY.

The second story highlighted two recent acquisitions to our archives – a gong from the Japanese Pagoda sorority and a silver trophy. The gong was donated to SOS by Helen Chewning Fitzpatrick, the 1941 sorority president, and was used to start and end sorority meetings. SOS is delighted to have this special piece of history and share it with you on this video https://youtu.be/C4oweVGHbH8.

Facebook
In addition to the Seminary Stories, we are also posting other tidbits of history and information on our Facebook page. When you like or follow us on Facebook, you can receive a few more interesting stories, such as how the students of NPS came to understand camp life of soldiers during WWI.
History in the Glen
The SOS Glen Restoration Committee has been busy searching our archives and other sources for historic photos of the Glen and then creating an accurate map of the Glen with all its historic features marked. The ultimate goal is to restore the Glen to its enchanted and accessible state.

In addition to marking the Glen features on a map, the committee is also placing bright orange stakes at the location of each of the features, whether they are extant or not. In November, when the leaves are off the trees, SOS will hold either an in-person or virtual tour of the Glen showing historic photos and the existing features so that viewers can get a sense of what the Glen could look like once again.

Hiawatha Waiting
Due to the coronavirus, the restoration of Hiawatha, the Native American statue next to the Spanish Mission house, has been delayed once again since contractors were either closed or working very limited hours. We are also trying to coordinate the repair of the stone pedestal Hiawatha stands on while the statue is in the contractor’s shop. All the restoration plans and materials also first need to be reviewed and approved by the Maryland Historical Trust to meet preservation standards. SOS is doing the best we can to get the statue restored in 2020!

Site Update
SOS is pleased to see three more buildings on the NPS campus completely renovated and ready to welcome new residents. The Garage/Firehouse, Power Plant, and Practice House now contain 14 unique condos, four of which are sold. This renovation also included the cleaning and repair of the historic cast stone bench on the portico of Practice House.

After years of delay, a new roof has been installed on the Carpentry Shop, after the old roof collapsed from snow. With the new roof, rebuilt mission-style gables, and a new coating of stucco, the building is looking like new.

On the other side of the Glen, the Villa and Castle still await their rebirth. In the meantime, the Castle has suffered more deterioration, with a large hole in the exterior wall on the second level and a smaller hole near the ground, where the stucco and lathe have fallen off completely. The roof is also now mostly gone and lacking any covering.