

Spring 2018

# News from Oak Hill

The NEWSLETTER of the FRIENDS of OAK HILL CEMETERY

## From The President Dear Friends of Oak Hill

My last President's report was written in October, and we will take up where we left off. We finished several of the path improvements over the intervening months, began new ones, and have made plans for more. The paths along the Montrose Park fence, and North Hill were completed and sodded as late as Thanksgiving. Our contractor Rony Hernandez assuaged our fears about working so late into the season, and he was correct. We have seen no winter damage, and the grass is beginning to grow. It will be a chore to keep up with the growth, but our crew is getting ready. Newly hired as our Grounds Manager, Scott Staples has joined the team. Scott has a widely varied background in horticulture and in the

few weeks on staff has been enthusiastic and informed. Welcome, Scott! His addition will unburden Superintendent Dave Jackson, who will focus on other projects, including our Historic Preservation Foundation. Also joining the team is Ernesto Torres, who is a nephew of Ricardo Haraujo. Working together on several masonry projects, Rico and Ernesto have proved a powerful team. When Jose Guzman and Jorge Robles need them, they also perform landscaping duties, and vice versa. We hosted a retirement lunch for Mainor Pinar Torres in December, who left us after 28 years of dedicated service. Friends of Oak Hill should be proud of this team, we certainly are.

Margaret Mihori left us as our office administrator, and it was difficult to replace her. Our best wishes to her and her family, and thanks for her considerable help. Lois Brown joined us in March, and we are very proud to have her here with us. Lois has considerable experience in not for profit development, and we are very optimistic that her talents will help not only the Cemetery



Grounds Mgr Scott Staples with Andy Del Gallo re-erecting a monument in Chapel Valley

operating company, but our Historic Preservation Foundation as well. Welcome, Lois!

Projects completed or underway include the rebuilding of the area around the water spigot at the Carriage House, the addition of more granite gutter east of the Carriage House along Rock Creek, and some rehabilitation of two pathways near the deBodisco monument above the Carriage House. Rico and Ernesto also constructed three new drainage inlets there. On the Friday before Easter the entire crew and I walked the borders of Rock Creek picking up trash and inspecting our northern boundary. Two months ago, Mike Papa and Doug Rowley from the U.S. Park Service, Dave Jackson, Captain deVicq and I, walked the Montrose Park and Mount Zion fence lines. Their workers graciously trimmed and pruned some



Lois Brown our new Director of Development and Administration

continued on page 3

### OAK HILL CEMETERY

3001 R Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007-2923  
Telephone: 202-337-2835  
Fax: 202-337-6481  
www.oakhillcemeterydc.org

Email: oak\_hill\_cemetery@verizon.net

### Cemetery Hours

Office and grounds:  
9:00 am to 4:30 pm, M - F.  
Saturday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm.  
Sunday 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm,  
(weekends walk-in gate only and no drive-in access  
on holidays either) weather permitting.  
Please observe rules posted at gate.

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David C. deVicq, Vice President  
Loretta Castaldi, Treasurer  
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Clift Seferlis  
Darla Jackson  
David Jackson, Executive Director  
Elizabeth Mizell, Director of Development  
Communications and Individual Giving  
Lois Brown, Director of Development and  
Administration

### Cemetery Publications

Available in the cemetery office

#### "Oak Hill Cemetery"

A brief history – contains a map of  
the cemetery, list of notable people  
buried in Oak Hill and a brief history  
of our founding. \$3.00

#### Oak Hill Note Cards

Set of eight note cards featuring  
four scenes of Oak Hill Cemetery  
through the seasons. Envelopes  
included. \$5.00

#### "Oak Hill Cemetery, Georgetown, DC Monument Inscriptions and Burial Data"

Two-volume set, including  
matching sleeve. \$175.00

All photos in this newsletter were  
taken by Oak Hill Staff, unless  
otherwise noted.

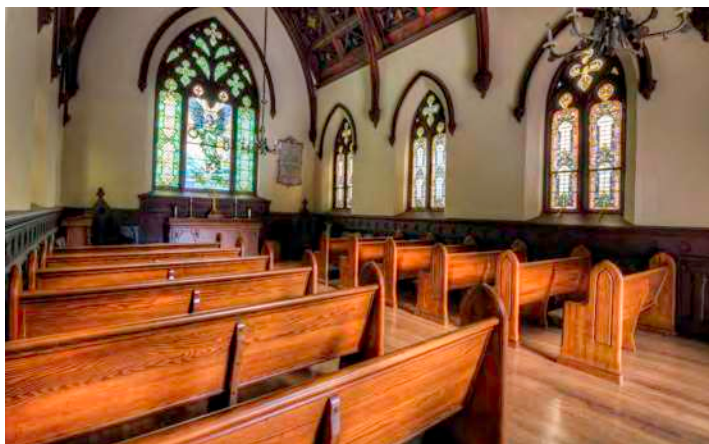
## 2018 Treasurer's Annual Report

Oak Hill Cemetery is in stable financial condition. The Cemetery ended the fiscal year on April 30, 2018 with a positive net operating revenue and no debt. The Cemetery has adequate inventory of saleable sites and financial reserves to fund Cemetery operations for many years to come. Moreover, the Cemetery has significant, untapped space that can be developed into additional burial sites as the current inventory is depleted.

Thanks to the generosity of donors and positive net revenues for the fiscal year ending April 2018, Oak Hill Cemetery contributed the regularly scheduled, inflation adjusted installment to the reserves. The goal is to build the reserves to a level that will allow the cemetery to continue operation for at least a century after sales cease.

Funds were also used during the fiscal year for a multitude of special projects including: opening new burial sites in Rock Creek Terrace section; installing a new sculpture by local artist John Dreyfuss; initiating phase one of the refurbishment of the historic fence along R Street; continuing the drainage improvement project on Corcoran and North Hill; significant pruning of trees around Corcoran and Stewart sections to allow more sun light; updating the landscaping in North Hill, Stewart and Corcoran sections.

In the upcoming year, we will continue work on cemetery improvements and contribute to the capital reserve fund.



Renwick Chapel



## President's Report (continued from page 1)



*Constitution Chapter of DAR honoring Judith Ellen Foster*

overgrowth, and we did the same. Their assistance is greatly appreciated, so that good fences can make good neighbors. I recently participated in the Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservation Day, met several of our neighbors and learned about their efforts to restore their lovely Beatrix Farrand landscape. We have met the new Director of Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks, Jonathan Kavalier, and look forward to cooperation where possible. We recently hosted Neville Waters, long time resident of Georgetown and President of The Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemetery, our eastern neighbor, to learn more about their progress.

We were hit hard by the windstorm in March, and many monuments suffered wind and tree damage. An enormous hickory tree fell in the main intersection and barely missed doing considerable damage. Four important monuments fell there and elsewhere, and many smaller ones as well, but several have been re-erected. Scott and I joined our talented stone mason Andy del Gallo and his daughter Delaney one Saturday morning on this project. Andy has taught our crew valuable techniques for repair and maintenance. We hope to devote more resources and effort to this need, and to apply for grant funds. It is the responsibility of families to maintain their property, but some projects devolve to us over time.

The Oak Hill Historic Preservation Foundation has also been busy. The Board held a retreat at my office in February with strategic planner Pat Larmee and development consultant The Sheridan Group to formulate consensus for the future of the Foundation. Short-term goals and long-term visions were explored. We look forward to sharing this work with you. Liz Mizell, our Director of Development Communications and Individual Giving and I have done a great deal of work on our new website. Although we had hoped to

be online by now, we and our website developer Two Penguins, are running a bit behind schedule. There have been many decisions to be made, and much research to be performed, but we are excited by what we have seen so far. Liz has spent considerable time at the Library of Congress, also searching our many decades of records, to provide content for our site. Many thanks to our friend John Cole at the Library, and Jeff Flannery, Head of Manuscripts. Liz has been assisted by American University student Marzuk Kahn, who has interned at Oak Hill the past four months. He has been skilled and very helpful, and we hope to see him again in the fall. In April, Dave Jackson and I hosted the Constitution Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This DAR chapter learned that one of its founders was buried at Oak Hill 110 years ago, but that the grave had never been marked. Their members generously gave and installed a new marker for Judith Ellen Foster, an early lawyer and Suffragette, temperance worker and lecturer. Thank you, ladies! The next day, Christ Church, Georgetown hosted a lecture by friend and historian Thomas Crocker on the founders of that Church, many of whom are buried at Oak Hill. The lecture was detailed and very interesting. We had hoped to host a walking tour immediately after, but the weather turned poor, so we will reschedule. We intend soon to host a lecture about the tremendously popular novel by George Saunders "Lincoln in the Bardo", much of which takes place at Oak Hill. There is a wonderful interview of Saunders by Kojo Nnamdi on the NPR website.

We hope that you find these projects interesting and that you will continue to generously support our work here.

It is very rewarding to be involved at the Oak Hill Cemetery.

Respectfully submitted,

George G. Hill

President, Board of Managers



*Fallen Hickory Tree in the intersection*

## GLORIOUS SPRING!!!

by Dave Jackson

No matter what, spring is always glorious!! Everyone who glimpses through our fence has the same reaction. It begins with the earliest Tulip Magnolia tree, the white one near the Renwick Chapel, and continues with the several large flowering cherry trees around the grounds! Daffodils, camellias, and Iris get into the act; then azaleas and rhododendron. We add to the show by planting annual flowers in late April and early May. What a show!! (I forgot the Dogwood and the recently added Redbud trees!!)

The first time we moved from Indiana to the Washington area in 1999 (Northern Virginia), I remember coming for a meeting the last week of April. I was amazed with all the blooming plants and trees I saw. Coming from the cold winter in Indiana,

the contrast was striking. Ever since then I developed a real appreciation for the gifts mother nature gives us this time of year. We are so fortunate....

Speaking of plants and trees, Scott Staples has joined the staff at Oak Hill Cemetery as our Grounds Manager. Scott has a wide horticulturally-based background having worked in various landscape companies and wholesalers. He spent a year at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and has traveled to England and Japan to study horticultural practices. Our goal is to improve our practices for landscape maintenance and make thoughtful additions. I want to accomplish those goals but keep in mind we are a 19th century garden

cemetery with limited irrigation and difficult terrain. Oak Hill will not be comparable to a modern day golf course or highly maintained and irrigated public garden, nor should we be. We should properly maintain our current trees, plants, and flowers and Scott is very capable of giving direction to our very willing staff to accomplish this. I was



Cross Avenue

impressed with Scott's knowledge of plants and how to maintain them in our environment. I am very glad to have him on the staff.

Also in the personnel department, Margaret Mihori has left and we wish her well. To fill that position, as well as increase our focus on development matters, Lois Brown has joined us as Director of Development and Administration. Lois is indeed a great find because she has background in development from seventeen years in her prior work as a not-for-profit development director and knowledge of administrative and accounting matters that we need in our office. She will assist with funerals and answering the loads of questions we receive in the office. She is already a huge help to me.

The last newsletter reported that we hoped to start Phase One of the Bigelow Iron Fence early this year. Unfortunately



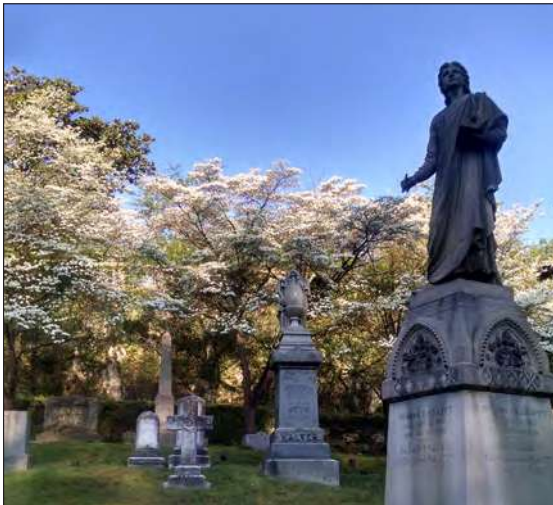
Ambassador Antonov with Superintendent Jackson





*Renwick Chapel in Full Bloom*

that has not been the case. We are seeking a “General Contractor” relationship with the company doing the work so that coordinating the iron work and stone work for the post bases is



*Near Louise Home Section*



*Renwick Chapel framed by Spring*

under the same supervisory entity. This has been a difficult marriage to find but we may have the issue worked out.. As I write this one of our long-time contractors seems willing to

take on the required role, even though it is somewhat out of their normal practice. We will report more on this in another newsletter.

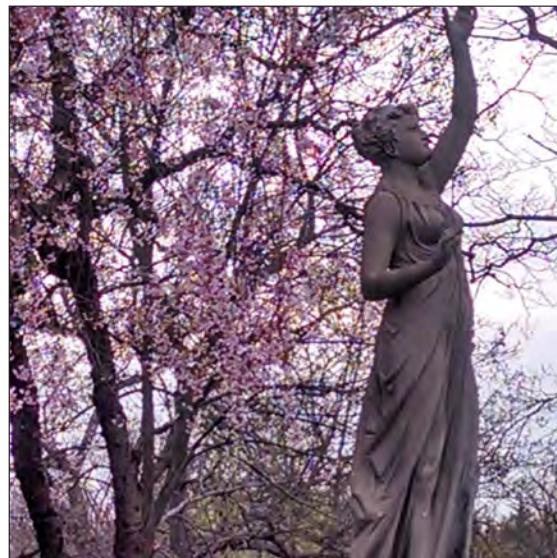
On February 2nd I was honored to welcome to Oak Hill the current Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United States, Anatoly Antonov. Ambassador Antonov was here to celebrate Russia’s “Diplomats Day” by setting a wreath at the grave of Baron Alexander



*Ambassador Antonov with Russian Embassy Staff*

deBodisco, Ambassador of the Russian Empire to the United States from 1837-1854. Baron deBodisco was known in Georgetown for his romantic marriage to Harriet Brooke Williams, a young Georgetown charmer.

I hope you enjoy some the pictures. These are all from Oak Hill of course, but may be in different years. Its no secret that finding attractive things to photograph in Oak Hill is the easiest thing in the world to do!! As always, please come visit. Add your own “aura” to the scenery here!!



*Near Renwick Chapel*

## Vice-President's Report

### *North Hill Burial Grounds: Reimagined and Recontoured*

The montage of photographs on pages 8 and 9 features a broad view of the hillside with Western Avenue passing down its southern border. The roadway, curbing, sodded slopes, concrete ramp and stone wall were all rebuilt in the past 18 months as part of ongoing efforts to both refurbish and upgrade the earliest sections of our historic cemetery. Primrose terrace, one of the first and the highest to be completed, may be seen just above the Morrison Family Mausoleum while Violet terrace emerges from behind Morrison's angelic figure whose banner proclaims "There Shall Be No Night There", and then runs northward to a Victorian bench which marks its new terminus. Bracketing views looking back towards the three 19th century Mausoleums show how recontouring has restored slopes and original widths of grass-covered walkways while ensuring that rain-water will be channeled to extensions of the underground drain system laid out before the Civil war. Primrose, Violet and another completed terrace provide new burial sites soon to be placed on offer. It took a lot of hard work, much of which is illustrated in the montage.

Crocus way whose southern run deteriorated to an almost impassable state, obstructed with rubble

from a partially collapsed stone wall and littered with round stone cobbles has been totally reconstructed. After removing all the impediments our staff installed a closed flume to carry runoff from three tiers of eroded paths to central drains. Next, specialists in stone wall masonry tore the failing wall down to its foundation, reshaped and reset hundreds of very heavy components and capped it with flat surface stone salvaged from Jasmine path. Once Lorton Stone Company's crew had precisely dressed the top and edge of their work, our men

returned to lay a one-foot diameter pipeline adjacent to the new wall. That pipe now connects to the flume serving Primrose and Violet terraces' cut stone gutters and receives water from an old cobbled swale further up Crocus path. Finally, Metropolitan Paving Company placed six inches of concrete over the new "plumbing" to provide a sturdy ramp wide and strong enough to support all of our maintenance equipment. The new Crocus ramp was used to haul up fill, loam, and sod and to

haul away both salvaged and waste material.

Jasmine Path presented a different set of challenges. Running down from the summit of North Hill to Circular Avenue it too required significant rebuilding. All of Jasmine above the gnarled old tree was covered in misaligned broken stone, occasional granite steps, thin broken concrete or,

*We hope you will visit  
newly completed work  
in coming weeks as the  
natural beauty of  
Oak Hill reaches its  
Springtime peak.*



patches or deteriorated asphalt; all to be replaced by extended grassed terraces. The tree, surface rooted, had jacked up and displaced paths, cobbled swales and monuments for a radius of 20 feet or more around its trunk. A formal set of steps and a landing to guide visitors southward toward the Fearson Family Mausoleum seemed desirable. We found it necessary to narrow the new steps from 4 feet to 3 to avoid cutting major roots and to raise the landing about 18" so that a tangled mass of roots could be crossed safely and without damage. The final design was accomplished by Ricardo Haraujo. Rico and his assistant Ernesto Torres are shown in the photo crafting the cobble landing while landscaping workers place and compact fill and topsoil prior to sodding what was once such an unsightly area. Rico's choice to include cast iron furniture, a Victorian bench and urn, make Jasmine Landing a very pleasant place to pause and reflect.

The bottom row of the montage photos particularly pleases me. The first one shows Rico alone contemplating that chaotic landscape of roots, erosion, tilted monuments, boulders and that all need to be set right. His stance indicates that the new design is being thoughtfully worked out by a talented mason. The next image is of pride in seeing it becoming a reality—a joy shared by Ernesto. The last three photos show teamwork with contract landscapers to raise the wall between the Smith and Fearson mausoleums and thus facilitate placing a protective cover over the cave type burial vaults which extend into the hillside.

Planning has been completed for the restoration of the remaining paths in this tranquil early section of North Hill. We expect work to begin in the fall and to have additional grass cover burial

sites available a few months thereafter. We are also considering the construction of additional terrace niches and will have plans ready when the trend towards cremation indicates their need. We hope you will visit newly completed work in coming weeks as the natural beauty of Oak Hill reaches its Springtime peak.



*The montage of  
photographs on pages  
8 and 9 feature a broad  
view of the hillside  
with Western Avenue  
passing down its  
southern border.*



North Hill Burial Grounds



Primrose Terrace



Reimagined & Recontoured



Violet Terrace



Crocus Way



Jasmine Path





## News from the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation

by Elizabeth Mizell

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### Connecting with Oak Hill

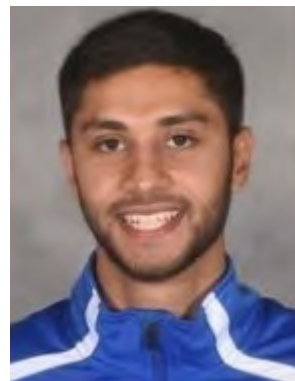
In this digital age, and as the Cemetery and its Foundation move into the mobile era, we desire to 'connect' with all of you. A continuation from my fall report, we are working with Two Penguins to create a new website. The new website will enhance our visibility and help grow our connections with our community. Once the website is launched, you will have multiple ways to connect with us. We want you to, "follow us" on Facebook, "like us" on Twitter, "follow us" on Instagram and certainly subscribe to our electronic newsletter. YOU are a key component to our online presence. In addition to our new website, we will also have an updated general brochure. This updated brochure was needed for many purposes --- distribution to our visitors, community events, displayed in locations where potential beneficiaries might pick one up, given to volunteers, and to be

included in packages mailed to prospective donors. Connecting with Oak Hill online will only take a few minutes and will help drive our mission. Once our new website is launched, we encourage all of you to get involved with us virtually! We anticipate our launch will be later this spring. In the meantime, if you would like to receive our newsletter virtually, please send us an email to [info@oakhillcemeterydc.org](mailto:info@oakhillcemeterydc.org), and say "subscribe to newsletter" in the subject line.

### Interning at the Cemetery

Oak Hill Cemetery hired its first intern in February. Marzuq Khan is from Santa Clara, California. He is a student at American University and currently working towards his Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration, with a focus on Management and Information

Systems & Technology. After graduation, he intends to pursue a Master's of Science degree in Analytics. He is set to graduate, December 2019.



At little about Marzuq. He was a proud member of the American University Men's Swimming and Diving Team for two years, where he competed in the Patriot League. His best stroke was the backstroke and his best event was the 200 backstroke. After his second year at American University he studied abroad in Hong Kong. He spent roughly four months continuing his education and explored many historical sites, as well as





## OHC Historic Preservation Foundation Strategic Planning Update

*As part of our ongoing efforts to continually improve Oak Hill Cemetery for families, relatives, visitors and the local community, the Board of Directors of the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation recently drafted its first five-year Strategic Plan. Key goals for the calendar years 2018-2022 include:*

- 1. Advance historic preservation and restoration of Oak Hill Cemetery.*
- 2. Advance Oak Hill Cemetery grounds beautification.*
- 3. Increase outreach to and engagement with the community to raise general awareness of Oak Hill Cemetery.*
- 4. Maintain strong financial stewardship to provide support for Oak Hill Cemetery now and in the future.*

*We welcome your input on the draft Strategic Plan. The plan will be available for your review with the launch of our new website in May. Please review it at: [www.oakhillcemeterydc.org](http://www.oakhillcemeterydc.org). Copies are also available to review at the Oak Hill Cemetery office during normal operating hours.*

other countries like Macau and Taiwan. Upon his return, Marzuq began working in our development department as our development intern. He has been a valuable asset to our team for the last four months. He continues to assist us with our data project. One of his many tasks is to prepare our data for migration into our new donor management system, Little Green Light (discussed in our fall newsletter). His knowledge of information systems and technology have contributed significantly to the success of this project. His last day with us will be May 17.

## Grants Reporting

A Special Projects Grant Application to the National Society of the Daughters of American Revolution (NSDAR) was submitted December 31, 2017. On April 25, we learned that we were awarded the grant for Monument Restoration, specifically for the Restoration of Five Memorial Stones in the William Tyler Page Family Lot, including a large marble "Tribute Stone" for William Tyler Page which was engraved and erected by the NSDAR on October 12, 1955. William Tyler Page, author of The American's Creed, and his family are interred at lot 635 east. The American's Creed is read at the beginning of every NSDAR meeting across the country. We are thrilled to have the NSDAR's support again in 2018!



## Annual Fund Program to Launch in 2018

*The Oak Hill Cemetery Boards and staff are nearing completion on a formal Annual Fund program that will offer ways to recognize and thank our generous supporters. The program will outline a variety of benefits offered to donors based on their level of giving. We look forward to sharing more information about this program with you in the coming months – please check the Oak Hill Cemetery website ([www.oakhillcemeterydc.org](http://www.oakhillcemeterydc.org)) periodically for more information as well!*



## “Lincoln in the Bardo” - a Review featuring Samuel “Trip” Slaymaker III

The novel by George Saunders has stirred a lot of interest in the Oak Hill Cemetery. The book is on the best-seller list and was the 2017 Mann Booker Prize winner. Samuel “Trip” Slaymaker, a journalist from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, presented his view on “Lincoln in the Bardo” on Sunday, April 29th, 2018 during an event hosted by the Oak Hill Cemetery Preservation Foundation. Slaymaker shared what makes this book special and stand apart:

- Structure: Historical grounding, anchor of real quotes and “real” history with emphasis on the abstraction of “truth” coupled with the specificity of the Bardo’s weirdness.

- Abstract thought writing, a unique stream of consciousness technique from Saunders that shows a historical figure (Lincoln) in an ahistorical, universal, timeless light-- that of a grieving father.

- Social Allegory- the circumstances of the Bardo and the philosophy of life, in general, are called into question: destiny, death, love, and existence are discussed, creating a vast cosmic backdrop to the civil war, slavery and human suffering.

He went on to discuss the structure and meaning of the Bardo and all characters who die are defined in the Bardo by their stories that



*Trip Slaymaker in Renwick Chapel*

they tell. Slaymaker makes a distinction that those ghosts are:

- Irrevocably dead
- In denial
- Able to move on, should they choose
- Attached to the world of the living by choice—and describing Tibetan Buddhism-- the Bardo is a state between death and rebirth- a catch-all place where souls are confronted by visions of their lives, mistakes, etc. Dante’s Inferno- punishment and Judeo—Christian structure, as in concepts parallel to-- “angels” “God” “Heaven” and “Hell” are implied.

Slaymaker’s understanding of the book, the literary tools used by the author, and overall essence of the story made for a lively closing





*TripSlaymaker with Preservation Foundation George Hill*

discussion with the audience. The event was held in the Historic Renwick Chapel and was well attended, brilliant and enjoyed by all. Afterward, there was a tour to the 19th Century Carroll Mausoleum in our North Hill Section overlooking Rock Creek where William Wallace “Willie” Lincoln was interred. The tour was conducted by Clift Seferlis, a Historic Preservation Foundation board member.

*He discussed  
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meaning of the Bardo  
and all characters who  
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Bardo by their stories  
that they tell.*



*Group visiting Carroll Mausoleum*





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October 21, 2017 through April 30, 2018

*We thank all our contributors for their support.*

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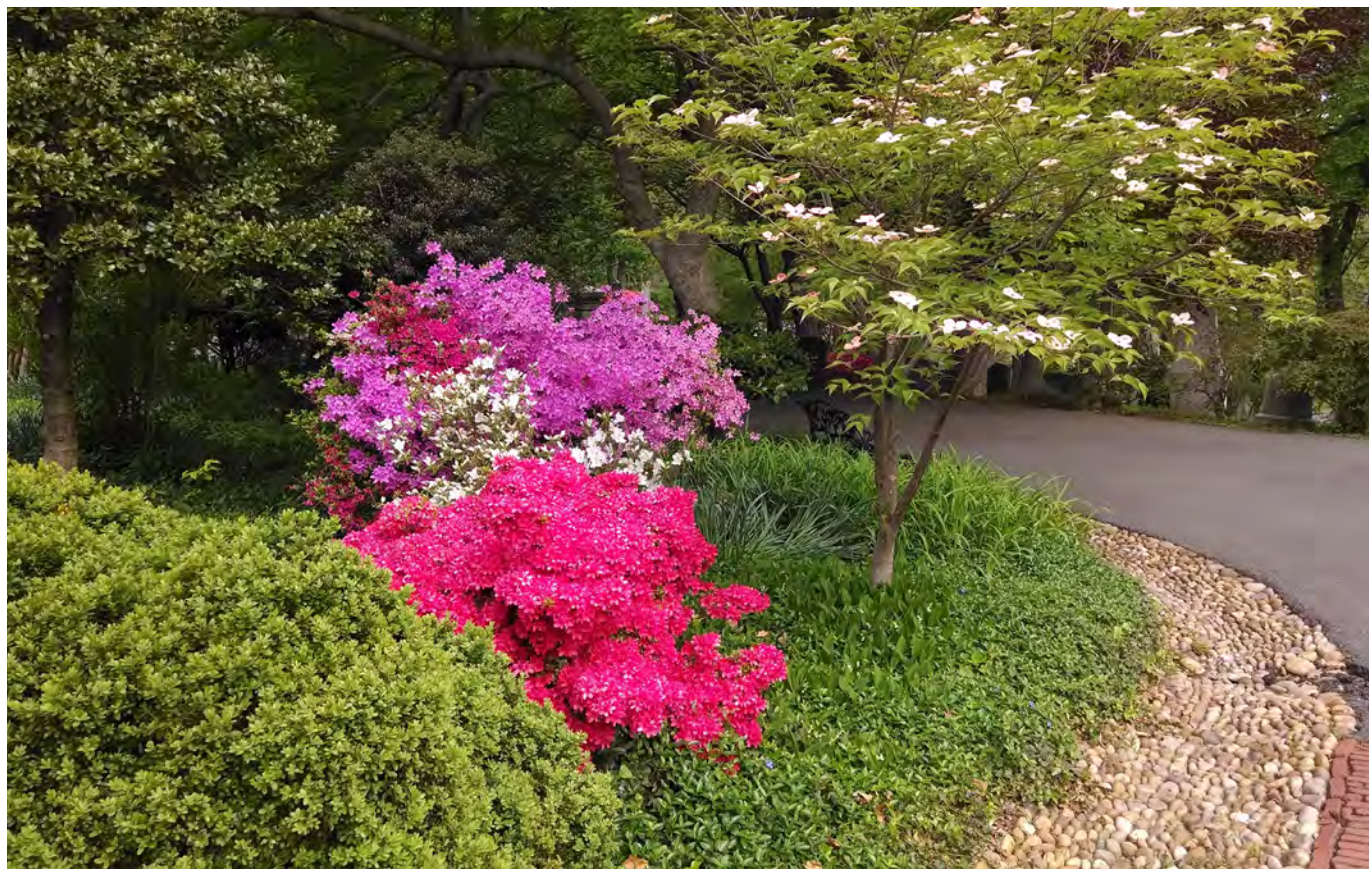
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