

METRO

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2011

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84, 9 a.m. 35, noon 36, 5 p.m. 35, 9 p.m.

Obituaries Lawyer Stephen N. Shulman, 77, helped negotiate a plea that became a turning point in the Watergate scandal. **B5**

POSTLOCAL.COM

Eye on the storm

The Capital Weather Gang has the latest on the winter storm watch, with accumulation projections and timing.

MARYLAND

'Like a hurricane hit'

While people wondered at the damage caused by a water main break, officials told thousands in Prince George's County to continue boiling water. **B4**



MARYLAND

Slots plus blackjack?

A bill being drafted in the General Assembly would call for a referendum on adding table games to the state's casino sites. It would also add another location: Rosecroft Raceway. **B4**

Historic urns bound for return to Arlington

BY CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT

The owner of a pair of towering decorative urns that were originally part of Arlington National Cemetery's Memorial Amphitheater told Army officials Tuesday that he would return them, saying they belong at the nation's most revered burial ground, not on the auction block.

The nine-foot-tall marble urns, which were replaced during a renovation of the amphitheater in the mid-1990s, were to have been put up for public sale this weekend by the Potomack Company, an Alexandria auction house.

But after being informed by The Washington Post of the sale, the Department of the Army, which

oversees the cemetery, asked the auction house to postpone, "pending additional research to determine rightful ownership and disposition."

Several preservation groups expressed outrage that the urns, which appear in many historic photographs of the cemetery, were to be sold to the highest bidder.

On Tuesday afternoon, several Army officials visited the auction house, said they would gladly accept the urns and started making plans to reclaim ownership. Hew Wolfe, the Army's historic preservation officer, said that it was not yet clear what the Army would do with the urns but that they would likely be put on display, perhaps at

URNES CONTINUED ON B5

Historic urns won't go to auction block

URNES FROM B1

the cemetery or at a museum, such as the one being built at Fort Belvoir.

The return of the urns may please preservationists who had criticized the Army for not better protecting the artifacts, but it does not end the mystery of how they ended up in private hands in the first place.

For 14 years, Darryl Savage has had them on display at DHS Designs, his antiques shop in Queenstown on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He said he purchased the urns from another dealer, whom he would not identify. According to Savage, that dealer acquired them from one of the companies involved in the amphitheater renovation.

Army officials said the original request for renovation proposals instructed the contractor to "dispose" of the urns.

The design plans for the project, however, dictated that the urns be preserved, said Justin G. Buller, the cemetery's associate deputy general counsel. He said Tuesday that the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, which protects against the discarding of historic artifacts, reviewed and approved those plans.

The urns incident has spurred the cemetery to seek listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Wolfe said. The designation would document the site's monuments and help protect its artifacts.

Kathryn Condon, the new executive director of the Army Cemeteries program, expressed surprise last week that the cemetery was not listed and pledged to work toward such a designation. Arlington House, the home of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee that sits in the middle of the cemetery but is managed by the National Park Service, is on the National Register.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation welcomed the return of the urns to the cemetery, "where we hope they will be conserved, properly interpreted and accessible to the public," said Stephanie Meeks, the group's president. "While this was a positive outcome, we continue to be concerned about the stewardship of Arlington National Cemetery... Allowing significant pieces of our heritage to end up on the auction block, and replacing historic elements with replicas, is simply not acceptable."

The urns, carved with eagles, serpents and rams' heads, were a key part of the amphitheater, which is adjacent to the Tomb of the Unknowns. The amphitheater, made of Danby marble quarried from Vermont, was designed by Carrere and Hastings, one of the most prominent architecture firms of the early 20th century.

The urns flanked the amphitheater stage where dignitaries, often including the president, gather for Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. It's where President Warren G. Harding, standing be-



TRACY A. WOODWARD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Army historic preservation officer Hew Wolfe, left, with antiques dealer Darryl Savage, who is returning the urns and their pedestals.

tween the urns, presided over the interment of remains at the Tomb of the Unknowns in 1921. And it's where Vice President Biden stood last Veterans Day.

At his antiques store, Savage had priced the pair of urns at \$125,000. The auction house estimated that they would sell for between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

In a statement, Savage said he purchased the urns "for a substan-

tial price" and did so "with full confidence about their ownership."

He said he was glad the urns were finally being recognized "for their cultural, historical and emotional significance... It is my hope that this situation will bring more attention to the need to protect our country's architectural legacy and heritage."

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