
FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

MEDINA, OHIO

Issue 6

May 2002

Memorial Day 2002

The Friends of the Cemetery will host an Open House at the Spring Grove chapel during Memorial Day weekend. The chapel will be open on Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and also on Memorial Day morning. There will be a new cemetery display and current project information in the chapel. The mausoleum will be open to the public on Memorial Day morning.

Cemetery staff will be mowing, trimming and mulching at Spring Grove Cemetery and Old Town Graveyard during the week prior to Memorial Day. The patriotic bunting for the Entry Gate and the Soldiers' Monument will be put in place on Friday, May 24.

Please plan to stop by the Spring Grove chapel on Memorial Day weekend. If you would like to volunteer an hour of your time to help staff the chapel that weekend, please give Bonnie Leach a call at 330-725-8155.

New Logo, Newsletter Format and Brochure for The Friends of the Cemetery

We are happy to introduce our new logo and newsletter format with this edition. Several months ago, a committee was appointed to acquire a logo and to redesign the Friends of the Cemetery brochure. The committee enlisted the services of artist Cindy Allman from the Medina County Art League and the Medina Community Design Committee to create our logo and to design and provide the art for our brochure. Janet Senkar of the Medina CDC also helped with the design of the brochure.

We wish to thank Cindy for donating her artwork for the new logo.

The new Friends of the Cemetery brochure will be available at the chapel at Spring Grove on Memorial Day weekend.

Flag Pole Lighting & Chapel Doors

Thanks to the generosity of the Medina VFW Post 5137, the flag that flies over the Soldiers' Mound at Spring Grove Cemetery will be illuminated at night. Tom Longsdorf has been contracted to install the new lighting.

Two new entry doors have been donated for the Spring Grove chapel. These doors will be ready for installation in the near future. The donor wishes to remain anonymous.

Thanks to Jerry Gunner for spearheading these projects.

Project Update

Perennial Garden – The Friends of the Cemetery thank the Willard Stephenson Foundation and the Feckley Foundation for their generous support in maintaining the Soldier's Mound perennial garden at Spring Grove Cemetery. This is the third year that the Stephenson Foundation has helped to fund the garden maintenance and the second year for the Feckley Foundation. These grants make it possible for this wonderful garden to flourish at Spring Grove Cemetery as a living tribute to our friends and loved ones interred at Spring Grove.

The task of caring for the garden has been given to Julie Kovacs, of The Traveling Gardner. Julie began work on the garden in March. We are impressed with her gardening expertise and are sure that the garden will thrive under her care.

Baby Section - We are delighted that the Oddfellows are continuing their commitment to maintain the Baby Section this season. We thank them for their ongoing dedication to the families of the precious little ones buried there.

Lake Project – A grant from the Letha E. House Foundation will fund design development drawings for the restoration of the lake that was located at the far side of what is now the Cremains Section. Behnke Associates of Cleveland has begun work on this project.

Winter Tree Work – This winter The Davey Tree Expert Company completed the pruning of thirteen large trees at Spring Grove Cemetery and five large trees at Old Town Graveyard. Four trees were cabled at Old Town. One hundred twenty young trees at Spring Grove received deep root fertilization. This project was made possible through a grant from Letha E. House Foundation.

The Friends of the Cemetery thank the Letha E. House Foundation for their commitment to the preservation and beautification of the Medina City cemeteries and their continuing support of and faith in our Friends of the Cemetery organization.

Spring Grove Trees

The Medina City Shade Tree Commission has implemented an in-house nursery pilot program at Spring Grove Cemetery. Thirty young trees have been planted at the far northeast edge of the cemetery. In two to three years, a number of these trees will be relocated to other areas of the cemetery. City Forester, Tim Swanson, said these trees may be purchased as memorial trees to be replanted near the grave of a loved one. Of the thirty newly planted trees, ten are Autumn Purple White Ash, ten, Autumn Blaze Maple, five, Cumulus Service Berry and five are Sugar Time Crabapple.

Ten Red Oak trees were recently planted in Spring Grove. These trees were moved from Bronson Street to make way for the waterline coming in from the Avon Lake water treatment plant.

Annual Meeting

On Sunday, April 28, 2002, The Friends of the Cemetery held their annual meeting at the chapel at Spring Grove Cemetery. Dennis Leach, President, opened the meeting with an overview of the projects and accomplishments during the past year.

T. Stefan Janidlo, Sexton/Concierge at Spring Grove, was the featured speaker. His extremely entertaining presentation was followed by an informative question and answer period. Those of us who attended were impressed and pleased by Stefan's obvious desire to serve the needs of the cemetery.

Trustees Resign

John Wetzel and Dave Thomas resigned this past winter as trustees of Friends of the Cemetery. Dave was one of the original trustees of Friends of the Cemetery elected in 1998. We appreciate their service to this organization over the years and will continue to work with them as members of F.O.C.

New City Administration

We have been pleased with the cooperation and interest shown in the cemeteries by Mayor Jane Leaver and her staff in the first five months of her administration. The mayor endorses the Master Plan for Spring Grove Cemetery and is supportive of the goals set forth by the Cemetery Commission and The Friends of the Cemetery.

In the first few weeks of office, Mayor Leaver initiated a positive change at Spring Grove Cemetery by not renewing

the contract for burials by an outside contractor and, instead, bringing the burial duties back "in house." This new plan has been quite a success and is saving the City a considerable amount of money.

In January the mayor appointed Nino Piccoli as Service Director. Included in his many duties as service director is the operation and administration of the municipal cemeteries. City Forester, Tim Swanson, remains in the position of overseeing the day-to-day operations and T. Stephen Janidlo remains as Sexton.

A Note From the Service Director

By: Nino Piccoli

I was born and raised in Sharon Center, Medina County and presently reside there. I had approximately ten years of service with the East Ohio Gas Company. I was in the meter-reading department for about six months, finishing my career in the construction and maintenance department, handling gas distribution and related day to day operations.

For approximately fifteen years, my father held the contract at the St. Francis Xavier Cemetery for installation of headstone footings as well as straightening. I assisted in the replacement and repairs of the concrete driveway and roads throughout that cemetery. I was not involved in the day-to-day maintenance of the cemetery grounds, but recognize the tremendous effort necessary involved in grounds maintenance as well as the administrative tasks.

The Medina City Cemetery Commission, Letha E. House Foundation and Medina City employees are charged with a monumental endeavor to preserve not only the historic past, but also the present and, possibly the most important, future of the Medina City cemeteries. One must appreciate the hours of free time many of the aforementioned are giving toward the cemeteries. Unfortunately, much of the general public does not realize the cemeteries are much more than a burying ground and are utilized as parks and open space.

I look forward to establishing a working relationship in an effort to preserve and enhance the cemeteries with the Cemetery Commission, the Friends of the Cemetery, various foundations, individual citizens, local businesses, veterans and religious organizations as well as all other supporters I may not have recognized.

Thoughts From Our Cemetery Advocate

By: Art Riedel

Our approach to Memorial Day 2002 seems more significant. In many respects, the devastations of September 11 and ensuing actions have revived our sense of patriotism and values, also directing us with a guard of the good things entrusted to us.

The momentum of maintenance support of project improvements established continues. Last year, serving a request on “how to improve the maintenance of the Baby Section at Spring Grove Cemetery,” my proposed plan was developed to restructure this special area, improving the amenities of plants, gravestone bed lines and lawns rendering this area manageable and conducive to a much-improved maintenance. The members of the Oddfellows service organization initiated reconstruction of this complete renewal project April 28, 2001 and continue a very commendable maintenance as you will see on your next visit to Spring Grove.

Newly planted daffodils and other bulbs have brightened up the chapel entrance and areas in the perennial gardens. New annuals will be planted around the Soldiers’ Monument.

New projects are moving forward, developing a legacy and history as our legacy enfolds for the community and our posterity.

As we attend the Memorial Day ceremony, remember again the words of Abraham Lincoln spoken at Gettysburg National Cemetery in part: “It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us.”

Spring Grove Lore

By: Elnor Johnson

The Mausoleum at Spring Grove

My first encounter with the mausoleum was in the 1920’s. I was not yet five, by about a week, when Grandmother Elnora Ellen Hartman Anderson died an untimely death at the age of 60. My mother was a very practical woman who led me through that death so that I’ve always been able to handle that life’s experience.

At that time the body remained in the household; then in the casket for the home funeral. I remember all of that and my many questions! Evidently I was not taken to the cemetery at that time, but was taken not long after. Thus, it has always been a warm place for me. Years later, Grandfather Anderson was put there. Grandfather Anderson was sexton of Spring Grove for many years.

I was there a lot, especially when we lived on East Washington Street from 1927-1935. At one point, Hal was quarantined with scarlet fever. Mother, in self-defense, sent me down with Grandpa at the cemetery every day at 4:00 p.m. I remember running so no one would see me. What she didn’t know was Grandpa was teaching me to drive his Dodge coupe. In his defense, straight roads came first – East Smith Road – then curves – cemetery here we came! He said we could do less damage there.

The mausoleum’s center has three tall vaults. Grandmother Anderson’s vault is in the center on top and later Grandfather was put below. To the north is Dr. Orr and his wives, to the south is Grandfather’s brother, Charles with his wife Laura below. They are the grandparents of Joyce Komjati and Charles Anderson.

In the north part of the building are my parents, R.E. (Jack) and Julia A. Snedden. In the south part is my husband, Bob, with my vault waiting. I always used the word “crypt,” but Webster says that is below the ground so I am to say “vault.”

If you have never been in the mausoleum, which is usually locked, just ask me to come and let you in. It has steel doors with designs and glass at the top with bars so no one enters without a key. Shutting those doors is one of life’s challenges. At each end of the building are three colored glass windows. The floor of the building has a lovely design. The Sexton and I believe the building was constructed around 1915. This past year’s repairs ensure it for many more years.

For me, visiting at least once a year has been a ritual since 1926. Flowers at Memorial Day – no matter what! You haven’t lived until you have climbed that ladder to the top vault to place flowers. In the days of home gardens we had baskets to arrange, now we are down to red geraniums.

For this article, I went down, looked at each vault, dates, etc. The south end was used first. In the center on one wall in black letters on white board are the earlier dates of death of the Milo Branch family. Milo Branch was from the Mallet Creek area. They say there is a small cemetery on Branch Road – maybe that is where those folks listed at the mausoleum are actually buried.

I am a “cemetery person.” There are some gorgeous works of art at Spring Grove. One in the middle of the cemetery, Prudence Anderson’s headstone, (a relative) is a lovely young lady sitting watch over the cemetery. Alice Hartman Chester had the stone cleaned. She is very regal sitting there.

We can be proud of Spring Grove Cemetery. Go drive around the cemetery – lovely headstones, beautiful lakes, trees and quiet! I have so many relatives there on both sides of my

family. Do I have memories? Yes! It is a special place for peace and quiet.