

# GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

21813 170TH ST.

BIRMINGHAM, IA 52535

www.rootsweb.com/~iasapic/

VOLUME 13 ISSUE #1

January, 2008

The **April 12, 2008 SAPIC meeting** will be held at the Johnson County Historical Society Museum in Coralville, Iowa at 10:00 AM. The Museum is located at 860 Quarry Road, Coralville. The Museum is within sight of Interstate 80, at the First Avenue, Coralville Exit. Take the exit south and turn east (left) at the first stop light. Go down the hill, towards the Marriott Hotel. Just before you get to the circle in front of the Marriott, turn south (right) and you will be in front of the Museum.

Mailing address of Museum: P.O. Box 5081, Coralville, IA 52241. Telephone: (319) 351-5738. FAX: 319-351-5310.

E-mail: questions@johnsoncountyhistory.org

Following the meeting, the Museum may be toured; there is also an antique car museum in the same building.

Restaurants closeby include Marriott Hotel, The Edge, Perkins, MacDonald's, KFC, Arby's, Hardee's, and the Iowa River Power Company Restaurant.

Thanks to SAPIC founder, Loren Horton, for making arrangements for this meeting.

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**THANKS TO CURRENT SAPIC MEMBERS WHO HAVE RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS FOR 2008! YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!**

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*Thanks to Larry Davis for arranging the January meeting at the Johnston, Iowa Public Library and for furnishing refreshments!*

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## "Be Careful Where You Die"

This was a short piece under the "Intelligence Report" and "Know Your Rights." It addresses the precarious weight that burial wishes may carry in certain states. It mentioned that many states "won't automatically honor your last requests." It will be the next of kin that will ultimately decide what happens. It gave a sampling of some state laws in Missouri, Michigan, and Arkansas. It ended with a recommendation to check your state's laws and put your requests in a notarized statement. For a list of laws, go to Parade.com.

From *Parade Magazine*, 10/14/07 and summarized in *The Dead Beat* magazine, Fall, 2007.

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"Being president is like running a cemetery: you've got a lot of people under you and nobody's listening."

-- Bill Clinton

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interesting web site about wooden grave markers:  
<http://www.darkfiber.com/tomb/headboard.html>

-- Thanks to Mike Magee

At the January SAPIC meeting, Patrick J. Palmersheim, Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs presented information on the importance of preserving veterans' commemorative property, and stated that a legislative bill is currently being prepared to present to the Iowa Legislature for that purpose. It was generally agreed that SAPIC would support such a bill, and members could contact their legislators in this regard.

Patrick also reported on the new State Veterans Cemetery currently under construction west of Des Moines. To find the number of the study bill, contact Mr. Palmersheim at Camp Dodge, Bldg. A6A, 7105 NW Ave., Johnston, IA 50131-1824.

Telephone 1-800-838-4692.

E-mail: patrick.palmersheim@iowa.gov

Web site: www.iowava.org

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During the legislative session, you can reach senators at the Iowa Capitol by calling the senate switchboard at 515-281-3371. You can reach representatives by calling the house switchboard at 515-281-3221. The Iowa General Assembly web site, <[www.legis.state.ia.us](http://www.legis.state.ia.us)>, lists legislator's e-mail addresses, tracks legislation, and broadcasts the audio of debates while the house and senate are in session.

Legislative Information Office

State Capitol Building

East 12th Street & Grand Avenue, Room G16

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515-281-5129 [lioinfo@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:lioinfo@legis.state.ia.us)

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"A veteran -- whether active duty, retired, national guard or reserve -- is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America', for an amount of 'up to and including his life.' That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it."

-- Author unknown

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Personalized Music for Memorial Services

Fisherman -- "Shall we Gather at the River"

Urologist -- "Pass it On"

Convict -- "I Surrender All"

Meteorologist -- "Showers of Blessings"

Construction Worker -- "How Firm a Foundation"

Librarian -- "There is a Place of Quiet Rest"

Embalmer -- "Preserve Me, O Lord"

Artist -- "Draw Me Nearer"

District Attorney -- "Were You There?"

Author -- "I Love to Tell the Story"

From *The Dead Beat*, Fall 2007 Thanks to Terry Altheide

## SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President: Steve Story  
18883 250th St.  
Hawkeye, IA 52147  
5630427-5354 dstory@netins.net

Vice-president: Willis Hoffman  
505 W. Chestnut St.  
Bloomfield, IA 52537-1921  
641-664-2852 wilcar@netins.net

Secretary: Larry Davis  
5716 Kingman Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311-2006  
515-277-4917 LD2mstone@aol.com

Treasurer: Valerie Ogren  
108 N. Oak  
Jefferson, IA 50129-1845  
515-386-4784 vjogren@netins.net

Board Member (2010): Molly Beason  
106 East 11th St.  
Tama, IA 52339  
641-484-6061 mollyb@iowatelecom.net

Board Member (2010): Pat Shaw  
21813 170th St.  
Birmingham, IA 52535  
319-293-3899 patshaw@netins.net

Board Member (2010): Jo Vernooy  
1240 235th St.  
Leighton, IA 50142  
641-673-8122 mahcem@kdsi.net

Board Member (2008) Ethel McVay  
1111 N. 8th Ave. Apt. #16  
Winterset, IA 50273-1089  
515-462-9802 emcvay38@msn.com

Board member (2009): Frieda Davis  
216 Riverview Dr.  
Vinton, IA 52349-2360  
319-472-5348 davisduo2@mebbs.com

Board Member (2009): Julie A. Eckenrod  
2211 Linn Ave.  
New Hampton, IA 50659  
641-394-3967 jjeck@myclearwave.net

Board Member (2009): Mike Magee  
638 Englewood  
Waterloo, IA 50701  
319-232-8762 Digger4045@yahoo.com

Board Member (2009): Marva Rowe  
905 S. 21st. St.  
Ft. Dodge, IA 50501-5910  
515-573-7658 marvaj@frontiernet.net

Board Member (2010): Tony Bengston  
1006 150th St.  
Fairbank, IA 50629-8611  
319-415-1175 tonybengston@yahoo.com

Web Page: Connie Street  
325 Franklin St.  
Wapello, IA 52653-1515  
319-523-8164 ckcasey@louisacomm.net

## WHERE TO GET PROBES

Agri-Drain  
340th St.  
Adair, IA 50002  
1-800-232-4743  
Sizes range from 4 1/2' to 8' -- \$18.50 and up  
WHERE TO GET EPOXY  
GRANQUARTZ Stone Tools and Equipment  
P.O. Box 2206  
Tucker, GA 30085-2206  
1-800-458-6222 <http://www.granquartz.com>

3-M 1838 B/A TAN EPOXY  
PRAXAIR - GENEX 1700 2nd Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
515-244-3131

GCT Stone Epoxy and Hardener  
Granite City Tool Co.  
P.O. Box 411 11 Blackwell St.  
Barre, VT 05641 mkewinter@aol.com  
[www.granitecitytoolvt.com](http://www.granitecitytoolvt.com)

Superior Stone Products  
(quickset acrylic adhesive)  
8580 Byron Commerce Drive  
Byron Center, MI 49315  
800-493-5111 [www.superiorstoneproducts.com](http://www.superiorstoneproducts.com)

## WHERE TO GET SIGNS

Iowa Prison Industries  
Box B  
Anamosa, IA 52205  
1-800-336-5863 Ask for Tammy Deseberg

## VETERANS' HEADSTONES

<http://www.cem.va.gov/hm.htm>  
Telephone: 1-800-697-6947

## STATE CEMETERY REGULATOR

Dennis N. Britson, Director  
Regulated Industries Unit, Iowa Securities Bureau  
340 Maple St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Dennis.Britson@comm6.state.ia.us  
515-281-4441

## OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Shirley J. Schermer, Director of Burials Program  
700 Clinton Street Building  
Iowa City, IA 52242-1030  
319-384-0740 shirley-schermer@uiowa.edu

## SAPIC dues:

Individual for one year: \$10.00  
Household for one year: \$15.00  
Business or organization for one year: \$20.00  
Lifetime individual: \$100.00  
Send dues to Valerie Ogren (address above)

**State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 12, 2008**

President Steve Story called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. on January 12, 2008 at the Johnston Public Library in Johnston, Iowa, with 19 members and guests present.

**Regulation of Veterans Commemorative Property:** Patrick J. Palmersheim, Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs presented information on the importance of preserving veteran's commemorative property, and stated that a legislative bill is currently being prepared to present to the Iowa Legislature for that purpose. It was generally agreed that SAPIC would support such a bill, and members could contact their legislators in this regard. Patrick also reported on the new State Veterans Cemetery currently under construction west of Des Moines.

**Meeting Agenda:** President Story presented the meeting agenda and asked for additions and approval. Moved by Mike Magee that the meeting agenda be approved. Seconded by Richard Booram. Motion carried.

**Meeting Minutes:** Moved by Valerie Ogren that reading of the October 13, 2007 meeting minutes be suspended and that they be approved as printed in the October 2007 issue of the Grave News newsletter. Second by Bill Reedy. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's report was presented by Valerie Ogren illustrating a December 31, 2007 balance of \$10,379.53 consisting of \$1,351.14 in the "Working Account", \$4,028.39 in the "Reserve Account" and \$5,000.00 in two Certificates of Deposit. It was noted that the Certificates of Deposit were due soon and it was agreed to combine the two and renew it for 12 months. Moved by Pat Shaw the Treasurer's report be received. Seconded by Tony Bengston. Motion carried.

**Membership Report:** Valerie Ogren reported the current membership as :

58	Life Members
71	Memberships now due
<u>28</u>	Currently Paid
157	Total

**Legislative Action:** Discussion was held in regard to SAPIC's participation in current legislation and how this could be accomplished. After considerable deliberation, it was moved by Valerie Ogren that a lobbyist not be hired at the present time, but SAPIC members support the proposed legislation pertaining to the regulation of veteran's commemorative property. Seconded by Bill Reedy. Motion carried.

It was generally agreed to maintain communications with the state legislators that have been friendly to cemetery legislation and Dennis Britson, State Cemetery Regulator to keep SAPIC informed of up-coming bills. If future legislative bills surface that require more direct assistance from SAPIC, this policy can be modified.

**501(c)3 Status:** It was noted that there is apparently still a need for SAPIC to consider being recognized as a 501(c)3 organization. This process was initiated in the past, and Pat Shaw was asked to follow-up on the process in order for this to be completed.

**Civil War Memorials:** Tom Gaard, representing the "Sons of Union Civil War Veterans" explained that the organization is in the process of recording all civil war memorials and monuments in Iowa. Also, many of these memorials are in need of repair and cleaning, and Tom asked for guidance in proper procedures.

**Future SAPIC Meeting Sites:** It was suggested that the Iowa City area be considered for the April 2008 SAPIC meeting site and Fayette County area for July or October.

Moved by Bill Reedy that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mike Magee. Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

# STATE ASSOCIATION for the PRESERVATION of IOWA CEMETERIES

Treasurer's Report for 4th Quarter - 1 October thru 31 December 2007

Balance in "Working Account" 30 September 2007, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$1,729.96

Income

Dues	\$ 90.00
Interest 10/31/07	1.82
Interest 11/30/07	1.61
Interest 12/31/07	<u>1.67</u>
Total Income	\$ 95.10

Expense

Ck # 202 – Birmingham Postmaster – permit (cost of permit increased to \$175 – other \$15 will show in Jan. 08)	\$ 160.00
Ck #203 – Patricia Shaw – newsletter expense	113.92
** Transfer to Reserve Account for Robert & Phyllis Carter Awards to Ed Strellner & Don Wentworth	<u>200.00</u>
Total Expense	\$ 473.92

Balance in "Working Account" 31 December 2007 \$1351.14

Balance in "Reserve Account" 30 September 2007, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 4,028.39

Expense

Ck. # 201 – Keith Street Memorial Scholarship to Jennifer Tupy	\$(200.00)
**Transfer from Working Account for Robert & Phyllis Carter Awards to Ed Strellner & Don Wentworth	<u>200.00</u>
Total Expense	\$ - 0 -

Balance in "Reserve Account" 31 December 2007 \$ 4,028.39

I am keeping an accounting of the amount which had been held in savings and have added Life Memberships and Memorials to it; however, all the money is in one account at the bank.

Combined Balance on Hand 31 December 2007 \$ 5,379.53

Plus additional funds:

182 day CD - \$1,000.00 - 5% - matures 1/08 – renew at 4.45%

12 month CD - \$4,000.00 - 5.25% - matures 1/16/2008 – renew at 4.50%

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Ogren, Treasurer

108 N. Oak

Jefferson IA 50129-1841

Ph 1-515-386-4784

E-mail: <vjogren@netins.net>

Friday, January 11, 2008

## Iowa Civil War Monuments



Blockton



Keosauqua



Fairfield



Sigourney

SAPIC member, Tom Gaard, representing the "Sons of Union Civil War Veterans" is undertaking a project to record, repair, and clean all Civil War memorials and monuments in Iowa. Pictured are examples of these monuments.

SAPIC member, Rosemary Hoover, submitted information about "tree stump" markers that were supplied by the Modern Woodmen of America, a group that has a long history in Iowa. In 1883, a man by the name of Joseph Cullen Root organized a fraternal society in Omaha, Nebraska, called "Modern Woodmen of America." One of the benefits of being a member was that upon death, the other members would pass around a hat and donate money to the widow. Membership was limited to white males older than 18 years of age. Later when passing around the hat became more frequent and costly, Root decided to sell life insurance to members. Modern Woodmen of America became a fraternal benefit society.

The name came from a church sermon founder Joseph Cullen Root heard as he was trying to choose a name for the fraternal benefit society he planned to organize. As he sat listening to the minister talk about "the work of the pioneer woodmen clearing away the forest," it occurred to him that this was a fitting analogy for the task of eliminating a man's financial burdens in the event of his death. Thus, Root chose Modern Woodmen for the name of his new benefit society. The phrase "of America" was added later to signify the group's patriotism.

Later, a women's auxiliary started up called "Royal Neighbors of America." Both the male and female organizations grew steadily and in five years, Modern Woodmen had a total membership of twenty-four thousand.

In 1889, several members had a "falling out" with the leaders of the society, and separated to form a new society under the leadership of Fred A. Falkenburg, and named it "Woodmen of the World." Shortly after, tensions were high in the new organization, and Falkenburg moved to Denver to form, "Woodmen of the World, Pacific Jurisdiction." Today, the three societies remain as insurance companies. Woodmen of the World created women's auxiliaries called "Woodmen Circle" and "Supreme Forest Woodmen," while the Pacific Jurisdiction created an auxiliary called, "Neighbors of Woodcraft", which exists as an insurance company in Portland, Oregon.

The traditional W.O.W. monument had 4 objects on it. They were the Maul, Axe, Wedge and the Dove. The motto "Dum Tacet Clamat" is Latin meaning "though silent, he speaks." This insurance company, started in the 1880's, would pay the widow \$100 and a free stone if the logo of the insurance company could be put on the stone. Styles were very elaborate to very simple. As time passed, the stones got to be smaller and smaller until they were similar to the conventional styles. The cost of the hand made marble stones became prohibitive and they were finally phased out about 1920. These stones are a real eye catcher to the cemetery visit or to one who registers graves.

Modern Woodman of America offered grave markers that families could purchase for deceased members of the

society until the mid-1970's. These grave markers serve as a lasting tribute to their members.

The grave markers were 7 1/2 by 20 inches, made of solid aluminum and designed so that a small American flag could be inserted and held by two loops on the back of the marker. They featured the working tools, motto, and initials.

Written accounts and photographs also document the popularity of tree stump monuments, engraved with Modern Woodman symbols (axe, beetle and wedge), even though the society did not supply these monuments or provide monetary assistance for them.

When founder Joseph C. Root wrote the ritual for Modern Woodmen, he also prepared a funeral ceremony for deceased members. The camp officiated services indoors, at the grave or both, according to the family's wishes. The ceremonies came to include hymns, remembrances and the dropping of flowers and evergreen sprigs over the casket.

Today these ceremonies are often mentioned by presenters of cemetery walks and in lectures on funeral and burial practices of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Started in the late 1880's, Modern Woodmen established a day of observance for camps to remember deceased members.

Members and the camp's Forester team would meet in a place of worship and, whenever possible, march to the cemetery. They would decorate the graves with flowers and often insert In Memoriam flags into the back of Modern woodmen grave markers. Members would sing hymns and tell stories about good deeds of the deceased.

Still today, Modern Woodmen invites each camp to hold memorial services at the first meeting in June, and the society holds a service at each of Modern Woodmen's quadrennial National Conventions.

Motto: Pur Autre Vie, which means "for the life of another."

Memorial Service Hymn -- official rituals from 1915 include these lines:

"...Nor let his goodness be forgot,  
While time its record keeps;  
But, Neighbors, guard this sacred spot  
Where a Modern Woodman sleeps."

[www.modern-woodmen.org/Public/AboutUs/History/Grave+Markers.htm](http://www.modern-woodmen.org/Public/AboutUs/History/Grave+Markers.htm)

Note from Rosemary Hoover: Rev. Root founded the WMA out of Lyon, Iowa. The graves of several people who belonged to WMA are in Webb Cemetery in Warren County, but have no symbols on their stones. A similar fraternal organization was formed about that same time. It was called the Brotherhood of American Yeoman (BAY). Many people belonged to it as well. BAY merged several times and evolved into Homesteader's Life Insurance Company located in Des Moines. They printed a lovely, large bound book for their 100th anniversary in 2006.

## COUNTY REPORTS

### BENTON

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, December 27, 2007:  
"Biodegradable coffins part of eco-friendly funerals."  
Portland, Oregon. (AP) Cynthia Beal, owner of The  
Green Burial Company, sells a variety of eco-friendly  
burial products, including the Ecopod, a kayak-shaped  
coffin made out of recycled newspapers.

Biodegradable coffins are part of a larger trend toward  
"natural" burials, which require no formaldehyde  
embalming, cement vaults, chemical lawn treatments or  
laminated caskets. Advocates say such burials are less  
damaging to the environment.

Cremation was long considered more environmentally  
friendly than burials in graveyards, but its use of fossil  
fuels has raised concerns.

"Green" cemeteries hosting natural burials have  
sprouted up in California, Florida, New York, South  
Carolina, and Texas. Examples of eco-friendly burial  
products range from natural-fiber shrouds to fair-trade  
bamboo caskets lined with unbleached cotton. There are  
also more traditional-looking coffins made of wood  
certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

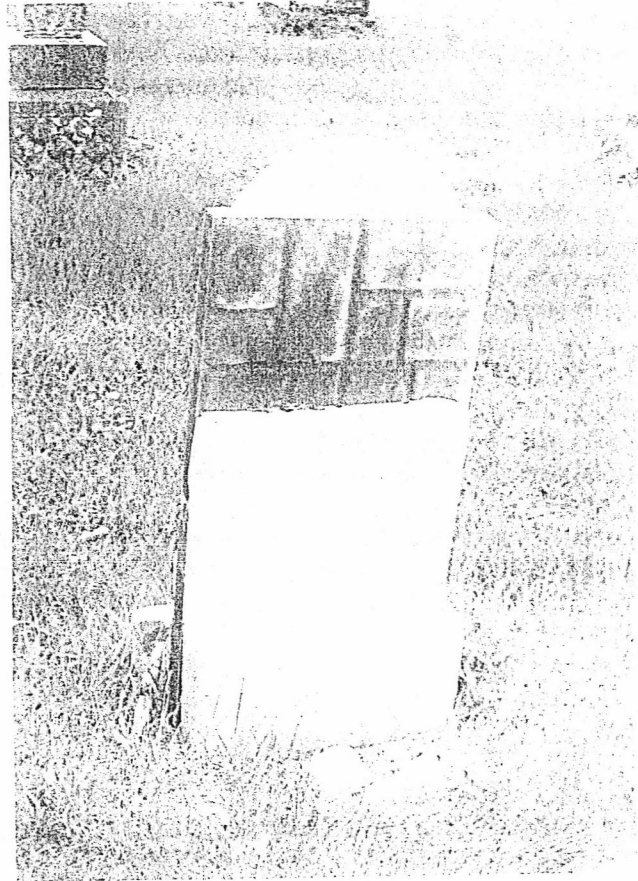
Biodegradable containers cost from around \$100 to  
more than \$3000 for a handcrafted, hand-painted model.

The Green Burial Council is working on certification  
programs to verify the commitment and quality of  
providers who say they are going natural, according to  
Joe Sehee, the council's founder and executive director.

\*\*\*\*\*  
From: [www.knowth.com/newgrange.htm](http://www.knowth.com/newgrange.htm)  
New Grange -- a passage to the Afterworld. One of the  
finest monuments of European pre-history dating to circa  
3200 B.C., New Grange was built during the Neolithic or  
New Stone Age by a wealthy farming community that  
prospered on the rich lands of the Boyne Valley, Ireland.  
Archaeologists classify New Grange as a passage tomb  
that provided a link for the living community to the world of  
their deities and served as a focal point for ritual and  
celebration. It consists of a passage leading to a chamber  
where the remains of the dead (usually cremated) were  
placed. Above the entrance to the passage is a window-  
like opening called a roof-box that allows sunlight to  
penetrate the chamber on the shortest day of the year,  
the winter solstice. Each year, the winter solstice event  
attracts much attention at New Grange. Many gather at  
the ancient tomb to wait for dawn, as people did 5,000  
years ago. The intent of its builders was undoubtedly to  
mark the beginning of the new year and may have served  
as a powerful symbol of the victory of life over death. New  
Grange is open to the public year round.

-- Based on an article by Clare Tuffy first published in *The  
World of Hibernia magazine* (no longer published).

\*\*\*\*\*  
About 70 iron crosses mark graves in a Catholic cemetery  
near Hague, North Dakota (population 91). Treasured  
as folk art, the elaborate crosses, or *eizenkreuzen*,  
were crafted by German-speaking immigrants from Russia  
who settled in the town. Crosses date from 1870-1930.



Stone in the Redman Cemetery showing the use of a  
landscape block to reinforce a broken gravestone.

### BLACKHAWK

From: [www.Worldvitalrecords.com](http://www.Worldvitalrecords.com) Printed August  
28, 1874 in the *Cedar Falls Gazette*: The ladies of Lyons  
contemplate forming an organization, to be known as the  
Ladies' Cemetery Association of Lyons, for the purpose  
of raising funds to improve and beautify the cemetery  
grounds. A similar organization should be formed in our  
place. A glance at our cemeteries shows great neglect in  
this respect. We take pains to beautify and adorn our  
homes, while the resting places of our departed loved  
ones are sadly neglected.

-- Contributed by Rebecca Miller

From the *Waterloo Evening Courier*, August 15, 1910:  
"Gravedigger for Half a Century -- Janesville mourns  
James Allison Rowen." Sexton Rowen was born in New  
York in 1834 and came to the Janesville area about 1860.  
He was made gravedigger and sexton of the Presbyterian  
church and served in that position for fifty years. His  
friend and undertaker J. B. Johnston conducted the  
funeral service at his request.

-- Contributed by Mike Magee

### BLACKHAWK, continued

From the *Waterloo Courier*, Feb. 29, 1910: "Order Several Graves Opened." Des Moines, Ia, Feb. 28 -- (Evening Press) The state board of health has ordered several graves in Central Iowa towns opened. The object is to ascertain the cause of mysterious funerals at night, where the proper permits were not secured.

From the *Waterloo Evening Courier*, March 1, 1910: "Babe Put in Cracker Box -- Secretary Sumner orders grave opened near Hanley." The state board of health has ordered the coroner of Madison county to open a grave near Hanley. A 3-day-old baby, the illegitimate child of a young girl, was buried there in a cracker box in the dead of night, without authority from the cemetery association.

It was learned that a baby was also buried in a cellar in a town in BlackHawk County. The case is also being investigated.

Much speculation is aroused over the report that an illegitimate child was consigned to earth under a house in this county. Efforts this afternoon to secure more definite information were unavailing.

The authorities here will be enlisted in the work begun by Dr. Sumner to uncover alleged violations of the law in burials.

From the *Waterloo Courier*, Feb. 20, 1910: "Strange Will of Woman is Filed -- Wants family burial ground put in order." Des Moines, Ia., Feb. 19 -- Expressing her belief that the family burying ground has been neglected in years gone by and through lack of attention has become a distasteful place in which to be buried, Susan McIntire especially provided in her will that her property should not be divided until the ground is improved and an iron fence put around it. Mrs. McIntire resided near Altoona.

From *The Burlington Hawkeye*, December 29, 2007: "Snowmobiles may get ban from cemeteries." The Cedar Falls City Council is drafting an ordinance that restricts all snowmobiles and all-terrain -vehicles from cemeteries. A complaint was filed by someone finding snowmobile tracks near headstones in a local cemetery. Signs have been posted signs at cemeteries to discourage snowmobile use.

### CASS

From the *Atlantic News Telegraph*: "Supervisors, city officials looking at where responsibility for cemetery lies," by Laura Bacon, NT Staff Writer. Volunteers who have been helping maintain the Southlawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery have asked the Cass County Supervisors to find out who is legally responsible for the property. It was annexed some time ago by the city of Atlantic. Dennis Britson from the Iowa Insurance Division said the City of Atlantic would have the responsibility to preserve and

protect the property as a cemetery. City Administrator Ron Crisp said they will take the matter to a council work session.

### CHICKASAW

From the *Chickasaw County Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Volume 24, Number 1, Fourth Quarter 2007, J.L. Kottke, Editor, p. 26: Chickasaw County Cemetery Commission. Several dedicated workers have been busy with the restoration of the Dresden Township Garden of Memories Cemetery, formerly known as Jones Cemetery. The overgrown brush has now been removed as well as the old dilapidated fence. Several overgrown trees and stumps have also been removed. Many of the stones were in need of repair. Mike Magee and Bill Youngblut of Black Hawk County have been assisting Fred and Priscilla Reisner in the restoration of stones and bases, thirteen so far. Robert Downs, Mark Westendorf, and Rex Nolte have also been helping with the stumps and fencing, now awaiting a new fence in the spring. Thelma Allen and Priscilla Reisner have been probing the ground and have found several stones so far. Some of the surnames on those "underground" stones are DeLap, Kroft and Goodrich. Mary Ann Crandall is so kind to bring lunch to the workers, sometimes on very hot days. Some of the workers also worked awhile at the Little Turkey Protestant Cemetery leveling, fixing stones and fixing bases. Commission members met recently for dinner and discussed next season's restoration plans.

### FAYETTE

Virgie Lee (Whitcher) Bruening, charter member and current chair of the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission, passed away February 16, 2008 at the age of 83. Virgie received her early education in the rural schools of Fayette County, graduated from West Union High School and attended Upper Iowa University to earn a business degree. Virgie was a farm housewife, mother of three girls, country school teacher, bookkeeper- secretary, and still later a teacher's assistant. She was active in the Fayette County Genealogical Society and volunteered at the Fayette County History Center. Memorials were directed to be given to the local genealogical and historical societies.

Virgie was the fifth of nine original (1998) Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission members to have died, but not before they individually and collectively had seen and/or worked in some of the many total restorations of Fayette County pioneer cemeteries. She was known for her love of gardening and working with flowers, her love of the color red, and her 'flat hats' (tams). Pioneer cemetery work crew members remember Virgie for her regular arrival by 10:00 am at the cemetery under restoration with lunch, which included all the condiments.

Four of Virgie's favorite hymns were sung and played at



her memorial service, including 'When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder', 'In The Garden', 'The Church In The Wildwood' and 'Wind Beneath My Wings'.

- (submitted by Steve Story, organist at the funeral)

### HENRY

From *The Waterloo Courier*, February 9, 1911:

"Eccentric Physician Ordered Asbestos Shroud For His Burial." Mt. Pleasant, Ia., Feb. 9 -- Dr. A. W. Buell, who died at Mt. Pleasant on Saturday, and who ordered that his tomb be opened once yearly and an admission be charged to view his body, also left instructions with Burlington undertakers that his remains be kept for from three to ten weeks and then wrapped in asbestos before burial. He is described in the article as an eccentric old man, but good at heart. He maintained a home and hospital for needy and deserving people. He left specific instructions about his burial and intended that his body could be seen in a perfect state of preservation in years to come.

--Contributed by Mike Magee

Stan Hill, Chairman of the Henry County Pioneer Cemetery Commission, is concerned about access to three pioneer cemeteries maintained by the Commission that are on land acquired by the Iowa Department of Transportation prior to construction of Highway 218.

(venue of the Saints) in the Mt. Pleasant area. In a letter to a member of the IDOT Commission, Stan expresses his concerns that the Commission did not plan for acceptable access/right-of-ways to the Menfree, Willeford, and Pickard Cemeteries and, therefore, these burial sites are inaccessible to most citizens who wish to visit them. The Menfree Cemetery is now accessible only through the gravel lagoon road owned by the city of Mt. Pleasant; the Cemetery Commission is furnished with a key to unlock the gate on the lagoon road. Access to the Willeford Cemetery can be gained through the Mt. Pleasant Recreational Trail. The access to the Pickard is a mowed path across a rough and sloping area, 2 water ways, and a culvert, but Stan was still unable to drive his vehicle to the site. Stan urges other counties who may be anticipating state highway construction to get involved with the IDOT in the early stages of planning, so they can bargain for adequate access roads to cemeteries that may be along the route.

### LEE

The Lee County Pioneer Cemetery Association held its 5th Annual Banquet at Ogo's Restaurant in Montrose, Iowa, on December 7, 2007. The featured speaker was Mike Foley who spoke about the restoration of the Zarahemla Cemetery on the Vic Conlee Farm. This cemetery was established in 1839 as the burial site of Mormon settlers. There is now a new entry to the site,

along with an information board about the early settlement. Awards were presented following the meal to several outstanding youth volunteers and to Fran Sprunger, the recipient of the Donald Wagner Memorial Award. Also honored was Beryl Roberts, A WWII veteran who was held as a POW for 18 months and to the Vietnam Veterans of American based in Ft. Madison. Articles about the banquet were printed in 2 Lee County newspapers, including the *Daily Democrat* in Ft. Madison on Jan. 31, 2008.

From the *Daily Gate City*, December 13, 2007: "Keokuk had its own case of 'murdered babe'," by Terry Altheide. Terry compares the murder of Baby Grace whose body was found in Texas on October 29 with a similar case in Lee County in 1894. The body of an infant girl was found in May of that year under a culvert in Keokuk and was buried the same day. It is Terry's goal to find the grave of this unidentified child and to pay tribute to her memory. Terry laments the fact that hundreds of children are murdered each year and believes that the guilty will be brought to justice in this life or the hereafter.

From *Preserving Our Past*, Winter Issue, 2007: In this newsletter of the Lee County Pioneer Cemetery Association, the Pioneer Patriot's Day at the Montrose Cemetery is featured on the front page. Pictured are members of the American Legion Post 41 of Keokuk, Sons of the Legion Squadron 421, and representatives of Bugles Across America. An article about the event that was printed in the Ft. Madison Daily-Democrat on October 1, 2007 is reprinted. The ceremony centered on the grave of Cato Mead who is believed to be the only black American Revolutionary War soldier buried in Iowa. Also included in the newsletter are articles about the placing of a sign at the Sand Cemetery, War of 1812 POW Andrew Oiler and others honored at a varsity football game in Keokuk, Frost Grove Cemetery, and the history and importance of sympathy flowers.

*"Love penetrates further into any tomb of darkness and doubt than any other faculty of the human soul"*

-- Anonymous

-- Contributed by Terry Altheide

### LINN

From *The Sun*, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, November 3, 1978: "Young couple Seeks Burial in One of Oldest Linn Cemeteries," by Sara Gaarde. Pictured is the Craig Cemetery located near Mt. Vernon. John and Marilyn Hunter of Cedar Rapids have inquired about purchasing burial plots in the cemetery from township trustee, Helen Neal. Little is known of the history of the cemetery, who is buried there, and if and where available plots are located. John Hunter grew up in the area and wants his grave to be in the cemetery that is "quaint, beautiful, and secluded." Helen Neal has requested information and assistance from Linn County, but the article does not say how the matter was resolved.

-- From [www.WorldVitalRecords.com](http://www.WorldVitalRecords.com)

-- Contributed by Rebecca Miller

From the *Des Moines Register*, March 5, 2007: "Cemetery urination costs man his TV job," by Clark Kauffman. A photographer for a Cedar Rapids television station has been fired for urinating in a cemetery while covering the funeral of an Iowa soldier killed in Iraq. Gerry Edwards, a photographer for KGAN-TV for 24 years, claimed that he feared missing the soldier's funeral procession if he left the cemetery. Last Memorial Day, persons attending a service complained that Edwards talked loudly on his cell phone in a cemetery. His appeal for unemployment benefits was denied by an administrative law judge.

#### LUCAS

From the premier issue of *Our Iowa* magazine, November, 2007: "My Day with the Grave Witches," by Jerry Wiebel, Editor. The author recounts how he met Mary Ruth Pierchbacher and Darlene Arnold in Chariton to see them demonstrate their ability to witch for unmarked graves. Mary Ruth is a member of the Lucas County Pioneer Cemetery Commission and Darlene is the treasurer of the county genealogical society. Jerry says he was "spellbound by two dear ladies as they located old graves in a country cemetery." They claim to be able to determine if the grave is that of a man or woman. They match their findings to old records to determine who is buried there. Before they arrive in a cemetery unfamiliar to them, they ask that the headstones be covered -- just to prove they can determine the difference between a man and a woman by witching.

<http://fahrusha.wordpress.com/2007/11/28grave-witching>

#### MAHASKA

(My apologies to Jo Vernoooy for failing to print this report in the last issue of *Grave News*)

In the past, we have had some issues at Gorsuch Pioneer Cemetery on the Poweshiek-Mahaska line. A renter of farm ground had refused to allow a descendant entrance. The property was sold and we contacted the attorney for the estate that had owned the real estate. We were able to have an easement included in the legal description on the Deed when the property was transferred. We found out later how fortunate it was that we had pursued the easement, as the DOT has granted our request for an entrance from Hwy. 63. We will be pursuing the installation of the entrance this fall, if possible.

We are happy to report that action is being taken on the repair the "flat(table top) stones" in Smith Cemetery. SAPIC's own, Larry Davis, has been working with Commission member, Leroy Nugteren and volunteer, Eddie Hoover, in repairing the stones. We are so very grateful to Larry. As you will remember, for quite some time we have been attempting to find someone qualified to repair the stones. Larry was our

first choice, of course; however, he had some misgivings about their repair. After another look, with input from Leroy and Eddie, he decided to repair the stones. Without repair, these stones would have soon deteriorated to the point where they could not be saved. We are so grateful for these dedicated men who realize what a wonderful legacy we have in these unusual stones.

We are continuing with the photographing of our Pioneer Cemeteries. Lloyd Patterson of Oskaloosa has agreed to this task. With each year, we lose the legibility of these wonderful, old stones. By photographing them, we can have the actual photos to review, and they are also being put on DVD.

The individuals who are going to be working at Muchakinock Cemetery are waiting for the crops to be removed so that they will have better access to the Cemetery. So many Pioneer Cemeteries were on accessible routes when established; however, now they are landlocked.

We are so thankful for the volunteers who help our Commission, and thank you to our wonderful Commission members!

-- Jo Vernoooy

#### MUSCATINE

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, December, 2007: "Muscatine woman works to commemorate 'Babyland' cemetery," by Melissa Regennitter. Barb Andresen has decorated the graves of her three stillborn children in Memorial Park Cemetery since 1960, but in 2000, she asked for donations to brighten up the grounds by adding an electrical outlet in the Babyland portion so Christmas decorations could be installed. Now Barb has made it a tradition to pay tribute to all children in Babyland, sometimes by putting a toy on each grave. Tom Brehmer, cemetery office manager, says there have been 180 babies buried there since its inception on July 24, 1940. The lights, the tree and having family near when it's time to remember those lost have made visiting Babyland a more pleasant experience for Andresen and her family. "I know it's a good thing for other families, too," she said.

#### SHELBY

From <Harlan Online.com> Harlan (Iowa) newspapers, 6/29/04: Two Shelby County men were charged with drug possession and theft of five bronze grave markers from local cemeteries. Three of the markers belonged to veterans of the two World Wars. Each marker was worth between \$250-350. The military markers had the names and dates of the deceased on them and were taken from the Harlan Cemetery and the Graceland Cemetery in Avoca.

From SAPIC member, Denny Williams, in an e-mail dated January 30, 2008: Denny has completed efforts to restore interment listings for Bowman's Grove Cemetery the Internet. You can find the work in SAPIC format at [www.mindspring.com/~denny.williams/bowmansgrovecemetery](http://www.mindspring.com/~denny.williams/bowmansgrovecemetery). Please feel free to download and safeguard the information as you wish. The next step is to re-photograph all the gravestones to replace the missing digital photographs. For more information, contact:

[denny.williams@mindspring.com](mailto:denny.williams@mindspring.com)

#### WAPELLO

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, January 15, 2008, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: "Eddyville's cemetery well-kept, absent ice storms," by Rachel Powers, Eddyville. Ms. Powers is responding to a previous letter that was critical of the persons responsible for maintenance in the Eddyville Cemetery. The previous letter writer complained that she could not visit her brother's grave because of fallen limbs due to ice storms in December. Ms. Powers stated that a 4-H group had planned to pick up tree limbs, but the activity had to be canceled due to an unusual series of winter storms during the month. She advised the person who complained to visit again during Memorial Day weekend when the cemetery is beautifully decorated with many flags placed by the Agri-Power FFA, the American Legion and Eddyville Elementary students.

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, February 6, 2008, "Former Ottumwan placing wreaths at Arlington," by Judy Krieger. Pictured is former Ottumwan, LTC Lisa Winger laying a wreath for LTC Russell Martin MIA at Arlington National Cemetery. The wreaths were donated by the Worcester family, Wreaths Across America company, that has done this every year for 17 years. Lisa volunteered to lay wreaths in section 33 on December 15. LTC Russell D. Martin was from Bloomfield and was shot down on June 3, 1996 over southern Laos. Lisa wore his POW bracelet for 15 years and visits his grave at least twice a year.

#### FROM NEIGHBORING STATES -- ILLINOIS

From the *Herald & Review*, Decatur, IL, November 26, 2006: "Retiree finds satisfaction in restoring forgotten cemeteries," by Huey Freeman. PIATT County. The extensive article tells of the efforts of SAPIC member, John Heider, who has restored the Kentuck and Piatt Cemeteries with the help of his grandchildren and his 89-year-old father-in-law. Heider uses dowsing, or divining, to locate fallen grave markers that he digs up with plastic shovels to prevent any chipping of the stones. Each unearthed stone is air-dried for several days and then taken to his shop for repair and cleaning. He also inserts nylon reinforcing bars to put broken stones back together and makes new concrete bases, if necessary. He was especially motivated to restore the Piatt Cemetery because it contained the grave of Lt. Samuel Olney, a Revolutionary War Veteran from Rhode Island who died in

1833 and is believed to be the only soldier of the Revolution buried in the county. For the complete story, visit:

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&AN=2W62W6454799902&site=ehost-live> or contact Pat Shaw for a copy: [<patshaw@netins.net>](mailto:patshaw@netins.net)

From *The Putnam County Record*, July 4, 2007: "A Meeting with John Heider at Friend's Cemetery," by Darrell Alleman. In this full-page article with 3 photographs, John Heider is profiled by the writer who obviously has a great deal of respect and admiration for him. John demonstrated his ability to dowse in this beautiful cemetery that is maintained by his cousin, Stephen Wilson. John imparted a great deal of information about cemeteries in general, including how to tell the gender of the deceased, how to clean stones properly, and the family history of some of those whose graves are located there. The article mentions that John Heider is also an antique tractor collector. Check his web site at: [www.heidertractors.com](http://www.heidertractors.com)

From the *Clay County Republican*, July 18, 2007: "Rinehart Family Working to 'Bring Life' Back to Kinnamon Cemetery," by Beth Fancher. Pictured are members of the Rinehart Family along with Cemetery Restoration Specialist John Heider as they repair stones in the Kinnamon Cemetery located northeast of Louisville. Working in the cemetery was a project held in conjunction with the Rinehart Family Reunion. About 90 descendants of John Rinehart attended the reunion. John was 88 years old when he died in 1853 and was buried there. John Heider used the ancient method of dowsing to locate several unmarked graves. When his pipe hoist with chain pulleys jammed while lifting a third section of a heavy marble monument, the workers resorted to using an ancient method of moving stone by rolling it up a wood board using large dowel rods. John comments that the weather and animals are more destructive to old cemeteries than vandalism.

From the *News Gazette*, Champaign, Ill., July 29, 2007: "Cemetery Restorer -- Piecing together a final resting place," by Meg Thilmony. Pictured in color in a full-page story is John Heider from Monticello, Illinois, in the Kentuck Cemetery that he restored along with assistance from his father-in-law and grandchildren. The story continues on another page. Besides the Kentuck, John has restored the Marquiss and Barnes Cemeteries. A story about John's hobby of restoring antique tractors and windmills is also included. John travels around the state giving workshops on cemetery restoration and encourages members of 4-H Clubs to take on cemetery restoration as projects. Piatt County has 42 cemeteries; half are unused and in decline. According to John, that has to change, because "if it wasn't for them, you wouldn't be here."

From the *Rantoul Press*, Rantoul, Illinois, October 24, 2007: "Grave doubt -- many skeptical, but Heider uses unique method to locate burials," by Dave Hinton, *Rantoul Press* editor. Pictured in color on the front page is John Heider as he uses two copper wires to exhibit his dowsing method to find graves while Don Cler of Thomasboro walks alongside him with flags to be used as markers. They were in Wells Cemetery in rural Penfield. A great deal of the article is devoted to Heider's use of copper wires as divining rods to locate unmarked graves. The practice also can tell the gender of the deceased 99 percent of the time. Although he cannot explain how and why it works, he says he has learned to accept it and use it to locate unmarked graves in the cemeteries he is restoring. In the Penfield Cemetery, he was there to help the Lincoln's Challenge cadets and staff with the clean up of the Wells Cemetery. The story continues on another page and shows several cadets and Senior Airman Brandon Keener as they clean brush and shore up grave markers.

For more information, contact John C. Heider at 988 Iron Horse Road, Monticello, IL 61856. Telephone: 217-762-2422 (office) or 217-898-2422 (mobile).  
E-mail: [jheider@mchsi.com](mailto:jheider@mchsi.com)

Note: Let's hope that SAPIC members from Iowa can meet soon with our energetic and talented fellow cemetery restorer from neighboring Illinois to share information and view each other's cemeteries!

From the *Burlington Hawkeye*, May 17, 2007, "Just turn me into a rosebush," by Betsy Taylor, Associated Press writer. An Illinois-based business, started by Frank Strand, is turning cremated ash into plant nutrient. The small Kankakee, Illinois based business is called Floramorial, Inc. Strand, now 84, serves as an advisor in the business run by his son, Roger. They work with a funeral director, crematory, and a veterinarian, in the case of pet remains. In a process that breaks the bond between the calcium and phosphate in the cremation ash, the remains become water soluble and can be absorbed by plant roots. Pictured is Sherry Flad, a Humane Society of Missouri adoption center staffer, as she places a handful of material made from the cremated remains of two rescued dogs around a shrub planted in their honor. A certificate and a commemorative trowel are part of the Floramorial package. [www.Floramorial.com](http://www.Floramorial.com)

From the *Daily Gate City*, December 26, 2007: "Couple hunt down the graves of Civil War veterans." Amboy, Ill. Patrick DeGeorge and his fiancée, Katie Thome, are in the process of finding and honoring the Civil War veterans from Battery G, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, the unit he and others portray as Civil War re-enactors. For DeGeorge, an

Iraq war veteran, it's a way to honor the people who served before him in hopes that, a hundred years from now, someone will remember to honor veterans from today. In their two-year quest, the two have found dilapidated neglected headstones and burial plots. In the case of E. Nott Smith, who died in 1917, there was no headstone at all at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. Smith's burial document reads, "needs 10 cents more." They are seeking grant money to raise money for Smith's grave site and other worn and broken stones.

From *Yellowbook News*, November, 2007: "Native American Funeral Rites in Pre-Colonial Times," by Adrienne Kalmes. When the first European settlers landed on the eastern shores of this country, they encountered numerous Indian nations that had fully functioning funeral rites and practices. Much of our knowledge of the practices of these indigenous peoples comes from a study by the Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of Ethnology, completed by Dr. H. C. Yarrow, in 1878. Among the common types of Native American burial Yarrow describes are:

INHUMATION: Placing the body in a pit, grave, urn, mound, cave or beneath the floor of a building.

SURFACE BURIAL: Positioning bodies in hollow logs or covering it with loose rock or branches.

CREMATION: Burning the body and collecting or scattering the ashes.

SEPULCHER BURIAL: Placing the body in a container that remains above ground such as a canoe, lodge or carved wooden box.

AERIAL BURIAL: Raising the body into tree branches, baskets or lashed scaffolds or canoes.

AQUATIC BURIAL: Sending the body into the river, lake or ocean.

The author has directed the sales and marketing efforts of Meadow Hill Company, Inc. that produces Thumbies Fingerprint Keepsakes for more than 3,000 funeral homes across the U.S. and Canada. Adrienne Kalmes can be reached at: Telephone 877-848-6243, E-mail [adrienne@thumbies.com](mailto:adrienne@thumbies.com) Mailing address: PO Box 274, Fox River Grove, IL 60021.

From *The Burlington Hawkeye*, January 13, 2008: "Tombs in Jewish cemetery vandalized," The Associated Press. CHICAGO -- Cook County authorities say nearly 60 tombstones were defaced with swastikas and anti-Semitic phrases in the 71-year-old Westlawn Cemetery near Norridge. Damage is estimated at \$100,000.

From an unknown newspaper, unknown date: "Oldest Roman Catholic Cemetery in Northern Illinois abandoned." Pictured is the St. Mary's at Highland Park, the oldest Catholic burial place in northern Illinois, showing only 3 stones standing. The remains of early settlers of Lake County have been moved to other and more recently consecrated ground. This "Acre of God" held a double sanctity in that it is believed to be the spot

that Pere Marquette once planted a cross and preached to the Indians. It was also the site of the first log church built by settlers in the 1830's. The first burial in the joining cemetery was that of Patrick McAvoy.

--Contributed by Terry Altheide

### COLORADO

From *American Profile* magazine, January, 2008: "A Frozen Good Time," by Vicki Cox. Thousands of waving spectators line the streets of Nederland (pop. 1,394) as a parade filled with skeletons, helmeted Vikings, pompadoured Elvises and antique hearses makes its way down First Street to mark the beginning of Frozen Dead Guy Days -- a celebration that's part Mardi Gras, part country fair, and all tongue-in-cheek. Included in the celebration are coffin races, a polar plunge, costume party and frozen turkey bowling. Frozen Dead Guy Days is the residents' weekend farewell to the area's harsh, snow-filled winter. The festival began in 1994 when the body of a cryogenically frozen man, Bredo Morstoel, was found in a shed when his daughter and grandson, who were in the U.S. illegally, were deported to Norway. As a result, the town council banned frozen bodies within city limits, but "grandfathered in" Mr. Morstoel's body, now nicknamed "Grandpa." The fun-filled festival draws 15,000 visitors the second weekend in March. Frozen Dead Guy Days is scheduled for March 7-9, 2008. To learn more, click on: [www.americanprofile.com](http://www.americanprofile.com) or call 720-374-6742.

### GEORGIA

A technical assistance manual funded by the federal Center for Mental Health Services as part of a special project of the National Empowerment Center entitled: *It's About Time: Discovering, Recovering and Celebrating Psychiatric Consumer/Survivor History*, by Larry Fricks for the Georgia Consumer Council. This group, staffed by the Office of Consumer Relations, toured a cemetery at Milledgeville in March 1997 and chose to start the cemetery restoration and memorial of the burial site of many mental patients who were committed to the institution and died there. The project was about restoring dignity and respect to their lives and burial places. Copies of this technical assistance manual can be obtained by contacting: Larry Fricks, Office of Consumer Relations, 2 Peachtree Street, Suite 23-411, Atlanta, GA 30303; Telephone 404-657-2100; e-mail: [LFricks@dmh.dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:LFricks@dmh.dhr.state.ga.us)

-- Thanks to Rebecca Miller

### MICHIGAN

An extensive guide to restoring historic cemeteries, *Michigan Historic Cemetery Preservation Manual*, by Gregg G. King with Susan Kosky, Kathleen Glynn, and Madys Saborio may be obtained from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and The Charter Township of Canton, Historic District Commission and Department of

Leisure Services. <http://www.michigan.gov/>

-- Thanks to Stan Culley

### INDIANA

From Yahoo! NEWS, May 8, 2007: "Man injured by toppled tombstones charged." A man found trapped unconscious beneath of 1,000-pound tombstones in a cemetery faces charges and might have to pay for damages, police said. Michael David Schreiber of Merrillville faces charges of criminal trespassing, criminal mischief, and public intoxication. Both his legs were broken. He estimated that he had been under the stone for more than three hours. Estimated damage totaled about \$8,400 which he may be ordered to pay.

### OHIO

From: [www.wyvtv.com/news/local/12315681.html](http://www.wyvtv.com/news/local/12315681.html) December 10, 2007, "Grave Markers Stolen." Matthew Russick and Jessica Gustaitis are charged with theft and criminal mischief after stealing brass rods and markers from at least 800 graves at four New Castle-area cemeteries. They also did \$14,000 worth of damage. The Lawrence County Department of Veterans Affairs will help replace the broken or stolen markers -- but that money will have to come out of the county budget.

### MASSACHUSETTS

From the *Daily Constitution Democrat*, Keokuk, Iowa, January 6, 1890: "Beauty in Death -- Magnificence of the Hiller Mausoleum, Winchester, Mass." The article tells of the efforts of Mrs. Dr. Francis Hiller to produce the most elegant and peculiar mausoleum in America for the bodies of her late husband and herself. A great deal about her past life is given, including that fact that she had twenty-three children and outlived them all. She collected woods from all over the world for four coffins that will be in the mausoleum. Mr. and Mrs. Hiller are pictured along with a drawing of the structure. Mrs. Hiller's wish is that funerals may no longer be chilling and that the dead may lie above ground in artistic retreats and cemeteries be unknown.

### SOUTH DAKOTA

From *American Profiles* magazine, December 20, 2007-January 5, 2008: Rhett Albers and Bryan Defender have formed the Sitting Bull Monument Foundation to care for the gravesite of the Sioux Indian leader on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation near Mobridge (pop. 3,547). The men cleaned up the site and are raising money for a \$12 million visitors center.

### TEXAS

From the *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram*, November 13, 2007: Texas State Cemetery -- Where political battles are put to rest," by John Moritz. Pictured is the Texas State Cemetery that was founded in 1851 and is located a few

blocks east of the Capitol. Harry Bradley, the superintendent of the cemetery, describes the site as "a humbling place, even to the folks who've earned the privilege of being buried there." Those eligible are former members of the legislature or a member who dies in office, former state officials, persons specified by the governor's proclamation or the current Legislature, and persons who made a significant contribution to Texas history and culture. Bradley tells of having to avoid putting former political rivals next to each other. Because of his contributions to Texas culture and history, former Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry was eligible to be buried there and has a grave marker, but is actually buried in Dallas.

From the *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram*, December 5, 2007: "Effort of remembrance." Pictured is cemetery director, Przemyslaw Isroel Szpilman, as he walks through a Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, Poland. Nazis burned the offices and files of the sprawling 19th-century burial ground in 1943, and now Szpilman is taking on the monumental task of reconstructing the cemetery's records of its estimated 250,000 graves. Contributor of the article, Sidney Lewis, comments that destruction of Jewish cemeteries was part of the Nazi plan. The stones were used for terrace and street paving. He compares it to a farmer in Boone County, Iowa who took stones from a local cemetery to use as weights on his disc. There are also stories of farmers using grave markers for barn foundations and sidewalks in other parts of Iowa.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 2007: "Bid to save cemetery caught in legal dispute," by Lee Hancock. The article details efforts by descendants to access the Love Cemetery near Scottsville in East Texas. Doris Vitatoc and other descendants gained access in the 1990's (after being locked out for more than 3 decades) and cleaned the site. A book, *Love Cemetery: Unburying the Secret History of Slaves*, by author China Galland, chronicled the restoration efforts of the group. Now, however, they are being denied access again. Though state law tells property owners to allow access to graves, it doesn't set penalties for violations. Snider Industries, a timber industry that is owner of the access, wants the restoration group to have insurance that may cost as much as \$34,000 per year. Snider may offer to help by providing similar insurance that it offers to hunters at a lower cost. Pictured is Doris Vitatoc visiting the grave site of her great-grandfather, Ohio Taylor, and Philip Verhalen as he helps remove brush.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, December 10, 2007: "Irish frontier soldiers' headstones marked." SAN ANGELO, Texas -- The European Union's ambassador to the U.S. placed wreaths on the headstones of five Irish frontier soldiers Sunday at the Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. While the grave sites of the five Irish

soldiers killed in the Indian Wars of the 1870s are unknown, the headstones commemorating their sacrifice are located at the east end of the parade ground. The post closed in 1889.

From the *Ft. Worth Star Telegram*, December 15, 2007: "Celebrating Christmas with dear departed," by John Austin. Pictured is Francisco Gonzales, Moore Memorial Home and Cemetery foreman, as he sets a star atop what will be a nativity display for the 16th annual Reflect, Rejoice and Remember, a drive-through Christmas spectacular featuring animals, a creche and (weather permitting) a live baby Jesus in the manger. The event takes place in Arlington and includes a nondenominational memorial service, refreshments, several thousand lighted candles on graves and along streets in the cemetery leading to the nativity scene. Other features have been added over the years. Some relatives of those interred on the grounds feel that "it is a way to have Christmas with my family."

From the *Dallas Morning News*, December 23, 2007, "In many cemeteries, Christmas flourishes," by Patricia Leigh Brown, *The New York Times*. Pictured is Martin Hernandez and Claudia Ventura as they embellish the grave of a loved one in California. The writer tells of a growing trend to decorate graves and cemeteries at Christmas, causing cemetery officials to issue decorating regulations and occasionally enacting crackdowns on "nonconforming" grave decor. The practice is most commonly associated in the U. S. with el Dia de los Muertos, the Mexican folk tradition of the Day of the Dead. It is becoming common practice across the country and "the grave is becoming an extension of the living room," said Helen Sinclair, a cemetery historian in Chicago.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, December 28, 2007: "Man's devotion to cemetery keeps area's history alive," by Stephanie Sandoval. Paul Dafft has lovingly cared for the Keenan Cemetery in Farmers Branch in Dallas County for about 30 years. The graveyard had become overgrown and unkempt, so he and other association members went to work setting things right. Since then, he has been instrumental in placing 3 historical markers in the cemetery -- one for the cemetery itself, one for baby Keenan (the first burial), and one for Rev. David Meyers, who founded Union Baptist Church in 1846. He also brought the first waterline into the cemetery, placed military markers on veterans' graves, added a flag pole, planted trees, and organized the installation of a wrought-iron fence. Since Mr. Dafft now has cancer and most of the other cemetery association members have died or are aged, they were pleased when the city of Farmers Branch agreed to take over the maintenance of the site. That allows Mr. Dafft to face his passing peacefully.

-- Texas articles contributed by Sidney Louis

## WASHINGTON

From *The Director*, November, 2007: "Grave Tenders Add Life to Death," by Marc Ramirez. (Reprinted from *The Battle Times*, Aug. 14, 2007) Pictured are Karyl Boxmeyer and husband Ron with the truck they use in a grave-tending business. The sign on the truck says, "The Cemetery Lady -- of grave concern." Karyl launched the business of providing a gravestone cleaning service after she retired from a career in law enforcement. She named the business after her grandmother who took her to the cemetery as a child and instilled in her a respect for the graves of family members. Families and friends who are busy or live far away or are not able to visit family graves can hire Karyl to tidy up the site and clean the marker. They also place flowers and other items and take a photo of the finished site for their client. If the markers appear weak or cracked, the Boxmeyers won't do anything, instead asking clients whether they want the cemetery notified. They charge \$25 for the first marker cleaning and \$5 for each additional; weeding is \$5. Photos are provided free. Karyl and Ron were even married in a cemetery at the Queen Anne family plot.

-- Contributed by Terry Altheide

## WISCONSIN

From the Wisconsin Historical Society's Bimonthly Newsletter, *COLUMNS*, Vol. 28, No. 6, ISSN 0196-1306, November/December 2007: Archaeology News, "Robinson Burial Settlement." Two Oneida County landowners who disturbed a Native American burial site on the shores of Lake Nokomis when they began building a home were recently ordered by the Oneida County Circuit Court to remove the foundation, restore the site and pay penalties, assessments and costs totaling more than \$16,000 for the violations. The case, filed by the Wisconsin Department of Justice at the request of the Department of Natural Resources and the Burial Sites Preservation Board, which includes representatives of the Society, has established an important precedent for the state's burial preservation law, demonstrating that violators will be prosecuted.

Wisconsin law says that no person may intentionally cause or permit the disturbance of a burial site. The landowners, Raymond and Patti Robinson, began construction of a home foundation within the designated boundaries of the burial site, despite being told in 1999 by the Society that their property contained a burial site. After hearing of the construction, Society staff visited the location, arranged for a survey of the property and contacted law enforcement officials. Over the last year, the Society has worked proactively with the Department of Justice and the DNR to ensure that the case was aggressively pursued. The construction contractor was also charged and ordered to pay \$10,000.

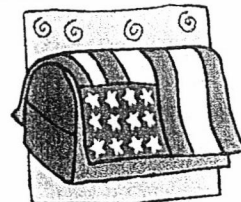
[www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/burialsites](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/burialsites)

-- Thanks to Ron Harris

From *The Director* magazine, December 2007: "Inflamed Vets Score Relief from Flag-folding Edict," by Chris Raymond. While not officially part of the "U.S. Flag Code." The flag-folding ceremony conducted at funerals of military veterans can include a verbal recitation of the generally accepted significance of each of the flag's 13 folds, if a family requests it. On September 27, 2007, an internal memo within the federal government banned the recitation at all of the 125 national ceremonies in the U.S. This edict was apparently issued as a result of one complaint by an individual who objected to the meaning given to the 11th fold. In October, the edict was quasi-rescinded in response to public, veteran, and congressional pressure. Now a family member or volunteer honor guard may read the recitation or a comparable script.

### Generally Accepted Significance of Each Flag Fold

1. Symbol of life.
2. Symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
3. In honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.
4. Represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.
5. A tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong.
6. Represents where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
7. A tribute to our armed forces, for it is through the armed forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
8. A tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death that we might see the light of day, and to honor the mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
9. A tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.
10. A tribute to father, for he, too, has given sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.
11. In the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
12. In the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.
13. When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."



From the *Dead Beat*, Fall, 2007: "Stepping Stones," by Jason Ryan Engler. Cemetery: the very word can strike fear and awe in those who have ever had any experience or dealings with them. anyone who has ever visited a cemetery generally leaves feeling one, or both, of these emotions.

Cemetery is from the Greek etymology *koimEtErion*, which literally means "sleeping chamber" or "burial place." Cemeteries are often considered places of peace: it has always been conveyed that they are places of rest and serenity. Cemetery and Memorial Park owners, doyen, and founders have almost always expressed this throughout the somewhat recent history of their existence.

But it seems that we, as a society, have started to discredit the need and purpose of cemeteries. See, they aren't just places of rest for the dead -- they are stepping stones into our past.

Many people ask me how I became interested in a career such as funeral service at such an early age. My response is always the same: Cemeteries. One summer, my step-mom was researching family history for membership in the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and we literally spent the entire summer traveling the state of Texas going through cemeteries. Obviously, that had an impact on me.

But even before that, my grandfather used to take me to our family's graves at San Geronimo Cemetery in Seguin, Texas. I very vividly remember seeing my great grandmother's stone, and reading the words, "Ruhe in Frieden" -- German for "Rest in Peace." I remember as he told me stories of family members whose graves we were visiting, and where they fit in our family history. It was there that I first learned of my family -- who they were, what they did to thrive and ultimately, where I came from. These stones I saw were more than just places of record for future generations, they were almost like portals into the past -- windows that opened up conversation and stirred the heart and sparked the memory.

I was thinking just recently, while visiting with a family as they prearranged for the imminent death of a loved one, and explaining to them the benefits of these stepping stones. Although I am a major advocate of cremation, it is my opinion that there should always be a stepping stone of some sort. It is very important for these touchstones to be available for generations to come.

Now let me make myself a little clearer. The final resting place can be a family plot, a columbarium niche, a mausoleum crypt -- whatever is appropriate for a particular family, the result is always the same: Permanent Memorialization -- touchstones that leave a *physical* legacy for future generations. Even if a family chooses cremation there needs to be a final resting place to have the closure in the grieving process. Part of this closure is memorialization. Many times, there is a sort of serenity for a family to see a loved one's name and dates of birth and death permanently inscribed, carved into a block of granite or marble.

Even, and especially when a family chooses to scatter a loved one's cremated remains, we should always encourage some type of permanent memorial. Something that is tangible, that they can touch and feel, not just emotionally and spiritually, but physically.

I always enjoyed the trips with my grandpa, or other family members, and finding out where I came from. Who my family and ancestors were and are and it was not just a thought of "this is where they rest." It was, "this is where the memories are!"

This is a very important heritage that we must pass on to our future generations. Many stories and thoughts have been shared while visiting the Engler Family plot at San Geronimo Cemetery in Seguin, Texas. And even though it is my choice to be cremated, my cremated remains will one day rest there as well. Then in years to come my children, grandchildren, and all my progeny will be afforded the opportunity to return there and honor my memory and pay homage to the legacy I've left. And in this place of peace, I myself can "Ruhe in Frieden."

Jason Ryan Engler is a native of South Central Texas and resides in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a Funeral Director and Cremationist and fervently studies cremation and its history. He can be reached via e-mail at [acremationist@hotmail.com](mailto:acremationist@hotmail.com)

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