Programs for 2015

We will be pleased to present the following educational programs this year to continue highlighting various aspects of the history of the National Park Seminary property.

Tuesday, March 24, 7:30 pm
A Fine Education

Thursday, September 17, 7:30 pm
Movie Night - Esther Williams film

Wednesday, November 11, 7:30 pm
History of Medical Services at Walter Reed Forest Glen Annex

All of these programs will be held in the beautiful ballroom. Here are the details about the first program, which is coming very soon! It might sound familiar to some because it was postponed last fall when the speaker became ill.

A Fine Education on March 24th will focus on the educational philosophy and academic program of National Park Seminary and how it transitioned to a junior college. You’ll hear how the students learned (no exams!), what subjects they studied (Latin to Invalid Cookery to Meteorology), and how their curriculum fit in with national trends in women’s education.

The program will start with a very brief SOS Annual Meeting to formally present the 2015 work plan and budget for the recently adjusted fiscal year starting March 1st. A minor technical correction to the bylaws will also be voted on.

If you can attend the March 24th program, we appreciate a RSVP by either phone to 301-589-1715 or email to info@saveourseminary.org. We look forward to seeing you at our programs.

Put on Your Dancing Shoes!

Our very special event planned for this year is a dance in the ballroom. On Sunday, May 17, from 3 to 5 pm, SOS will present music from the 1920s, 30s, and early 40s to reflect the school era of ballroom dances. Period dress will be welcome but is not required.

We’re also hoping to have a surprise to reveal in the ballroom. Whether you are a dancer or not, mark your calendar for this date to share the delight of dancing in the glorious ballroom at NPS.

If you are a ballroom dancer, please contact SOS to be considered as a demonstration dancer for this event. It will be great fun!
25th Anniversary Celebration
On Sunday, November 2, 2014, members, friends, and the Board of Save Our Seminary celebrated the 25th anniversary of the founding of our organization. Through images, video clips, and comments by present and past SOS Board members, we reminisced about the challenging road travelled by SOS to bring about the rejuvenation of National Park Seminary.

SOS co-founder Rich Schaffer started by describing how he fell in love with the mystery of the campus when his Boy Scout troop started meeting there in the 1970s. Bonnie Rosenthal, long-time Board member and current Executive Director, showed us video documenting the tragedy of the Odeon fire, which led SOS to increased advocacy and hands-on preservation. Former Board member Steve Devoney helped us understand the severe deterioration of the interiors with film footage showing collapsed ceilings and floors, peeling paint, and dilapidated rooms, but he ended with the SOS triumph of the Pagoda restoration.

Fred Gervasi was SOS president when NPS went through the years-long process of transfer from the Army to Montgomery County and then to The Alexander Company for redevelopment, which culminated in great promise for the future. Linda Lyons, also a past president, focused on the support and encouragement SOS received from the National Park Seminary and College alumnae throughout the years, which bolstered our efforts to preserve this special place.

After comments on the current SOS activities of sculpture and archives restoration and a thank you to all who have supported SOS, president Anne Brockett unveiled a beautiful bronze plaque that commemorates NPS as a National Register Historic District for its “architectural significance and its role in women’s education and the history of U.S. Army medicine.”

Just before guests were invited to share cake and punch, the final announcement of the day was made – the release of SOS’s new book National Park Seminary: An Enduring Legacy, which updates and enhances the previous edition, published when the Seminary’s future was still unknown. You can order the book through our website on the Store page.

If you could not attend this special event, you can still “be there” by viewing the video produced by Steve Devoney at http://youtu.be/hOY8IKBwwGM.

Gym Nearing Completion
The winter weather has not stopped the exciting progress of the interior of the gymnasium being transformed into 12 condominiums by Washington Landmark Construction. The excellent restoration of the exterior is particularly noteworthy, as it has accurately brought back the severely deteriorated front façade to its grandness. It was almost 20 years ago that the Army blocked off the front portico with a plywood wall and built a truss system to hold up the falling portico ceiling. Now even the cast iron
griffin lamps are back in place at either side of the front door and will once again be lighted.

Inside, the studs are now being covered with drywall to create new living spaces. The upper level condo units include soaring loft spaces open to the roof rafters. The condo unit that includes the swimming pool reveals the muted color tiles of the pool in the living and kitchen areas at the sunken floor level.

SOS recently arranged a special interior members-only tour of the gym to view this renovation in progress. The condo units are expected to be completed by May, and two of them have already been reserved.

Maidens in Springtime
The next project for SOS to tackle is the restoration of the ten maidens or caryatids that comprise the porch columns of Aloha House. Now that we have $10,000 in hand from generous donors who have adopted one maiden each, we are in the process of getting bids for the work.

The restoration will include removing the old paint, repairing any damage, and repainting with a more appropriate finish. Depending on the weather and the chosen conservator’s schedule, we hope the work can start in the spring. Thanks again to all our maiden donors, who will be recognized with a plaque above their adopted maiden.

Treasures in the Archives
In the past few months, SOS has received more framed photos of National Park graduating classes to add to our archives. Thanks to thoughtful and generous alumnae family members, we now have these lovely panoramic photos from 1926, 1940, and 1942.

We also have a very early class photo, from the late 1890s, that we showed in an earlier newsletter. Our plan is to hang each of these class photos in the main hallway that leads from the main building to the ballroom. We hope to acquire class photos from other decades of the school as well.

Do You Know…?
In this season of entertainment awards, how good are you at movie trivia? We recently discovered that a former World War II era patient at Walter Reed Forest Glen is the only person to have won two Academy Awards for the same performance.

If you can identify this man, email info@saveourseminary.org or call 301-589-1715, and we will print the answer in the next newsletter.
AmazonSmile Donations
Do you shop on Amazon? Thanks to the initiative of one of our supporters, Save Our Seminary is now one of the charitable organizations in the AmazonSmile program. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Save Our Seminary when selected by customers.

There is no cost to the consumer, and Amazon gives the full 0.5% to the organization. Here's the link to support SOS by shopping at AmazonSmile: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1643912.

Thank you for considering another way of giving to SOS!

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