

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 23

Medina, Ohio

December 2010

Painting a Summer Day in the Cemetery



Local artists from the Plein Air Painters of the Western Reserve find plenty of inspiration at Spring Grove Cemetery. Plein Air means outdoors and that's where these artists like to paint.

There are so many ways to enjoy our beautiful cemetery. It lifts the spirit, beckons walkers, provides sanctuary for wildlife and records our history as well as serving as a final resting place for our friends and loved ones.

At right and below, "Lavender Mist" and "Marble Orchard" by Cindy Allman."



Dave Fawcett painting Letha House Lake



Please let us know if you like the newsletter printed in color.

Friends of the Cemetery

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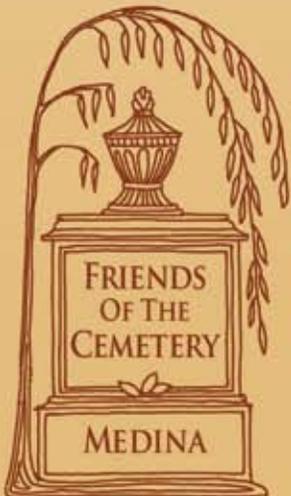
Cindy Allman

John Gill

Teresa Merkle

Board Meetings

First Thursday at 7 pm
FOC office-Liberty Row
445 W. Liberty Street
Conference Room
Please call first.



The stone and plaque in memory of Art Riedel is now in place at the entrance to the Chapel.



Victorian Vintage Fans

The Friends purchased two lovely Victorian style floor fans for the restored Spring Grove Chapel. There is no air-conditioning in the chapel and, with the very warm summer we had this year, we thought the fans would be a welcome addition. The fans are in keeping with the Victorian feel of the chapel and cemetery and are a beautiful addition to the chapel. By the way, the chapel **does** have a furnace for use during the winter months.



Medina Coterie Meets at Spring Grove Chapel

by Judy Smith

Tours, Tales and Tombstones” is the Medina Coterie program theme for this year. So it was most appropriate for the September 7th meeting to be held in the newly restored Spring Grove Chapel. Cynthia Szunyog and John Gill gave a very informative presentation on the history of Spring Grove Cemetery, the Entry Arch, the Soldiers’ Monument and the Mausoleum. Using colorful display boards, Cynthia also detailed the renovation of the 1884 Chapel, which was completed last October. Following the meeting, Coterie members toured the grounds and admired the beauty of the Pat Mears Garden by the Letha House Lake and the beautification of the Baby Section by the Oddfellows. A big thank you to Cynthia and John for a great program.

Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Cemetery held their Annual Meeting on Sunday, September 19, 2010 in the newly restored Spring Grove Chapel. The current slate of officers was re-elected to another one-year term and Trustees, John Gill and Helen Streett, were re-elected to serve another three-year term. Linda Fenn was elected to her first term as Trustee and will serve a three-year term as well. We welcome Linda aboard and appreciate her willingness to serve!

“I appreciate the opportunity to serve as a Trustee for the Friends of the Cemetery. The citizens of Medina have shown their support in preserving our area’s history in a variety of ways, including its cemeteries.

Our family has always been interested in history. My husband’s Aunt Clara spent years chronicling our family’s genealogy – for which we are grateful. We would usually plan family vacations to feature stops at historical sites, including cemeteries. There are many stories told in cemeteries and much history to learn.”



Linda Fenn

Fall Tree Pruning Update

The Friends of the Cemetery contracted with Treemasters Tree Service to complete the 2010 tree pruning project at Spring Grove and Old Town Graveyard this fall. The Friends also purchased fertilizer that the cemetery staff used to feed trees in the fall. The City recently purchased fertilization injector equipment so that fertilization of City trees can be done in-house instead of being contracted out.

Friends Tree Planting Project

The Friends of the Cemetery funded the purchase of eleven 2" caliper trees that the Forester and cemetery staff planted at Spring Grove Cemetery this fall. The species of trees chosen this year include Buckeye, Kentucky Coffee, Red Oak, Swamp White Oak, Skyline Honey Locust, Hardy Rubber and Frontier Elm.

This year marks the start of this joint project with the Friends and the City of Medina to re-populate our forest at Spring Grove. Unfortunately, several of our larger trees have died or become safety hazards and have had to be removed and it is important that these trees be replaced. There are several sections of the cemetery that currently do not have many trees and these are the areas this project is targeting.



Website Update

The Friends of the Cemetery website is up and running! Please visit us at www.FriendsOfMedinaCemetery.com. The website will continue to evolve, so please check back often for news and updates. If you would prefer to receive the Friends of the Cemetery bi-annual newsletters electronically, please let us know. For those who have already made this request, the December 2010 newsletter will be uploaded onto the website the first week of December. We will send you an e-mail to inform you when it is ready to be viewed on line.

MEMBERSHIP LISTING

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Sandy Argenio*
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Betty Bagley
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Carter & Elizabeth Bennett
Elby A. Bennett **
Peter & Sydney Sue Benson
Ruth Beshire
Dean Bowman
Ruth Brenner
Nancy Brintnall
LaRue Brown
David & Bea Bryenton
Sue Bryenton
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Edy Campbell
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Leland Codding
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Betty Zarney

* designates new member
** designates Life-Time member

If you don't see your name listed above and it has been a while since you sent in your membership, your membership has lapsed. Please take the time now to renew by using the enclosed self-addressed remit envelope. If your name is listed above and it's been a while since you sent in your membership, please use this convenient envelope to do that. Your gift is tax-deductible. Thank you!

The Ladies' Cemetery Association of Oakwood Cemetery

In 1892 the Ladies' Cemetery Association of Medina dedicated the Entry Gate to Spring Grove Cemetery. This group gathered donations and organized fundraisers to fund the construction of our lovely gateway arch.

Our Ladies' Cemetery Association was not unique to Medina, however. Many of these associations were formed across the country after the Civil War and existed into the 20th century. One such organization is still in existence today – The Ladies Cemetery Association of Oakwood Cemetery in nearby Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Nora Kelly, President of the group, and her sister, Judy Kaufman, who serves as Treasurer, attended our 2009 Historical Walk at Spring Grove. Their story is quite fascinating in that the City of Cuyahoga Falls owns and operates Oakwood Cemetery, but the historic 1898 chapel, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, with its splendid stained glass, has always been and continues to be owned and maintained by the Ladies' Cemetery Association. In the past, membership in this association was exclusive, passed down through the generations from mother to daughter. Remarkably, some of the present Board members are descended from the ladies who originally built the chapel!

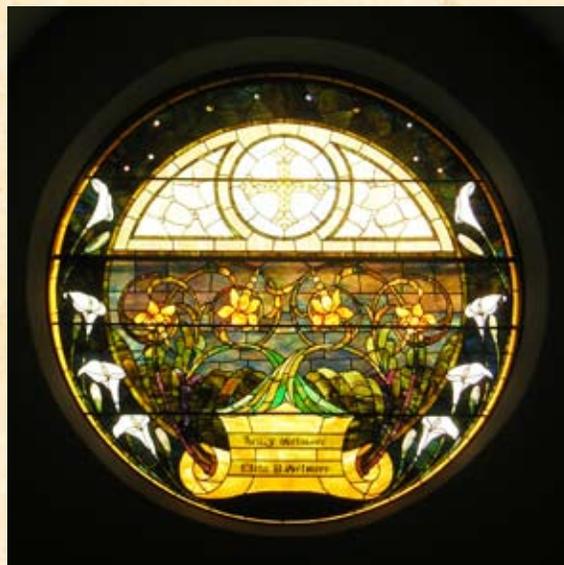
According to President Nora Kelly, "The Ladies' Cemetery Association of Oakwood Cemetery was formed in 1888 by some women who saw a need to improve the Cuyahoga Falls cemetery where most of the City's founders and community leaders are buried. After cleaning up the cemetery and having a well dug to water their beautiful new plantings, the ladies began to raise money to build a chapel

in the cemetery to hold funeral services. The \$2,300 to build this chapel was raised by holding dinners and by presenting entertainments, with the most popular being "Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works." They also went door-to-door collecting donations of 50

cents from area households. In 1898 ground was broken for the Oakwood Chapel. The 12 magnificent stained-glass windows and the lovely front doors were donated by several Falls families and social organizations. On July 2, 1898, this beautiful chapel was dedicated to all faiths as a service to the Cuyahoga Falls community. In the 1930's, however, funeral services in the chapel were discontinued. The Ladies' Cemetery Association continues to own and maintain the chapel, which is now used only for Memorial Day festivities and for LCA meetings. "

The Association is currently looking toward the future and considering the creation of a "Friends of Oakwood Chapel" to include anyone who has an interest in the chapel and/or Oakwood Cemetery. They recently held an open house at the chapel to garner support from the community and have packaged note cards with a painting of one of the chapel's 1898 Tiffany stained glass windows to sell as a fundraiser. The Medina Friends have been supportive of these efforts and wish the best to them.

The Oakwood Chapel is located in the Oakwood Cemetery at 2420 Oakwood Avenue in Cuyahoga Falls. It is worth the drive to Cuyahoga Falls especially in the spring of the year when the peonies are in bloom. Another very special feature of Oakwood Cemetery is its tall trees.

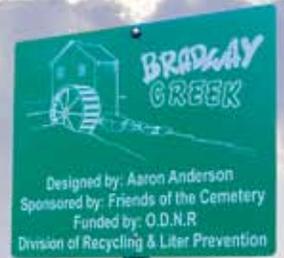


1898 Tiffany Stained-glass window in Chapel of Oakwood Cemetery

Bradway Creek Sponsorship

The Friends of the Cemetery and the Medina City Cemetery Commission will co-sponsor the care and maintenance of the portion of Bradway Creek that runs along the northeast edge of Spring Grove Cemetery. The Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District oversees the sponsorship of the County's creeks and waterways. Medina City Councilman Dennie Simpson, City Council liaison to the Cemetery Commission, approached the Friends with the idea of a joint-sponsorship. Funds from the City's litter grant funds paid the \$225 application fee, which covers the cost of the sponsorship sign

that was posted near Route 3 in the spillway where the creek passes below the road. The sponsorship sign was designed by Aaron Anderson, a young man who died in 2004 and is buried at Spring Grove and whose dad, Doyle Anderson, is involved in the care and maintenance of Spring Grove's Baby Section with the Oddfellows.



STONE STRAIGHTENING PROJECT

The City of Medina contracted with Cutlip Construction (the same contractor that did the work last year) to straighten nine stones at Spring Grove Cemetery and three stones at Old Town Graveyard. This work is tedious and physically demanding. Some of the stones are estimated to weigh more than two tons. The stones have to be moved from their original (failing) foundations so that a new foundation can be poured and then are moved back again! We commend the City for their continued commitment to the stone-straightening project each year and we are glad for Cutlip Construction and their exceptional expertise in gravestone straightening!



Dates for removing fall and winter grave decorations

We would like to remind those who decorate graves in Spring Grove Cemetery that Fall decorations must be removed by December 15 and Winter decorations by March 15. On or after those dates, cemetery staff will remove any remaining

decorations. In addition to these formal removal dates, we would like to suggest that people make sure to remove decorations if they become unsightly. Following these guidelines will ensure that our cemetery is always well kept and beautiful.

An unusual grave marker for a special couple

A few yards south of the Chapel at Spring Grove Cemetery is an unusual grave marker that whets the curiosity of passersby. It is built of smooth, shiny, black stone in the form of a bench. Upon inspection one finds that it marks the graves of Homer Charles Davis Sr. and his wife Margaret Batchelder Davis. For several decades Homer Davis Sr. was Chief of Police in Medina. Margaret Davis was extremely active in many aspects of life in this community.

For this issue of our newsletter, we determined to find out more about this couple with such a distinctive gravestone. What we found was more than we expected. First we interviewed Margaret's brother, William (Bill) Batchelder Jr., a not quite retired attorney well known in this community for decades. Next we talked with this couple's son Homer C. Davis Jr. who himself is a retired Chief of Police in Medina.

It turns out that Homer Davis Sr. wrote a summary of his experiences during his tenure as Chief of Police. This narrative paints a picture not only of the development of the police department, but of the development of the whole community and of 20th century technology.

Margaret Davis' obituary shows us what sorts of things busy people were doing and brings to mind many social institutions and activities of the time, many of which are still functioning. According to her son, she wrote the obituary herself before her death. Also, she was the one who came up with the idea of a gravestone in the form of a bench.

We wish to give a special thanks to Bill Batchelder Jr. and Homer (Chuck) Davis for the information, written materials and pictures they gave us. Thanks to the efforts of the couple now lying under the stone bench, this article practically wrote itself! They are virtually speaking to us from their grave! So it is that we present to you apart of their written legacy.

David Kellogg

Although we cannot include here the entirety of Homer's and Margaret's self-portraits, we present below a selection that will be of interest for those who enjoy Medina history. The following is a part of Homer Davis Sr.'s narrative about Medina's early police department.

"I started working for the City of Medina as a patrolman March 1, 1948, at which time there was one acting chief and two patrolmen, two patrolmen having just quit. The police department had one car and one motorcycle...

I received a permanent appointment as Chief of Police of the village of Medina on November 2, 1949, Medina remaining a village until 1950. The salary at this time was \$265 per month; the patrolmen were getting \$220 per month.

In the year 1950, the budget for the police department was \$31,010. The population count that year was 5085, which automatically made Medina a city. I requested that the council sell the motorcycle and buy another police car, which they did. The police department consisted of one big room with two jail cells and one desk, I set up a system of records, which had not been done previously.

I worked closely with city council, county commissioners, and Sheriff Charles Williams and they were able to work out a plan to buy together a set of radio equipment for all patrol cars and the station. The city also hired a desk man to operate the radio system on the night shift; this was done in March 1950....

"In 1951, my office was so small that when I got a regular sized desk, I had to saw the center out of it to get it into the room. My office was also being used as a dark room and a meter repair room..."

A few of Margaret's words from her obituary - "Mrs. Davis belonged to St. Paul's Episcopal Church for more than 75 years, where she belonged to ECW and Altar Guild, was a Sunday school teacher and sang in the choir for many years ...She worked as a clerk, deputy and director of all Medina County elections for 26 years... She was a lifelong Republican and a 40-year Ward II precinct committeeman. She attended four presidential nominations as alternate and delegate. She was a member of Medina Chapter 266 Order of the Eastern Star, Ladies Auxiliary Commandery 84 Knights Templar and Medina Chapter 106 Order of Rainbow for Girls.... She was an avid reader and flower gardener.



Historic Cemetery Tour Garners Articles in Two Newspapers

by Jane Effinger Corbus

Saturday September 25, 2010 was a beautiful day for the eighth annual Spring Grove Cemetery Walk. The sun darted in and out behind scudding clouds in a brilliant blue sky. Friends of the Cemetery members Cynthia Szunyog, David Kellogg, John Gill and Jane Corbus had rehearsed the previous weekend to take the tour to five family grave sites where each could tell personal stories. Cynthia, the designated tour leader, was also tapped to introduce the walk with an overview of Spring Grove history at the Chapel gathering place.

As 1:00 approached, the crowd grew larger and larger, finally estimated at about 70 people. Among those attending were two reporters, Judy Totts reporting for the Medina County Gazette and Allison Wood reporting for the Post. Both reporter attendees produced articles appearing in both newspapers.

Judy Totts' article lyrically titled, "Return to Spring Grove" was the cover story for the Tuesday, September 28 Gazette. It was accompanied by a lovely color picture of the Spring Grove Entry Gate. Also pictured on the front page in color was the crowd forming in front of the newly renovated chapel. Continued on page 3, the report covered all the high points of the tour and included two more pictures of David Kellogg speaking at his father's gravesite and Jane Corbus talking in front of the Fairfax Smith monument.

The Totts article can't be improved upon for content, accuracy and thoroughness. The following summary is quoted directly from "Return to Spring Grove"

"As in past programs, presenters stood at their family plots and talked about their ancestors. Friends of the Cemetery trustee David Kellogg of Medina told his family's story focusing on his father, Windsor Kellogg, who served Medina as a teacher for 17 Years and as a judge for about 40.

Jane Corbus of Lodi stood in the shadow of her ancestor Fairfax Smith's monument and compressed 220 years of the past into a 20 minute tale...



Trustee John Gill gave a short presentation on the Green family, and as the walk progressed, it provided an opportunity for the participants to see the new columbarium funded by the Edward C. Mears bequest, and the two lakes sponsored by the Letha House Foundation, projects supported by the Friends.

At the Sylvester family plot, Szunyog talked about her ancestors, Francis and Cynthia Sylvester, as well as Franklin Sylvester who, at the turn of the last century, provided money to build the library that eventually metamorphosed into the Medina Library.

As Teresa Merkle, president of Friends of the Cemetery, watched the crowd disperse, she said the group, formed in 1997, has a good working relationship with the city to maintain the lakes, trees and perennial gardens..."

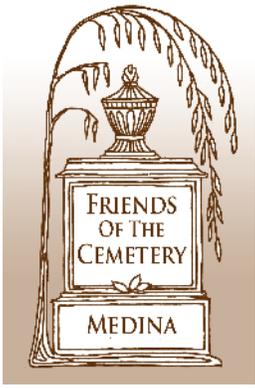
Completing the five-station walking tour, David Kellogg spoke a second time at the Whipple family grave site. The Whipple's were David's grandparents and raised his father through his boyhood. The tour, from gathering at the chapel to the final tales at the Sylvester monument, lasted just under two hours.

A week later on Sunday October 3 the Allison Wood article appeared in the Post. It took a much more lighthearted approach to the historic walk with the title, "Cemetery tour digs up old tales about Ancestors". A color picture of Cynthia Szunyog speaking at the Sylvester monument accompanied this article.

The Friends of the Cemetery should be pleased with so much publicity. It's not every day that we achieve such notoriety.

Postscript from Jane Corbus: Just this past Tuesday while in Buehler's River Styx, I was stopped by a woman who had attended the Walk. She touched my arm, "Aren't you the

person who spoke at Spring Grove? It was so interesting. My husband and I just moved to Medina and we are both interested in history. Thank you."



FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

445 W. Liberty Street,
Suite 219
Medina, Ohio 44256

Become a Friend of the Cemetery

*"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



Memberships are available as follows:

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