



AUTUMN 2008

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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1450 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Tree Lighting Continues a Long Tradition on the Ellipse

The lighting of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse is a Washington tradition during the holiday season. After the annual lighting in early December through January 1, 2009, visitors will have a one-of-a-kind opportunity to enjoy the National Christmas tree, smaller trees representing all fifty states, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories, an installation of model trains and the warmth of the Yule Log. Additionally, on evenings through December 23, visitors will be treated to sounds of the holidays as musical groups from across the region perform on the outdoor stage in the Ellipse area. The site will be open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

The tradition of a tree lighting ceremony in the nation's capital began in 1913, when 20,000 onlookers witnessed the lighting of the first Washington Community Christmas tree on the East Plaza of the Capitol. A decade later, on Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit the first National Christmas tree on the Ellipse, a sixty foot evergreen from his home state of Vermont. Today's National Christmas Tree was transplanted from Pennsylvania in 1978. The live 41-foot 9 inch Colorado blue spruce grows on the Ellipse, just south of the White House.

The 2008 Opening Night Ceremony will take place Thursday, December 4 at 5:00 p.m. The National Park Service will distribute free Lighting of the National Christmas Tree Opening Ceremony tickets to the public at the Ellipse Visitor Pavilion at the southeast corner of 15th and E Street, NW on Saturday, November 1 at 8:00 a.m. A maximum of four tickets will be issued per person. For additional information call (202)208-1631.



On Exhibit: Presidential Inaugurations

The history of Presidential Inaugurations for more than 200 years can be revisited in this exhibit on display from November 4 through January 24, 2009 at the White House Visitor Center. Since 1801, a Presidential Inauguration has been held in Washington, D.C., the culmination of our electoral process. Some of these marked a change of president and even a change of the political party in power, while others were second inaugurations for incumbent presidents.

Inauguration Day was officially held on March 4 through 1933. The four months between an election and an inauguration proved to be too long, and the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1933, officially changed Inauguration Day to January 20. The inauguration site has not been constant. Early presidents were sworn into office inside the Capitol. Today, a platform and stands are erected on the west side of the Capitol. The Inaugural Parade, which began spontaneously as President Thomas Jefferson returned to the White House in 1805, has developed into a formal, often lengthy procession reviewed by the President and his family and guests from a stand on the north side of the White House.

Advances in technology have contributed to the public's awareness of the Inaugurations of their Presidents. The 1857 Inauguration of President James Buchanan is the earliest to have been photographed. In 2005, the Inaugural ceremony was beamed to hundreds of countries around the globe on television and the internet.



President Calvin Coolidge reviews the troops from a stand erected on the north side of the White House for his 1923 Inaugural Parade. Photo: Library of Congress.

You Can Become a "Very Important Person" in Our Parks

Volunteering is an American tradition that has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations and individuals across the country. At President's Park and across the nation, volunteers play a vital role in support of the National Park Service's mission. There are many ways volunteers can help the National Park Service achieve its goals, including organizing and cataloging photo files and library inventories, working on maintenance projects, staffing the visitor information desk, helping with tour operations, or presenting interpretive programs. Our Volunteers-In-Parks Program (VIP) has grown over the years to reflect the dedication of people to our national parks. More than 360 National Park Service areas use VIPs, ranging in age from young children to senior citizens. They come from all over the United States and the world, bringing different backgrounds, skills, and talents that enrich our park programs.

The National Park Service provides current information about the VIP program and volunteer opportunities all across the National Park System at www.nps.gov/volunteer. An electronic application is provided so you can apply right on the Web! All submitted applications will be e-mailed directly to the VIP coordinator at your Park of choice. President's Park volunteer opportunities include:

Information Specialist – Provide current information to visitors at the White House Visitor Center and President's Park.

Interpreter – Give guided talks and walks around the many statues and memorials in President's Park.

Special Events – Assist with seasonal Garden Tours, the annual Lighting of the National Christmas Tree, Easter Egg Roll, and more.

Education Program Aide – Assist with educational presentations for school children and seniors.

For more information about the President's Park Volunteer Program, please call (202) 208-1631 ext. 228.

SPECIAL FAMILY ACTIVITIES

★ THIRD ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL

On **October 18**, special activities and events will take place on the Ellipse from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This event will coincide with the first day of the White House Fall Garden Tours. Join us for games, participate in one of several “ghoulish” readings and use your thespian talents to portray characters from our favorite books of the season! Take a haunted hike and complete scavenger hunts for prizes!

★ SPIRITS FROM THE PAST

Come one, come all! Halloween is not until the end of October, but we’d like you to join us on **Saturday, October 18** at 5:00 p.m. for our special presentation, “Lafayette Park: Spirits from the Past.” You will meet some of the “spirits” of the residents and politicians who contributed to the 19th and 20th century social scene around Lafayette Park. Costumed interpreters will travel through the past 200 years of history in the park just north of the White House. The one hour free program is available to everyone. The program will begin at the White House Visitor Center. *Reservations are not required.*



★ GARDEN TOURS SHOWCASE HISTORY

Each fall, visitors receive a special opportunity to visit the grounds surrounding the White House, including the Rose Garden located right outside the West Wing, the Jacqueline Kennedy Gardens located outside the East Wing, and the Children’s Garden, created by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson in 1969. The grounds will be open on **Saturday, October 18** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and **Sunday, October 19** from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m. Free same day timed tickets can be obtained at the Ellipse Visitor Center at 15th and E Streets, NW beginning at 8:00 a.m. each day. *For additional information, call (202) 208-1631 or visit us on the internet at <http://nps.gov/whho>.*



★ YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Tuesday, November 4 is also Election Day in the White House Visitor Center! Children of all ages can join us all day and vote for their favorite presidents. Here’s your chance to relive history!

★ NOVEMBER KIDS CORNER

On **Tuesday, November 11** between 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., the Visitor Center will host a crafts event to celebrate Veteran’s Day, as well as Thanksgiving. Activities will be available for children of all ages to honor America’s veterans, including those memorialized in President’s Park. *No reservations required.*

★ TURKEY TALK!

It’s time for the feast and another voting opportunity for all Visitor Center guests! Every year, prior to the Thanksgiving holiday, the President “pardons” the national turkey! Beginning **Thursday, November 20**, you can cast a vote to suggest names for the White House turkey. See if the White House picks your name. Free ballots!

★ HOLIDAY CRAFTS – PAST AND PRESENT

Beginning **Friday, December 5** through **December 23**, journey in time through the past 200 years as we create crafts colonial children made to celebrate the holidays. Stud cloves into oranges, roll a candle, create a holiday card, mix mulling spices, blend herbs for holiday sachets, and design an ornament from recycled materials. *Tuesdays through Fridays, 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. Call the Visitor Center in December for the daily activity schedule.*

★ DECK THE HALLS!

A special program on plants used to make a holiday cookie will be presented and yes, you’ll be able to decorate a gingerbread cookie just like presidential children have done through the years! This free ranger-led program will provoke its participants to employ their senses and learn more about the plant parts from which the cookie ingredients are derived. Where do sugar, flour, cloves and ginger come from? Can you guess what President Lincoln’s favorite cookie was? This program will be available hourly between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on **Saturdays, December 6 and 20**. Each session is limited to 25 children. *Registration is required at the Information Desk on the day of the event.*

DAILY PROGRAMS AT PRESIDENT’S PARK

Interpretive programs are presented by Park Rangers daily at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. These programs, both indoors and out in the Park, vary in length from twenty minutes to one hour. More detailed descriptions are available at the White House Visitor Center Information Desk – the starting point for all daily programs.

★ WALKS THROUGH THE PARK

“A Winter Wonderland” – How do the changing seasons affect the animals, plants and trees in President’s Park?

“Monument Walk North” – Join a Park Ranger and walk through Sherman and Lafayette Parks to explore the history of our American tradition of creating monuments and memorials to our heroes and ideals.

“The Long and Winding Road” – Did you know that in 1919 there were only about 1,000 miles of paved highway in the United States? Hear the story of the two mile long army convoy that attempted to cross the country that year..

“A Walk Around President’s Park” – Discover some fascinating facts about this parcel of federal parkland surrounding the gates of the White House.

“December Walk” – Join a Park Ranger and walk through the Ellipse site of the National Christmas Tree Lighting. *(December only)*

★ THE NEIGHBORHOOD

“Washington’s Washington” – Land from Virginia and Maryland created a new capital city for the United States. Join a Park Ranger’s discussion of Washington, the man and Washington, the city

“The Big Red One” – Explore the history of the First Division, a celebrated group of soldiers and their valor displayed during wartime.

“The Commonwealth of Virginia” – More presidents were born in Virginia than any other state in the union. Can you name all eight of these men?

★ PULL UP A SEAT

A video on the holiday theme and decorations within the White House will be shown daily from mid-December until December 31 in the Visitor Center.

★ 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

“The West Wing” – It’s an election year. Our 44th president will take office in January. He will walk to work in the Oval Office located in the West Wing. What will he find?

“The Call in the Middle of the Night” – After a busy day filled with presidential duties you are asleep. That special phone rings. Who is on the other end of the line and what could be happening?

“A Funny Thing Happened on the Road to the White House” – Starting a new job is always rough. Hear a Park Ranger’s discussion on some interesting stories concerning “getting acquainted” with the Oval Office.

“Tinsel and Tact in the White House” – How do you decorate a 132 room mansion when visitors flow through it all the time?



White House Historical Association

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

★ View the Center’s **Annual Holiday Exhibit**, which includes a huge Christmas tree, as well as glimpses of the White House decorations. *The White House Visitor Center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.*

★ Catch the holiday spirit with “**Beacon of Hope**,” a special holiday Power Point interpretive program highlighting the history of the National Christmas Tree. This half hour program will be conducted by Peggy Eisenhauer, a volunteer at President’s Park. *The program will take place in the Visitor Center at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Mondays, December 1, 8 and 15 and at 11:00 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturdays, December 6 and 20. No reservations required.*

 **Interpretive Program**

 **Walking Tour**

 **Video Presentation**

 **Special Event**



EXPERIENCE
Your AMERICA

Programs may change due to reassignment of rangers to other duties that serve the National Park Service. Every effort is made to maintain the schedule as printed. Please contact the Visitor Center at (202) 208-1631 to confirm programs and dates. The Center is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you wish to be added to our mailing list, e-mail us at whho_presidents_park@nps.gov.

This calendar is sponsored by the National Park Service and the White House Historical Association.