



Independence: The Best Park in History

President-Elect Obama Visits Independence

Independence National Historical Park Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod and Deputy Superintendent Darla Sidles were honored to join Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell in welcoming President-Elect Obama, Vice-President Elect Biden, and the National Governor's Association to Independence National Historical Park on December 2, 2008.



The nation's governors gather in Congress Hall



Superintendent MacLeod with Governor Rendell

The meeting of the National Governor's Association was held in Congress Hall on Independence Square. The House of Representatives and the Senate met in Congress Hall when Philadelphia served as the capital of the United States, from 1790 to 1800. The building was also the place where, in 1797, George Washington stepped down as our nation's first President and John Adams was inaugurated. That was a historic peaceful transfer of power in a time when power around the world was transferred only through blood lines or blood loss.

President-Elect Obama used the occasion to encourage the gathered governors to work together to help spur an economic recovery and support the nation during the current economic crisis. Following the meeting, which was closed to public, press, and park officials, Governor Rendell hosted a press conference with his fellow governors to answer questions about the nation's economy and their ability to work with the new administration.



Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Congressman Chaka Fattah joined the governors

This was Barack Obama's fourth visit to Independence NHP. Senator Obama delivered his famous speech on race relations in this country in Independence National Historical Park, at the National Constitution Center, on March 18, 2008. That speech is now available for public viewing as part of the National Constitution Center's special exhibit, Headed to the White House. Senator Obama also visited the park to participate in a debate with Hillary Clinton at the National Constitution Center and to speak at a rally in his support during his campaign.



Superintendent MacLeod with Virginia Governor Tim Kaine

Independence Hall and Congress Hall are sometimes used as venues for meetings for traditionally associated groups such as the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration or the Daughters of the American Revolution. In January, 2007, the United Kingdom's Prince Charles met with Governor Rendell and then-Mayor John Street in Independence Hall.

President's House Update

The City of Philadelphia, the Friends of Independence, and Independence National Historical Park are working together to make the proposed commemoration at the site of the President's House a reality.

The story of the President's House, at 6th and Market Streets, is a story of many themes: the house and the people who lived and worked there; the Executive Branch of the United States Government; the system and methods of enslavement; African-American Philadelphia; the move to freedom; and, history lost and found.

The commemoration, designed by the Kelly/Maeillo design team, will address each of these themes in creative, educational ways. A major revision in the earlier proposal for the site will be to include a vitrine through which visitors will be able to view the original archeological remains of the house, including George Washington's bow window and the underground tunnel that connected the house to the kitchen.

The City of Philadelphia, working with the Friends of Independence, has launched a major fundraising campaign to raise the remaining funds required to complete the commemoration, along with an endowment for its continued operation and maintenance. Contributions in support of this fund may be made payable to the Friends of Independence -- the President's House. Donations can be mailed to Mayor Michael Nutter, Attn Grants and Foundation Office, City Hall Room 225, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Construction will begin in 2009. The site is slated for completion in Fall 2010.



Celebrating the Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe

Considered to be the creator of the modern detective story as well as the master of the horror story genre, Edgar Allan Poe spent some of his most creative and prolific years in Philadelphia. The Edgar Allan Poe National Historical Site (EDAL) at 7th and Spring Garden Streets tells the story of Poe's life and works while in Philadelphia.



Where better to celebrate Halloween than at the home of the master of the horror tale? Thanks to the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, EDAL was pleased to welcome Elvira, "Mistress of the Dark" to join Edgar Allan Poe at the Poe House on October 31, 2008. Together, Elvira and Poe, played by NPS interpreter Helen McKenna-Uff, performed a reading of *The Raven* to a costumed audience of several hundred Poe fans.

In honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe, which will fall on January 19, 2009, the National Park Service is creating new and exciting exhibits at the Poe House. In order to install these exhibits, the house will be closed to the public from December 1, 2008 - January 17, 2009. Join us on January 17, 2009, as we re-open the Poe House and unveil the new exhibits celebrating the incredible life and literary legacy of this great American poet and author.

Events will be scheduled throughout 2009 to celebrate Poe's life and accomplishments, including:

January 10, the Free Library of Philadelphia Central Branch, will feature internationally renowned Poe actor David Keltz. Also appearing at the library that day will be Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff as Poe's fiancée Helen Whitman.

Friday, January 16, 6:00 to 8:00 PM -- The Official Friends of Poe bicentennial birthday party! Festivities will take place at the German Society, 7th and Spring Garden Streets, across the street from Poe. The event will include a wine-tasting of vintages mentioned in Poe's works and a preview of the new exhibits. For tickets and reservations, please contact the Friends of Poe at 215-597-7919 or reservations@friendsofindependence.org.

Saturday, January 17, 9:00 - 5:00 -- Official public opening for new Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site exhibits. Daniel Hoffman, poet and Poe scholar, will offer a talk at 2:00 pm on Poe's influence on women writers like Joyce Carol Oates.

Saturday, March 28, 2:00 PM -- 19th century literature expert, David Reynolds, author of *Beneath the American Renaissance* and **George Lippard, Prophet of Protest** and professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, will discuss "Poe in his Times" and sign copies of his new book *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*.

INDE Recognizes Volunteer Bill Ubil

On October 9, 2008, staff at Independence NHP celebrated the retirement of longtime Interpretation and Visitor Services (I&VS) volunteer Bill Ubill with a ceremony at the Liberty Bell Center. Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod hosted the event, which included a congratulatory letter from Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter.

During his time at Independence NHP, Bill greeted thousands of visitors and donated over 5000 hours of his time. Bill had already been awarded the Secretarial Volunteer Service Award (for 3,000 volunteer hours) and Presidential Volunteer Service Awards (for 4,000 volunteer hours), and with his 5,000 hours of volunteer service surpassed all Departmental volunteer award levels! Bill and his wife were joined at the ceremony by current and former members of the Independence staff



I&VS Staff and Volunteers with Bill Ubil



Bill with I&VS Volunteer Coordinators Jay Hinesly, Palmer Forbes and Bill Caughlin

and volunteers, Northeast Regional Office staff, and park partners.

INDE relies on its dedicated crew of volunteers, who help the park in all divisions. Volunteers in I&VS greet visitors and offer tours of historic buildings around the park. Volunteers in the division of Cultural Resource Management help catalogue archeological artifacts in the Independence Living History Center, research the history of the park and its buildings, and work with museum artifacts. Volunteers in the Maintenance Division help maintain and improve gardens throughout the park, including Washington Square, the Edgar Allan Poe House, and the Rose Garden.

Anyone interested in volunteering with the park can contact VIP Coordinator Beverly Morris at 215-597-1293 for more information.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

<http://www.nps.gov/inde>

Independence National Historical Park

143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

National Park Service
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Staffing Changes at INDE

INDE offers best wishes to staff moving on and welcomes some new faces to the park!



James W. Mueller, Chief Historian at Independence National Historical Park, will retire on January 4, 2009 after 30 years of federal service. Since joining the NPS in 1980, Jim has worked for the Midwest Archeology Center in the Rocky Mountain Region and for the Denver Service Center's Applied Archeology Center in Silver Spring, MD.

INDE's Division of Resource and Visitor Protection has a new Chief of Operations. Paula Risell joined the INDE team on November 9, after having worked for the past four years at Valley Forge as its Chief of Operations within the law enforcement division. Paula has been with the National Park Service since 1992, and brings with her a wealth of experience from the fields of not only law enforcement but also interpretation and telecommunications.





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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Upcoming Events

On **January 20, 2009**, experience the inauguration of President Barack Obama on the nation's best Mall -- Independence Mall! From **noon - 2 pm**, the Presidential Inauguration will be broadcast live from a large screen on Independence Mall, outside the Independence Visitor Center. The Visitor Center and the National Constitution Center will have food and indoor activities to keep you warm!

For this **very special occasion**, INDE invites you to join actors of the American Historical Theater for a **re-enactment** of the first peaceful transfer of power between Presidents Washington and Adams in **Congress Hall**, the very

place where Adams was inaugurated on March 4, 1797. This free event will be held at **10 am and 3 pm**. Visitors may choose to contribute to the donation box at the entrance.



On Saturday, February 7, 2009, at noon, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial will re-open with new exhibits featuring original Kosciuszko artifacts on temporary loan from six major museums in Poland, being coordinated through the Polish government and US State Department.

This December, INDE will implement the final stages of the new security process. Visitors to INDE this winter will see new bollards and chains in place of the old bicycle barricades.



Celebrate the Bicentennial of Edgar Allan Poe. The Official Friends of Poe birthday party will be held on **Friday, January 16, from 6 - 8 pm**.

There will be a wine tasting and previews of the new exhibits. Tickets are \$10 for Friends' members, \$15 for non-members. Call 215-597-7919 for reservations and more information.