



# The Current

Volume 1/Number 3

Fall 2006

## Celebrate the Past, Improve the Present, and Help Us to Ensure a Sustainable Future for your National Mall



Aerial of the National Mall.



The National Park Service is launching a major planning effort to improve how you experience the National Mall in the heart of Washington, D.C. The National Mall is home to the great symbols of our country — national icons such as the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Jefferson Memorial. It includes the Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans, and World War II memorials, as well as lesser known memorials to American heroes — the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, George Mason, and John Paul Jones.

Each year 25 million people visit the National Mall. That's more visitors than Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon national parks receive combined. That adds up to a lot of wear and tear that affects the landscape and visitor facilities of the National Mall. Facilities can be overwhelmed with use. Lawns may be worn to the ground, adversely affecting the vigor of nearby trees. Areas adjacent to sidewalks may be damaged as crowds and tents spill off walks because the space is inadequate for crowd control and security screening. The National Mall symbolizes our nation and our freedoms, and its appearance should reflect its value to our country.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park will also be part of the plan. Pennsylvania Avenue is America's grand ceremonial avenue, designed to run between the Capitol and the White House. America's history has marched, paraded, promenaded, and protested its way up and down the avenue, and the nation celebrates the election of a president every four years with the Inaugural Parade. Pennsylvania Avenue is truly more than just another city street, rather it is the place where the nation comes to commemorate its tragedies and triumphs.

You are invited to help decide how you and future generations will experience and enjoy the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park. The public phase of the planning process will start with an all-day symposium to be held this fall. With your help, NPS planners will examine ways to improve the appearance of the National Mall and determine desired visitor experiences and educational opportunities on both the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue.

There will be many ways for you to help with planning – sharing your concerns and ideas for the future of these national treasures. Find out more about the park and plan by visiting [www.nps.gov/nama](http://www.nps.gov/nama). Join in celebrating the past, improving the present, and working to ensure a sustainable future for the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue.

by Vikki Keys, Superintendent,  
National Mall & Memorial Parks

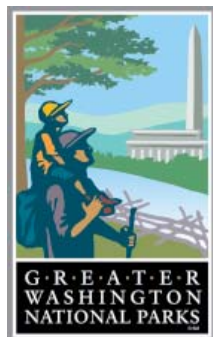
## Regional Director's Corner

On August 25th the National Park Service (NPS) celebrated its 90th year of service to America. We here in the National Capital Region appreciate President Bush and Secretary Kempthorne's support as the NPS moves toward its centennial in 2016.

As part of the National Park Centennial Challenge (NPCC), we will build upon partnerships to increase community investment and to leverage philanthropic, partnership, and government investment for the benefit of our parks and our visitors.

Early NPS leaders Stephen Mather and Horace Albright laid a solid foundation for our work. We will use our 90th year to honor our traditions and commit to seeking the insight and perspective of employees, retirees, volunteers and partners. I look forward to working to preserve the best of America and to enhancing what national parks mean to our children, their children, and future generations.

Joseph M. Lawler  
Regional Director  
National Capital Region



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Jimmy Garvin inducted into the African American Golfer's Hall of Fame.
- State, county & school children partner to raise money for historic canal boat.
- Harpers Ferry National Historical Park celebrates the Niagara Movement.

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)





Dignitaries attend the unveiling of the Niagara Movement West Virginia State Historical Marker.

## 100 -Year Civil Rights Milestone Celebrated at Harpers Ferry



In an effort to focus attention on an event which has been referred to as the cornerstone of the modern civil rights

movement, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park hosted the multi-day centennial celebration of the Niagara Movement Conference that was held at Storer College in 1906. Storer College, now the site of the Harpers Ferry Center, was the only school in West Virginia to offer African-Americans an education beyond the primary grades.

Concerned the Niagara Movement might become overshadowed by more recent civil rights movements, the Park, the Harpers Ferry Historical Association and the Jefferson County, West Virginia Branch of the NAACP partnered to commemorate this historical event August 17-20, 2006. A symposium entitled, “The Niagara Movement & the Dawning of 20th Century Civil Rights,” featuring two Pulitzer Prize winners, an evening tour of the Park, and interpretive exhibits, completed the weekend’s festivities.

“For 10 years we prepared for the centennial of the 1906 conference,” said Park Ranger Todd Bolton. “We opened a permanent exhibit on the Niagara Movement, focused on planning the commemoration and developed an Educator’s Guide.”

by Martha Wassel, Interpretive Specialist, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, martha\_wassel@nps.gov

## Jimmy Garvin - Fame on the Greens

*The African American Golfer’s Hall of Fame Inducts Langston Golf Course Legend into Class of 2006*



Renowned golfer and general manager of Langston Golf Course, James “Jimmy” Garvin was inducted into the African American Golfer’s Hall of Fame in May. Garvin’s story is one of tragedy and triumph.



Driving his way into the Hall of Fame.

Orphaned at age 14, Garvin overcame adversity and attended classes at Howard University where he was introduced to golf. After graduating from Howard, Garvin held a number of positions at Langston before joining its maintenance crew. Working his way up, Garvin earned the position of General Manager in 1999, later becoming president.

Remembering how others helped him, Garvin implemented free golf instruction for children aged 7-17, and established an education center at Langston’s club house that is equipped with computers, math and SAT prep programs, and learning tools for 20 junior golfers. The center is open 350 days a year and reaches over 500 students annually, encouraging students to get good grades before they can play golf. “Golf is the carrot, but education is the key,” Garvin adds.

Originally a nine-hole course and later expanded to 18-holes, the Department of Interior bought Langston and opened in it 1939. At that time there were limited golfing facilities for African Americans. Jim Thorpe and boxer Joe Louis are among the American legends to play golf at Langston. In 1991, Langston was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its role in providing equal access during the era of racial segregation. To find out more about Langston, call 202-397-8638, or visit [www.golfdc.com](http://www.golfdc.com) or [www.nps.gov/nace](http://www.nps.gov/nace).

by Janet Braxton, Public Affairs Specialist, National Capital Parks-East, janet\_braxton@nps.gov

## Volunteers Help Make a Difference



*On a hot July day an ardent patriot took up a quill pen and affixed his name along side those of others who in so doing willingly agreed to risk their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor for the cause of liberty in hopes of establishing a better way of life for their fellow citizens.*

While this description might characterize Independence Hall in 1776, it also applies to an interpretive event held on July 4th, 2006 at the White House Visitor Center, when visitors participated in a reenactment of the Second Continental Congress in 1776 that led to American independence, just one of several such interactive interpretive programs being offered at President’s Park.

These programs are a direct result of teamwork between park staff and its dedicated corps of Volunteers in Parks (VIPs). The thread that binds them together is an emphasis



White House Visitor Center volunteer leads children in a hands-on educational activity.

on creating opportunities for visitors to make personal connections with the park story, and a true passion and earnestness on the part of VIPs and park staff to serve as catalysts in this process. “The enthusiasm and commitment is contagious” voiced one VIP after participating in the President for a Day program that took place earlier this year, in which visitors sampled some of the sights, sounds, activities, and personages that have helped to make the White House one of America’s most significant historical residences.

If any readers are interested in volunteering at President’s Park, applications may be obtained by calling 202-208-1631 or by sending a note to [Maggie\\_Chandler@nps.gov](mailto:Maggie_Chandler@nps.gov).

by Maggie Chandler, Park Ranger, President’s Park, maggie\_chandler@nps.gov



# A Call to Action - Civil War Defenses of Washington

## Fort Circle Parks Receive Due Attention



This spring, the Civil War Preservation Trust drew attention to the Civil War defenses of Washington, or the “Fort Circle” parks, by including the remains of these fortifications on a list of the “10 most-endangered” Civil War sites.

These places—and the events which occurred at each site—were witness to an earlier wave of interest when National Park Service (NPS) staff drafted a management plan for the Fort Circle Parks in 2004. Both forms of recognition suggest the need for coordinated interpretation, partnerships and a comprehensive approach to stabilize remaining fortifications while encouraging recreational and educational uses.

Since completion of the management plan, NPS managers have undertaken a number of activities, including: revising and publishing a new brochure on the defenses, documenting the need for earthwork stabilization; planning with District of Columbia

agencies and others; designation of a foot path linking the forts, which is a potential segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail; and establishing partnerships for communication, interpretation, education, and preservation.

Following are some suggestions to learn more about the circle of historic forts:

- Visit the museum at Fort Ward, City of Alexandria,
- Volunteer for a work trip on the Fort Circle Parks Trail, October 1, 2006, organized by American Hiking Society (see [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)),
- Mark your calendar for Fort Stevens Day, July 14, 2007, organized by Rock Creek Park; and
- Read the Civil War Defense of Washington report at [www.civilwar.org/news/topten2006/2006report.pdf](http://www.civilwar.org/news/topten2006/2006report.pdf)

by Don Briggs, Superintendent,  
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail,  
[don\\_briggs@nps.gov](mailto:don_briggs@nps.gov)



Visitors attend the inaugural launch of the Charles F. Mercer passenger boat at C&O Canal.

## History Returns to Great Falls, Canal

The C&O Canal, its staff and visitors returned to the historical park's roots, with the opening of Lock #20's iron gates and the rush of water raising a new canal passenger boat, just as was done countless times during the 19th century.

With help from third-graders from Seven Locks Elementary School who started fundraising efforts with bake sales, and in partnership with Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, private donors and the Friends of Historic Great Falls Tavern, over \$540,000 was raised for the construction of the “Charles F. Mercer,” the new boat which replaced the 30-year old “Canal Clipper,” and named for Charles F. Mercer, former president of the C & O Canal Company.

“This brings the past into the future,” said C & O Canal Superintendent Kevin Brandt. “Thousands of visitors, and especially school children, will now have a lifetime impression of what it feels like to be on a canal.”

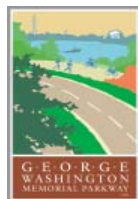
by Bill Line, NCR Public Affairs Officer,  
[william\\_line@nps.gov](mailto:william_line@nps.gov)

## When Fort Hunt was Known as “P.O. Box 1142”

### Declassified records provide insight on military intelligence operations



Fred Michel and George Mandel, served as military intelligence interrogators, in a building similar to this, at Fort Hunt, during WWII.



Few visitors to Fort Hunt Park, a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, recognize the secrets preserved within its diverse history. The National Park Service administers the picnic pavilions and ball fields, but evidence of its past is largely concealed.

During World War II, Fort Hunt, built just before the Spanish – American War, was home to two highly classified military intelligence programs. Now, 60 years later, the men who once served this country in a top secret assignment, are being given the opportunity to finally tell

their stories. Since their days of extracting intelligence information from enemy prisoners of war, these veterans have gone on to become professors, ambassadors, and CIA operatives. Many of these men share a common background as German-born Jews who narrowly escaped the Holocaust, while some lost entire families.

In an effort to better understand the unspoken history of Fort Hunt Park, George Washington Memorial Parkway staff initiated research into this incredible story. Clues uncovered in recently declassified military documents have led park staff to the names of veterans who served at Fort Hunt, at that time known only as “Post

Office Box 1142.” Veterans who worked at Fort Hunt were under direct orders to remain silent about their work and could only refer to their work location as “P.O. Box 1142.”

In order to capture and preserve first-hand accounts of these Fort Hunt Interrogators, GWMP staff proudly hosted a small reunion of these men on August 15, 2006. In addition, staff is conducting a detailed oral history program that will permanently record their stories. This information will be critical in interpreting how this small band of soldiers contributed to the war effort—and to their place in American history.

by Vincent Santucci, Chief Ranger,  
GWMP, [vincent\\_santucci@nps.gov](mailto:vincent_santucci@nps.gov)



# Upcoming Events

For GWNP event information, call 202-619-7222



## Veterans Day — Honoring all who served

*Saturday, November 11, 2006*

Various locations throughout your Greater Washington National Parks

Event highlights include:

- Storytelling at Vietnam Women’s Memorial, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4 p.m., Vietnam Women’s Memorial, 23rd and Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.

Wreath Laying Ceremonies:

- Veterans Day at Arlington National Cemetery, 11:00 a.m., Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- Veterans Day at Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 1:00 p.m., Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.
- Veterans Day at the Navy Memorial, 1:00 p.m., U.S. Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.
- African-American Civil War Memorial, time to be determined, African American Civil War Memorial, Vermont Ave. & U Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Call 202-426-6927 or 202-667-2667.
- The Women in Military Service for America Memorial Observes Veteran’s Day, 3:30 p.m., Women In Military Service For America Memorial, at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery.

Beginning this Veterans Day (Nov. 11), U.S. veterans, members of the U.S. armed forces and their families will be admitted free-of-charge annually on Veterans Day to most public lands managed by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture.

## Greater Washington Trails Forever

*October 20, 2006 , 10:00 a.m.*

George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Fort Hunt Park  
703-289-2500

## 18th Annual Memorial Illumination at Antietam

*Saturday, December 12, 2006, 6:00 p.m.*

Antietam National Battlefield  
301-432-5124



## Planetarium Programs

*Sundays & Saturdays,*

*1:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m*

*Wednesdays, 4:00 p.m.*

Rock Creek Park Nature Center  
202-895-6070

**Exhibits - “The West Wing” - Through December 2006  
& “The Presidential Seal” - Through January 2007**

White House Visitor Center  
202-208-1631

# Greater Washington National Parks

*Where you are never far from history and nature*

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



*The Current* is published in partnership with:  
*Eastern National and  
National Mall & Memorial Parks*

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20242



## NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING AND PAGEANT OF PEACE

We invite you to join the thousands of visitors who turn out for the annual lighting ceremony of the National Christmas Tree in early December. This Washington, D.C. tradition is a full month of celebration for the Christmas Pageant of Peace. Each night throughout the month, musical groups from the greater Washington area will entertain visitors to the Ellipse.

This year’s lighting ceremony is on Dec. 7 at 5:00 p.m. For more information on programs and ticket distribution for the lighting event call 202-208-1631.

### EDITORIAL OFFICE

National Park Service, Office of Communications, 1100  
Ohio Drive, SW, Washington, D.C. 20242, 202-619-7222

*Happy Holidays*

From the staff at your  
Greater Washington National Parks

