

Friends of Poe Mission Statement

The mission of the Friends of Poe (an Affiliate of the Friends of INHP) is to support the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in preserving and protecting the only surviving home of Edgar Allan Poe in Philadelphia and to educate the public about his life and legacy.

To join Friends of Poe, please fill out and return this form with credit card payment information or a check made payable to "Friends of Independence Park." In the memo section of the check, write "Poe."

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card: Visa MasterCard

Account # _____ Exp. _____

Signature (as it appears on card)

Individual \$35

Household \$50

Raven \$75

Black Cat \$100

Gold Bug \$200

Comments/requests: _____

Please return to Friends of Independence Park - Friends of Poe, 143 South Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Philadelphia, PA 19106-2778

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National Historical Park

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Friends of Poe

**Friends of
Independence**
National Historical Park

Newsletter Number 2

Winter 2006-2007

An Eventful Year

2006 proved to be another fun, productive and creative year for the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. We'd like to take some time to review some of the highlights.

Exploring "Tell-Tale Heart"

In April, Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" was examined through legal, psychological and historical lenses. Poe's tale was recited by Grover Silcox. Superior Court Judge Seamus McCaffrey talked about the history of the insanity defense and, as a former Philadelphia Homicide Detective, he provided insight into the handling of the confessor in the story. Dr. Elio Frattaroli provided the psychological perspective. Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff provided a literary history. The event was held at the Independence Visitor Center theater before an appreciative audience.

National Park Week and Poetry Month

In honor of National Park Week and Poetry Month, on Saturday, April 29, 2006, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site presented "An afternoon with Edgar Allan Poe and Friends". The event was held at the Independence Visitor Center.

Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff performed her one-woman play "Remembering Poe", based on the writings of Poe's fiancée, Helen Whitman. Act Three, McKenna-Uff

performed, as Poe, "The Raven" and a few other poems.

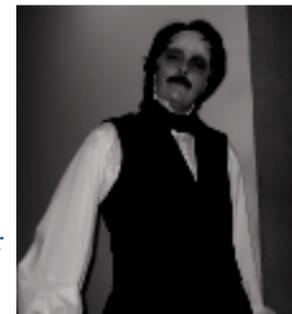
Park Rangers and musicians Andrew McDougall, Ted Johnson, Bill Caughlan and Steve Medeiros performed three of Poe's poems set to music: "Murders in the Rue Morgue" by Iron Maiden; "The Raven" by Glass Prism; and "A Dream", an original composition by Rangers Medeiros and McDougall.



Park Rangers (and musicians) Andrew McDougall, Ted Johnson, Bill Caughlan, and Steve Medeiros take a bow, while Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff, as Poe, looks on.

October Candlelight Tour

On the evening of Thursday, October 26, Park Rangers Chris Elbich, Bill Caughlan and Mike Jolly led visitors on candlelight tours of Poe's home. Refreshments and many other details were handled by



Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff performs as Poe at the October Candlelight Tour.

much appreciated volunteers Joyce Tew, Dawn Bruno, and Joanne Reider, from McCormick Taylor, Inc. Interpretive Specialist Mary Jenkins and site supervisor Cherie Butler were on hand to ensure smooth operations.

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Friends of Poe – 2007 Calendar of Events

January 2007 – Saturday and Sunday, January 20-21, 2007, 3:30-4:30 PM: Celebrate the 198th Birthday of Edgar Allan Poe by joining a special guided tour of Poe's house lit by candlelight. The tour focuses on the famous stories Poe wrote in Philadelphia, such as "The Gold Bug", "The Black Cat" and "The Tell Tale Heart". Before the tour, listen to his poems in the reading room or view a special animated version of "The Raven". Free, but reservations suggested.

March 2007 – Friday, March 23, 2007 at 2:00 PM: A trip to the Rare Book Department of the Free Library at 1901 Vine Street to view the Poe Collection. We are working with Jim Dewalt, the new head of the Rare Book Department, in arranging this Friends of Poe member's only tour. Reservations are required and limited to 15 people.

April 2007 – Sunday, April 29, 2007, 2:00-3:00 PM: Follow in Poe's footsteps as you join Park Ranger Steve Medeiros on a walking tour of Poe and Publishing in 1840s Philadelphia. The tour begins at the Merchant's Exchange, 143 South 3rd Street, a building Poe knew well since it housed a Post Office. Tour limited to 30 people; free, but reservations are suggested.

June 2007 – Saturday, June 9, 2007, 11:00-12:30: A special tour of the Walt Whitman House in Camden. Site Manger Leo Blake is arranging a tour of the house of fellow poet and Poe admirer Whitman. While the house is modest like Poe's, it has retained many furnishings and papers used by Whitman. This is a Friends of Poe member's only tour. Reservations are required and limited to 20 people. Free.

July 2007 – Thursday, July 12, 2007, 4:00-6:00 PM: "A Summer Evening in Poe's Philadelphia." We will enjoy a musical evening in the garden and learn about the cultural scene that Poe enjoyed in 1840s Philadelphia. Famous band leader and African American musician Francis Johnson's music will be featured. Poe attended his concerts and Mr. Johnson died the day Poe moved to New York. Free; no reservations are required. Bring your friends and a picnic supper - we have a large yard.

Summer 2007 – Noted author Matthew Pearl plans a book signing of the new paperback edition of his best seller, *The Poe Shadow*. We will let you know as soon as we have a confirmation from the author.

October 2007 – Thursday, October 25, 2007: Evening candlelight tours of the Poe House featuring Poe and his tales of Horror! This sellout event has become a highlight of the season. Tours leave at 6:00, 6:30 and 7:00 PM. \$10.00 per person, but free for members of the Friends of Poe. Reservations are required.

January 2008 – Saturday, January 19, 2008: Celebrate Edgar Allan Poe's 199th birthday on the actual anniversary day! We will be featuring recordings by various famous performers of Poe's poems and stories. At 3:30 in the winter dusk, tour the house by candlelight. Free, but reservations suggested.

We are planning for a wonderful celebration of Poe's Bicentennial in 2009.

For reservations or information about all Friends of Poe events, please call 215-597-8780, or visit our website: www.nps.gov/inde.

Visit the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site on the web at www.nps.gov/edal.



Photo of Poe House by Helen Schwarz

An Eventful Year

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Poe, Philadelphia and the Detective Story

On November 18, 2006, Dr. Richard Fusco, professor of English at St. Joseph's University, gave a wonderful talk called "The Philadelphia Origins of the Detective Story". In this talk, Fusco explained how events in Poe's personal life, while living in Philadelphia, are reflected in Poe's creation of the modern detective story.

Look at our Calendar of Events on page 2 for news on what we have planned for 2007!

Please Join Us As A Member!

Friends of Poe Annual Membership Categories

Individual

(basic FINHP membership) \$35
(includes the latest Park news via newsletters, special mailings and emails, plus invites to Friends' educational programs with a special membership rate for one)

Household

(household FINHP membership) \$50
(includes individual benefits above, for two, plus a special summer evening tour of Independence Park - dates TBA)

Raven

(household plus a book of Poe's Poems) \$75

Black Cat

(above benefits plus a book of Short Stories) \$100

Gold Bug

(above plus a special Poe house tour for up to 15) \$200
(tour to be given at a mutually convenient time)

Death of Poe Scholar Major William Hecker

*On January 5, 2006, Major William Hecker III was killed in Iraq by a roadside bomb, along with four other Army officers in their Humvee. Some Friends of Poe may remember that Hecker gave a talk in 2003 about Poe's military career. Like Poe, Hecker attended West Point and was an artilleryman. As an Assistant Professor of English at West Point and a literary critic, Hecker edited a facsimile publication of Poe's Poems (1831) and presented his research in his book *Private Perry and Mister Poe* (LSU Press).*



Prior to Hecker's work, little was known about Poe's military career, often regarded as a wrong turn on the road to becoming a professional writer. While most biographers failed to properly define Poe's role in the army, Hecker showed that Poe was not a mere clerk. Hecker paints Poe as an artilleryman (artificer), who employed his prodigious talent for calculation in creating ordnance that would detonate with accuracy, something that required great mathematical skill and discipline. Hecker brilliantly connected Poe's military experience to Poe's aesthetic of beauty.

With "aesthetic bombs", Poe sent his readers into rapturous journeys transcending life. Bill, the artilleryman critic, destroyed our comfortable acceptance of Poe's military career as a brief, inconsequential detour in a life of literary toil.

We wonder where Hecker's research would have taken him next if he were still alive. A brilliant light in Poe scholarship has been sadly extinguished.

*Helen McKenna-Uff
Park Ranger*