



Fall 2000

Appreciation for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America

On July 24 members of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America gathered in Washington for an annual legislative conference. In conjunction with their meeting members contributed their time and expertise to two civic improvements: groundwork at Arlington National Cemetery and here at Congressional. On a drizzly day, members from across the country cut sections of the cemetery and laid down lime for improved turf development.

At the same time, John Dingus and his crew from the Davey Tree Expert Company turned his attention to some of our needy trees. A huge limb from a tulip poplar had fallen over the Winter Vault leaving the 70 foot surviving tree dangerously unstable. Dingus' men made quick work of the poplar, cut down two conspicuous dead trees near the center of the cemetery and a couple of others that were conveniently at the roadside.

Congressman John Linder of Georgia praised the work of the PLCAA in a statement published in the Congressional Record.

Tom Delaney, executive director of the PLCAA, says he hopes their work at Congressional can be an annual event.

We are thrilled with the generosity of the PLCAA. We are truly grateful for their help in attacking some of the projects that we have had to defer for so long.

Our Wish List du Jour

Our members have been generous in their response to periodic pleas for specific items. We have a few wishes at the end of this year that we hope might be realized through donations from our members and supporters:

- a pressure washer
- a heavy duty chipper
- a riding mower

Anyone having these items available are encouraged to contact the cemetery office.

A Long, Cool Summer

While nothing has burned down this year, we have had our own version of an annus horribilis.

This spring we hired a contractor to cut the grass at the cemetery and he promptly fell behind in his work. Once we passed Memorial Day and the Fourth of July without getting in shape, we looked to someone else. We have a new contractor, Village Turf, a member of the PLCAA, but it is a slow, difficult job to cut through the weeds that have been allowed to grow waist high. On top of all this, the mild, wet weather that we had all summer only encouraged the growth of grass and brush far beyond the growing seasons of the last few years.

We apologize to those who have suffered through the tall grass in the areas that are important to them. We believe that the new contractor will be able to keep abreast of the job from now on.

In light of our other troubles this year, we thought it useful to share with you this year's budget for maintaining the cemetery. We continue to be modest in our expenditures as we try to direct some money to the Congressional matching grant. We continue to have no full time staff. Nevertheless, just cutting the grass costs much more than most people know. We hope that this will assure our members that their contributions are being put to good use and at the same time they will recognize the challenge that faces us every year. Below is the budget proposed for this year. Some adjustments have been made in the last few months, but the general outline is still valid.

Projected Expenses for 2000:

Insurance and Financial Audit	\$8,000
Utilities (House and Chapel)	7,250
Maintenance (House and Chapel)	3,000
Maintenance (Water Pipes)	3,000
Interments - Backhoe Services	2,100
Supplies	1,000
Memberships and Other Fees	600
Newsletter Expenses	3,000
Lawn Mowing and Trimming	53,000
Tree Removal and Replacement	6,000
Total FY 2000 Expenses	\$86,950

In addition to this budget, we have achieved the goal of raising over \$50,000 to match our grant from the Save America's Treasures Program. We are grateful to the Kiplinger Foundation and to many individuals who contributed to this project.

Historical Footnote: William Cross

A new book published this year is *Ghosts of Cape Sabine*, by Leonard F. Guttridge, "The Harrowing True Story of the Greely Expedition."

The Greely Expedition was a military and scientific expedition dispatched to explore the Arctic in cooperation with other nations in the first International Polar Year of 1881. Led by Adolphus Greely, the company of 25 men spent three years collecting scientific data as they reached what then was the northernmost point achieved by man. Their camp was so remote that two attempts to recover or resupply the crew failed in 1882 and 1883. Their plight was the source of recurring coverage by the national media. When they were rescued in 1884, only seven men survived. The survivors were reduced to eating their shoes and sometime later newspapers speculated that cannibalism may have occurred.

Among the casualties and the first to perish was Sgt. William Cross, the party's engineer. He was recruited from the Washington Navy Yard for his skill as an engineer, but he had a weakness for alcohol that extended to siphoning fuel from the party's alcohol lamps. He died of malnutrition on January 17, 1884. His comrades barely had the strength to bury him in a shallow grave in the rocks and ice. When the survivors were rescued the following June, five bodies of the fallen were recovered and returned to the United States.

Cross was the only member returned to the Washington area. His body was placed in the Public Vault on August 10, 1884. When he was interred in Range 90, Site 299 two weeks later, a huge wreath spelling "Arctic" was placed on his grave.

Greely went on to become the Chief Signal Officer in the Army. He continued his interest in the Arctic and served as a trustee of the National Geographic Society. In March 1935 he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by special Act of Congress for a lifetime of achievement. He died the following October and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

A Potential Neighbor: A Monument to the Millennium

A new monument has been proposed for the city and one of the two sites being considered for it is on Barney Circle, adjacent to our southern boundary.

Rodney Cook of Atlanta has proposed a millennium memorial in the form of an arch and colonnade presenting a monumental entrance to the city at the foot of the Sousa Bridge. The plan includes construction of a southern entrance to the cemetery.

If the city agrees to allow use of its land, the memorial will be financed by \$50 million in private funds. Mr. Cook believes that the memorial could help to revitalize the surrounding area, including Congressional Cemetery.

Mr. Cook is responsible for a monument to the Olympic Games constructed in downtown Atlanta in 1996. That project was backed by H.R.H. Prince Charles and has attracted \$75 million in development nearby.

There are many hurdles that must be overcome before the proposal becomes a reality. We will continue to monitor its progress and its likely effect on the cemetery.

Make Our Dean's List

A new member of the Congressional family is Bob Dean, our enthusiastic volunteer coordinator. Over the past few months, he has helped in the maintenance and upkeep of the grounds and directed several individuals and groups that have offered help. Bob has already worked with the Son and Daughters of the American Revolution in planting flowers at the Gerry Monument; the Alpha Phi Omega sorority from the University of Maryland in a fall cleanup; and members of our Canine Corps in helping with brush removal.

With Bob's help, we have been able to keep the office open 9:00 AM to 2:00 daily, except for Thursdays and Sundays. For information about cemetery events or for volunteering, Bob can be reached at 410-897-9669 (home), 410-570-8739 (cell), or via e-mail at jrdean@aol.com.

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Funding for the preservation and maintenance of Historic Congressional Cemetery is provided by the Congressional Cemetery Endowment, which was created with matching funds provided by the Congress of the United States and administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.