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Newly Discovered Diaries of USDA Botanist Lyster Dewey Highlight the History of Hemp Cultivation in Washington D.C. Area

DC 'Hemp History Week' Event to Display Historic Documents

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Monday, May 17, 2010 at 7:30pm, the Hemp Industries Association (HIA) will display the diaries of USDA Chief Botanist Lyster Dewey in public for the first time at Capitol Hemp Clothing and Accessories, located at 1802 Adams Mill Road, NW. The diaries and personal photos of the USDA's top expert on fiber production for more than 40 years reveal a treasure trove of information on hemp farming research by the US Government from the 1890's to the 1940's. Excerpts of the newly discovered diaries will be read aloud at the event and members of the media are encouraged to attend.

"We are just learning about what is contained in these diaries, every time we open them we find something new," says HIA Executive Director Eric Streenstra who acquired the diaries for HIA's archives with the financial support of HIA member Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps.

The five volume set of sixty-two diaries begins in 1879 and spans until Dewey's death in 1944. Recovered at a garage sale and then resold to the HIA, there are two photo albums, one of which includes a picture of Dewey himself measuring a 20 foot high hemp plant grown at Arlington Farms, the current location of the Pentagon. The diaries also contain evidence of Dewey growing Hemp in the District of Columbia in his own backyard in the Petworth neighborhood of NW.

Would be hemp farmers may be particularly interested in his regular mentions of receiving hemp seed from around the world and then breeding it with local varieties, including one variety he developed and named *Arlington*. Lyster Dewey's work paid off for the US government during World War II, when it encouraged hemp cultivation, which diminished during the depression due to cheap imports. Presumably, hemp farming was restarted with Dewey's seeds to supply the military which lacked hemp fiber for ropes and parachute webbing after fiber imports from the Far East were cut off.

Discovery of the diaries couldn't have come at a better time for the **1st Annual Hemp History Week**, a national grassroots education campaign taking place from May 17-23, 2010. Organized to renew strong support for hemp farming in the United States, the week will feature 170 events in 30 states. Organizers also expect the campaign to collect tens of thousands of hand-signed postcards addressed to President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder asking them to end the ban on hemp farming and let farmers grow the versatile and profitable crop.

On Wednesday, May 19, at 10:30am Hemp History Week supporters will hand deliver stacks of signed post cards to the Attorney General's office located at 950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Washington, DC.

Hemp was once an important crop for George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and thousands of American farmers across the country, including farmers here in the Capitol region until it was outlawed completely in 1970 by the Controlled Substances Act.

Hemp History Week supporters will visit George Washington's home and farm, Mt. Vernon on Friday, May 21 to inquire about where the founding father grew hemp on the farm. Currently the historical site does not

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reference hemp farming by the first President, however, the Library of Congress has hand written letters by Washington describing his cultivation of hemp.

In addition to local events like these nationwide, natural product retail outlets are also participating in **Hemp History Week** by sampling best-selling hemp products in their stores including: Nature's Path's *Hemp Plus*™ Granola Cereal, Sunny Hemp™ Granola Bars and *Hemp Plus*™ Waffles; Living Harvest Foods *Tempt*™ hemp milk and frozen desserts; Nutiva's organic shelled hemp seed and Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps. **In the DC area sampling of hemp foods will be take place at My Organic Market locations in Maryland and Virginia throughout the week of May 17 – 23.**

Hemp History Week – May 17-23, 2010 is an unprecedented industry-wide project initiated by The Hemp Industries Association and Vote Hemp, involving hundreds of hemp manufacturers and retailers. The **Hemp Industries Association (HIA)** is a non-profit trade group representing hemp companies, researchers, farmers and supporters. **Vote Hemp** is a national, single-issue, non-profit advocacy group founded in 2000 by members of the hemp industry to remove barriers to industrial hemp farming in the U.S. through education, legislation and advocacy. While 16 states have passed pro-hemp farming legislation to date, Hemp History Week organizers want to influence significant policy changes on the federal level as well.

For further information and a list of sponsors, go to: <http://www.hemphistoryweek.com>

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