

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 48 Medina, Ohio May 2023

PFC GERALD F. VOORHEES

PFC Gerald F. Voorhees is buried under an unassuming flush gravestone in Section 6 at Spring Grove Cemetery. Gerald was killed in action on March 13, 1945 on Luzon in the Philippines. On April 14, 1945, a full month after his death, his mother, Mrs. Marie Voorhees, received a Western Union telegram from the Secretary of War at her Medina home. A confirming letter from Gerald's commanding officer, Captain Martin C. Griff, Company A, 149th Infantry, arrived in the mail sometime after the telegram. In the full-page typed letter, Captain Griff expressed his sincere sympathy and the sympathy of all the men in Gerald's unit. The captain wrote that Gerald was killed by an explosion in a Japanese cave and, that though the medics and Gerald's comrades did everything they could to save him, their efforts were not successful. The letter went on to say that Gerald had been given a Christian burial on Luzon, with a "number

of his companions," in the United States Armed Forces Cemetery. The family also eventually received a Presidential Memorial Certificate for Gerald which bore the signature of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The Medina Gazette published an article about Gerald on April 17, 1945, three days after Mrs. Voorhees received the Secretary of War's telegram. The article contained some fascinating information about Gerald's life after he entered into service and reads as follows:

"Pfc. Gerald F. Voorhees, killed in the Philippines on March 13, is one of four Medina county boys whose names have been added to Medina county's honor roll of soldier dead over the weekend. Pvt. Voorhees, who would have been 27 years old today, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Voorhees who moved last week to 523 Blake Street, New York. (Editor's note: according to surviving relatives, the Voorhees moved to 523 Blake Ave., Medina as tenants of R.O. Bowman who rented homes near R.O. Bowman, Inc., a farm supply company, located on West Liberty Street in Medina, where Gerald's father was employed.) Born in Lafayette, he attended school in Chatham, Lafayette and



Brunswick and before entering the service on Feb. 9, 1942, was an employee of R.O. Bowman. While in training at Camp Livingston, La., Pvt. Voorhees met and married Miss Evelyn Miller, a nurse in the camp hospital and daughter of Gen. Harry Miller. He spent Thanksgiving of 1942 with his parents and his wife, who was taking further training in New York, was to have joined him here but an automobile accident prevented her trip to Medina county. En route to England on an American passenger-cargo ship taking military personnel and civilian war-workers overseas, she lost her life when the ship was torpedoed by an enemy submarine. In November Pvt. Voorhees married his sister-in-law, Miss Helen Miller, in Birmingham, Ala. A month later he sailed for New Guinea as a member of the air corps and from there was sent to the Philippines where he was killed on Luzon Island, March 13. Besides

his parents, Pvt. Voorhees leaves a brother, Pfc. Leland Voorhees stationed in Paris, and a sister, Virginia, at home."

Six months after WWII ended, the U.S. military initiated a repatriation program entitled "Return of the Dead." Gold Star families were given the choice under this program to have their soldier's remains brought back to the United States for re-burial or to leave them in the country where they'd been killed. More than 171,000 WWII soldiers were returned home to the United States between 1947 and 1951. Gerald was one of those returned home, but

not until October, 1948 – 3-1/2 years after he was killed and buried on Luzon. His surviving cousin, Ron, who was 14 years old in 1948, remembers gathering at the home of Gerald's parents at 523 Blake Avenue in Medina and participating in the solemn funeral procession to Spring Grove on October 17, 1948. Gerald's military mementos have been passed down through the family and are now in Ron's care. These include the original Western Union telegram addressed to Mrs. Marie Voorhees at R.F.D. 3, the confirmation letter from

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Friends of the Cemetery

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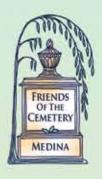
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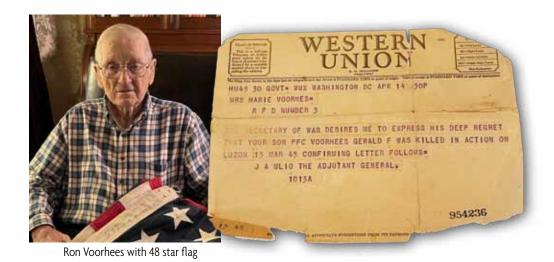


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Gerald's commander, President Roosevelt's Presidential Memorial Certificate, Gerald's purple heart medal with its certificate, and the 48-star flag that adorned Gerald's casket.

The Friends of the Cemetery honor Gerald F. Voorhees' service to our country and the sacrifice he made for our freedom. As President Roosevelt's Memorial Certificate issued in honor of Gerald reads in part: "He stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and increase its blessings. Freedom lives, and through it, he lives – in a way that humbles the undertakings of most men."

Editors Note: Thank you to Friends of the Cemetery members Ron and Maude Voorhees for sharing their cousin Gerald's story and his military mementos for this newsletter.



MEMORIAL DAY 2023

Medina will observe Memorial Day on May 29 with the traditional parade to Spring Grove for the memorial service at the Soldiers Mound. The Friends of the Cemetery will have the Spring Grove chapel open and staffed before and after Memorial Day services. We invite everyone to visit Spring Grove and Old Town on Memorial Day to honor our military veterans buried there.

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."

- Joseph Campbell

Chapel Floor Project

This past March, Friends contracted with MDG Flooring to remove the old carpet at the chapel and install matte stone floor tiles in its place. The carpet was laid when the Friends funded the restoration of the chapel in 2007 but, due to humidity issues in the building over the years, it had become a source of mildew and needed to be replaced. Over the past winter months, Friends have taken steps to reduce the humidity in the chapel with the installation of an industrial dehumidifier and air circulation unit. These have both proven to help reduce the moisture in the building significantly. The stone flooring, along with the dehumidifier and air circulator, should eliminate mildew concerns in the chapel in the future and enhance the historic aesthetics of the building. The cost of the flooring project was \$13,800. Stop by the chapel on Memorial Day before or after the memorial service to take a look at the beautiful new floor and keep in mind that the 139-year old Spring Grove chapel is available for small gatherings (maximum 50) for a nominal fee.





Spring Grove Arboretum Update

Due to the unusually mild winter we had here in N.E. Ohio, Bartlett Tree Experts completed the Spring Grove Tree Inventory Phase 2 pruning project in February. Bartlett wanted to get the pruning done earlier rather than later before the oaks in our collection started to bud. Eighty-two trees were pruned in this second sweep, along with several "bonus" trees that were either cabled or pruned. Approximately 173 trees have been professionally pruned at Spring Grove since last fall at a cost to the Friends of \$57,636.

In keeping with our yearly tree planting program, the Bartlett team planted ten new trees in the arboretum on a very chilly day in April. The trees planted were Buckeye Sycamore, New Harmony Elm, Scarlett Oak, Native Hornbeam, Tupelo Black Gum, Red Oak, Pin Oak, River Birch, Sugar Maple and Hop Hornbeam. Of those, four are new species to the collection and include Buckeye Sycamore, New Harmony Elm, Scarlett Oak and Native Hornbeam. According to Bartlett Arborist Chad Clink, the Buckeye Sycamore is an introduction from T. Davis Sydnor, from in and around Ohio

State's campus, with great anthracnose disease resistance. The New Harmony Elm is a Dutch elm disease resistant cultivar introduced as part of the disease resistance trials with several universities and arboreta and, like the Buckeye Sycamore, has Ohio roots. We can expect the Scarlett Oak to have an amazing rich dark scarlet color in the fall and the Native Hornbeam, Carpinus caroliniana, joins the European Hornbeam, Carpinus betulus, planted in 2021, as part of the Spring Grove Arboretum collection.

The Friends are committed to the maintenance and preservation of Spring Grove Arboretum's trees, shrubs and plants.

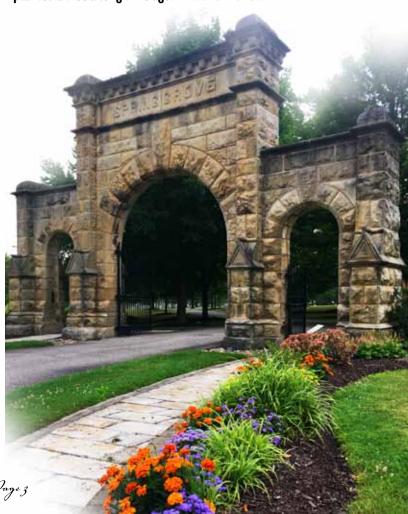
"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." — Warren Buffett



In November 2019 the Friends of the Cemetery contracted with Perspectus Architects, a Cleveland based restoration architectural firm, to do a study of the historical structures at Spring Grove to determine maintenance needs and priority of attention to those needs. With the resulting Spring Grove Cemetery Preventative Maintenance Evaluation Prioritization Plan, Friends are moving forward with preventative maintenance of the mausoleum and entry gate. These two structures were ranked as first and second in priority, respectively, in the maintenance plan.

In March we hired Perspectus Architecture at a cost of \$14,275 to perform on-site observations to document work required at the mausoleum and entry gate. This first phase of work performed by Perspectus Architecture included field work, preparation of contract documents, including construction drawings and technical specifications, assistance in bidding process, as well as construction administration.

In the second phase of this project, the Friends intend to fund repairs deemed necessary in Phase 1 of the project with an eye to complete the work on both structures this summer. In accordance with previous successful capital projects initiated and funded by the Friends of the Cemetery, we are working hand in hand with the City's Service, Parks and Engineering departments, as well as the Cemetery Commission, on this project. The historic preservation of Spring Grove structures is of utmost importance to the Friends.



PlotBox Cemetery Database by: James Hjort, Cemetery Sexton

In early 2023, Spring Grove Cemetery implemented PlotBox. This new cemetery management software assists the staff with maintenance of burial and lot owner records, improving accuracy of burial plotting and streamlining the lot sale process. Now available through the City of Medina's website is the Everafter portal. Through this portal, burial records and locations of individuals interred in Spring Grove can be accessed by the general public.

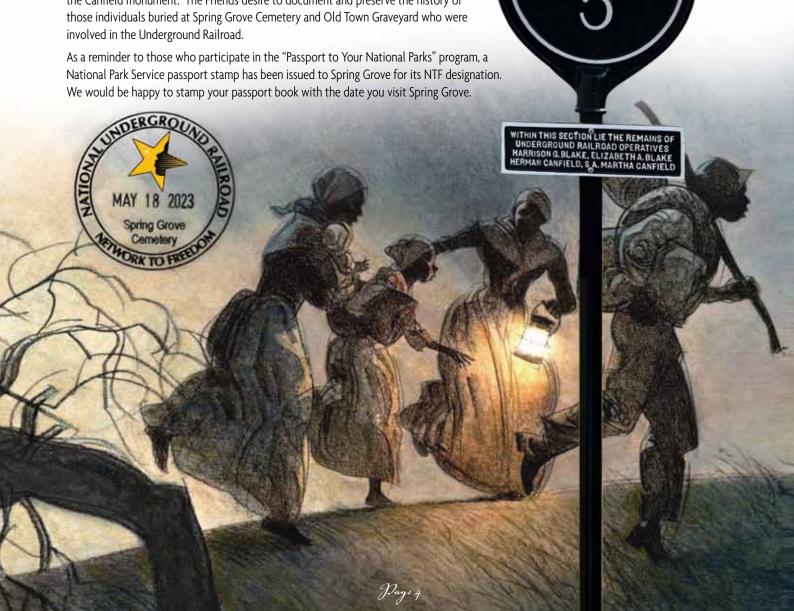
Editor's Note: The Friends of the Cemetery applaud the City's substantial investment in the cemetery database which provides a means for public access to cemetery records, cemetery maps and walking directions to individual grave lots via mobile devices and computers. The QR code provided here will take you to the Everafter portal. You may also access it on the City's website.

SECTION



National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Update

Signs have been placed by the Friends in Section 5 at Spring Grove to honor and commemorate H.G. and Elizabeth Blake and Lt. Col. Herman Canfield and his wife, Sarah Ann (Martha) (Treat) Canfield who have been recognized by the National Park's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (NTF) for their individual roles in aiding and supporting escaped enslaved people from the south. Two signs have been affixed to the two Section 5 wayfinding signs and interpretive sign markers will be placed at both the Blake monument and at the Canfield monument. The Friends desire to document and preserve the history of those individuals buried at Spring Grove Cemetery and Old Town Graveyard who were involved in the Underground Railroad.





Virginia Jeandrevin

The Friends of the Cemetery lost a great advocate and supporter with the death of Virginia Jeandrevin this past February. Virginia was a member of Medina City Council in 1995 when Mayor Jim Roberts brought back the defunct Medina City Cemetery Commission. Virginia was appointed as the Council's liaison to the Cemetery Commission and she remained Council liaison the eight years she was on Council. After her Council retirement, Virginia was appointed to the Cemetery Commission and remained

an active member of the Commission until July of 2021 when she resigned due to health concerns. Virginia and her husband, John, became Lifetime members of the Friends of the Cemetery and have supported the organization since its inception. We will miss Virginia and express condolences to John and the family. We thank the Jeandrevin family for designating the Friends of the Cemetery as beneficiaries of donations in Virginia's memory and we thank those who gave in her memory.

Photo Contest

Our second annual amateur photo contest will be held September 1 - October 25, 2023. This year's theme will be The Serenity and Beauty at Spring Grove. One photo per photographer should capture the landscape, still life, animal and plant life and/or architecture at Spring Grove. Prizes will be awarded to the best submission in the following categories: 12 years and under; 13 years to 17 years; Adult – 18 years and older. Photos will be judged by a panel of judges based on adherence to the theme, quality, composition & content, creativity and originality, and/or impact. We had a great number of photos submitted last year and look forward to a great response this year! Contest registration form and contest rules will be posted on our website before September 1, 2023. Watch for our flyer on social media and at storefronts!



Meet Donna Knack - Parks Clerk

If you've ever visited the Medina City Parks Department at the Amos Mears office building at Spring Grove Cemetery, you've more than likely received a friendly welcome from Parks Clerk Donna Knack. Donna is always cheerful as she goes about her work, not only in the Parks Department, but also as a point of contact for the Cemetery Department. In describing her unique position, Donna says, "As the Parks Clerk, I take the Minutes for the Cemetery Commission. This has enabled me to develop a much greater appreciation of the collaborative partnership with the Friends of the Cemetery. I have also gained a much greater knowledge of the cemetery, its rich history and the many nuances involved with maintaining these special grounds. All of this is helpful because sharing an office with

the hardworking cemetery staff, I provide administrative support as needed. Part of the administrative assistance includes greeting families upon arrival and providing telephone support. I oftentimes answer the telephone so people can speak directly to a person and not an automated system. I do enjoy the variety of assignments and feeling like, in some small way, I may be making a difference. Spring Grove is certainly a treasure to the City, however we all try to remember that it's not just about plots/lots, but people sometimes enduring difficult times."

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Friends Membership Meeting

Mark your calendars to attend our annual membership meeting on September 10, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at the beautiful Spring Grove chapel. We always look forward to meeting with our membership to review the year's projects and take a look forward at the organization's future plans.

Historical Walk at Old Town Graveyard

This year's annual Historical Walk will be held on Saturday, August 19 at Old Town Graveyard located on East Liberty Street across from the courthouse parking garage. Many of Medina's early settlers are buried at Old Town, with the first burials taking place in 1810 and the last burial in 1946. Veterans from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Spanish American War and World Wars I and II are buried there. The Friends will host a guided tour of the graveyard with stops along the way at gravesites where presenters will tell the stories of several of those buried at Old Town.

The event starts at 1:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Please take note that in order to reach gravesites at Old Town, we will be walking on uneven ground turf. Access by wheelchairs, strollers and/or wagons is only via the concrete sidewalk that traverses the graveyard and wheelchairs, strollers and/or wagons must remain on that sidewalk. We will meet at the center graveyard entry on the west side of the grounds. There is plenty of parking in the County Administration lot located right next to Old Town. This will be a rain or shine event.

Arboretum Walk

The 2023 Arboretum Walk at Spring Grove will take place on Saturday, October 21 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. This year we will offer two tours of the arboretum with Arborist Chad Clink of Bartlett Tree Expert Company. The first tour with Chad will begin at the east side of the cemetery at the Mears Building at 2:00 and the second one will begin at 3:00. Chad has worked with the Friends of the Cemetery since the inception of the arboretum at Spring Grove and, as a Certified Master Arborist, he has a vast knowledge

of trees, shrubs and woody plants. We invite everyone to come to join one of Chad's tours or, if you'd rather, you may take a solo walk through the arboretum at your own pace. We will supply tour maps to follow, water bottles, a scavenger hunt and there will be docents stationed along the way to be of assistance. The walk is also a great opportunity to snap that winning picture for our photo contest! This is a free event and is family, pet, wheelchair, wagon and stroller friendly! The walk will be held rain or shine.



Friends of the Cemetery MEMBERSHIP LISTING - MAY 2023

620 Corporation ♦ Cindy Abell * Sherry S. Abell Steve & Molly Adams Cynthia Allman Margaret Anderson Steve & Jane Anderson Dr. Jack D. Arters • Donald Baker James & Paula Banks > Skip & Janet Baran Dale & Connie Barath * Ken & Kathleen Barco Alan & Norma Batchelder Alice Batchelder Bruce & Sally Bauer David & Sheron Beard Don Beck Larry & Linda Beer Carter & Elizabeth Bennett Peter & Sydney Sue Benson Scott & Pam Benson Sheila Benson Phil & Mary Jane Brewer Nancy Brintnall David & Gloria Brown David Bryenton Sue Bryenton John Burke Edy Campbell Reg Campbell Marilyn Canfield Dr. Michael Carlson Family Ron & Catherine Carmany > Elizabeth Streett Cassella 💠 Casto Family Nancy Chizmar Susan Chmelik ◊ Robin D. Christen Barbara Clark > John & Marianne Clevidence > Guyles Clifford Ann Cole & Bob Smith > Beth Coleman Tad & Jan Coleman * James & Maureen Cook > Jane Corbus Todd & Melody Costello Thomas Dade John & Peggy Dague Eric Daiber Mike & Judy Davanzo Homer C. Davis, Jr. Judy Delahoyde Amy Demlow ◊ Joyce Dirham 💠 Pat Dohoda

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Ray & Madeline Laribee

Russ & Anna Leach Bob & Colleen Leedy > Marliese Leggett Dave & Pat Lehotan Lila Lehrer Linda Limpert Traci A. Linn Deanne Longacre Ed & Linda Ludwig Alfred & Diane Macino Bob & Becky Marshall Dr. & Mrs. H. Linn Mast Ann McClaning Linda R. McClure * Thomas W. & Kay McFadden > Pat McIntire Nancy McKee

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Frank & Becky Shotwell ◇
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Rick & Kim Wuescher Dolly Yowler Jay & Janis Zachman > Betty Zarney | > Donna Zatezalo Grace Zay Steve Zetts >

New Members since December 2022

Dénnis Leach >

Cindy Abell Dale & Connie Barath Tad & Jan Coleman Linda R. McClure

In Memory of Patricia. Pritchard Jeanne Pritchard

New Lifetime Members since December 2022

Michael & Chery Short

In Memory of Virginia. Jeandrevin

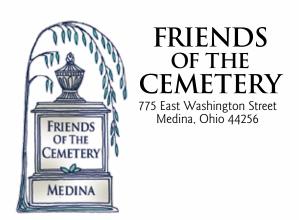
David, Gloria & Jessica Brown Tad & Jan Coleman Beth Cassella Ann Cole & Bob Smith

Jerry & Sally Gunner Chuck & Teresa Merkle Jay & Janis Zachman Jeanne Pritchard

Chet & Jan Simmons John Streett

* designates new member

designates life-time member



Become a Friend of the Cemetery

If you have not yet joined the Friends of the Cemetery, we'd love to have you become a part! For your convenience, we have provided a self-addressed envelope in this newsletter. Our membership schedule is included on the envelope flap. If you have been a member in the past, but do not see your name listed on page 7, please take time today to renew your membership using the envelope.

"Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the law of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

William Gladstone

Don't forget to check us out on the web at:

www.friendsofmedinacemetery.org

Family	\$15 \$25	Silver Gold		Marin Till
Contributing	\$50	Platinum		
Supporting	\$100	President's Club	\$3,000+	
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Address				