

# GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

21813 170TH ST. BIRMINGHAM, IOWA 52535  
VOLUME 14 ISSUE #1

www.rootsweb.com/iasapc/  
January 2009

**You are invited to attend the Saturday, April 18 meeting of SAPIC at 10:00 AM in DeWitt (Clinton County), at the Central Community Historical Museum on Sixth Avenue across from Scott Drug Store and Hardees. This is the south end of the business/retail stores in DeWitt. Coming from the south off 4-lane Highway 61, take the first DeWitt exit and go north across the railroad tracks about six blocks; the museum is on the right. From the west on Highway 30, go straight into town and follow the street (old Highway 30) until you get to a 4-way traffic light on Sixth Avenue. Turn right (or south) and go 3 blocks; the museum is on the left corner. Lunch is on your own. Hardees, Subway, and a family restaurant are nearby.**

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SAPIC is supporting a proposal in the current legislature that deals with adverse possession in the Iowa Code. The term "adverse possession" refers to a provision of Common Law whereby one may gain title to a piece of property by occupying and using that property without the owner's consent for a period of time, usually ten years. Individual states have their own regulations regarding the application of this principle, setting conditions and limitations on its use. Public property is not subject to claim by adverse possession.

Cemeteries, particularly Pioneer Cemeteries, could be subject to such claims, especially if they have not been actively maintained. An adjoining landowner, or any other person, could farm or otherwise use the property for a period of ten years or more, and then file a claim for title. Such a claim may or may not be successful, but would have to be litigated.

The responsibility to resist such a claim would fall upon the County Board of Supervisors, as they are charged with maintaining the integrity of pioneer cemeteries. Whether they would actually do in any given instance is uncertain. In the roughly 25% of Iowa counties that care for their pioneer cemeteries through a commission, the commission would probably resist such a claim, but even they are powerless without the co-operation of the County Attorney. In the remaining 75% of counties, where the supervisors administer care of pioneer cemeteries directly, resistance is entirely dependent on the supervisors' willingness to do so.

Many pioneer cemeteries are publicly owned, and are not subject to such claims. However, perhaps just as many are not. Title may rest with a church, or other religious or fraternal organization, or with a family group, or with an inactive or defunct cemetery association.

The legislation we have proposed would prevent the filing

of such a claim in the first place, so that protection of the cemeteries would not be dependent upon the whim or willingness to act of officials in whichever counties such claims might arise.

The proposal reads, "A cemetery, as defined in Code section 5231.102(6), or a pioneer cemetery as defined in section 5231.102(39), shall be exempt from seizure, appropriation, or acquisition of title under any claim of adverse possession, unless it is shown that all remains have been disinterred and removed to another location."

5231.102(6): "Cemetery" means any area that is or was open to use by the public in general or any segment thereof and is used or is intended to be used to inter or scatter remains.

5231.102(39): "Pioneer cemetery" means a cemetery where there were six or fewer burials in the preceding fifty years.

HF 216 was passed in the Iowa House on March 10. Senate File 249 (formerly SF63) was not allowed out of committee on March 9. However, a companion bill in the senate for HF 216 may be successful. Contact your senator and urge passage. For more information, contact SAPIC member Bill Reedy of Buchanan

County: (319) 474-2443 or e-mail reedypart@jtt.net

Contact information for legislators and for tracing the bills can be found on web site; <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IowaLaw.html>

Watch for dates of and information about public forums in your local newspaper where your state representative and state senator will be present.

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Memorial Day

<http://www.usmemorialday.org/backgrnd.html>

From Stan Culley:

I found all of the videos for the Modern Marvels Episode. They are really good!!

Modern Marvels - Cemetery Videos

YouTube - Cemeteries - Part 1 of 5

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M-6Vm7JvkI>

YouTube - Cemeteries - Part 2 of 5

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMNbJkgxT7E>

YouTube - Cemeteries - Part 3 of 5

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKNVJVQxu2A>

YouTube - Cemeteries - Part 4 of 5

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QlrVnm9KME>

YouTube - Cemeteries - Part 5 of 5

## SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

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## 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)

Due to adverse weather conditions, most SAPIC members were unable to drive to Johnston, Iowa for the January 10, 2009 meeting. Because only a few members attended, no business meeting was held. The proposed bill to the state legislature on adverse possession was discussed. For questions about the meeting, contact SAPIC secretary, Larry Davis.

Treasurer's Report for 4th Quarter – 1 October 2008 thru 31 December 2008

Balance in "Working Account" 30 September 2008, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$1,901.77

Income

Dues	\$ 200.00
Interest 10/31/08	1.61
Interest 11/30/08	1.49
Interest 12/31/08	<u>1.77</u>

Total Income \$ 204.87

Deposit from Connie Street for Keith Street Memorial 200.00\* trans. to Reserve

Expense

Ck #218 – Patricia Shaw – "address correction requested" stamp	\$ 24.88
Ck #219 – Jon Kordick – Keith Street Memorial	200.00* trans. from Reserve
Ck #220 – Patricia Shaw – newsletter postage	<u>54.47</u>
Total Expense	\$ 279.35

- 200.00\* from Reserve  
\$ 79.35

Balance in "Working Account" 31 December 2008 \$2,106.64

Balance in "Reserve Account" 30 September 2008, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 3,528.39

From Connie Street for Keith Street Memorial	200.00
Ck #219 to Jon Kordick for Keith Street Memorial	<u>- 200.00</u>
Balance in "Reserve Account" 31 December 2008	\$ 3,528.39

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 2008 \$ 5,555.68

Plus additional funds:

182 day CD - \$1,000.00 - 5% - matures 1/08 – renews at 4.45%  
12 month CD - \$4,000.00 - 5.25% - matures 1/16/2008 – renews at 4.50%

**NOTE:** These 2 CDs were combined into one and renewed 1/16/08

Total \$5,263.37 at 4.5% - will mature 1/16/09.

If renewed on that date, \$240.18 interest will be added – total \$5,503.55.

(New Interest rate not yet determined.)

Respectfully submitted,  
*Valerie Ogren, Treasurer*  
108 N. Oak  
Jefferson IA 50129-1841  
Ph 1-515-386-4784  
E-mail: <vjogren@netins.net>

## **View from the Attic**

*By Evelyn Birkby, Fremont County Historical Society*

Anyone who does genealogy research knows how valuable cemeteries are to help find needed dates and names of deceased relatives. Many historical and genealogy societies catalogue their local cemeteries and publish the results in a form that is available for purchase by interested relatives and friends.

It took 13 years for volunteers from the Fremont County Historical Society to walk the cemeteries of our county and transcribe the wording on every tombstone in those locations, including some back in the woods and in rural homesteads. The resulting book also includes what the researchers discovered of lost cemeteries including the French Village, the County Home (now with only four markers left) and Manti Cemetery church records of graves where the stones were removed by someone who wanted to use the land for crops.

Volunteers were recruited who were willing to face various kinds of weather, weeds, insects and, on occasion, snakes. These people spent many hours tramping the hills and valleys of Fremont County over smooth areas and rough, through the well-kept and the weed-covered graveyards. Pens and notebooks in hand, they copied as best they could the information on all the stones they could find. The most difficult and, undoubtedly, the most important work was deciphering the lettering from weathered, disintegrating stones.

Fremont County soil holds the precious remains of prehistoric inhabitants, Native Americans of recent centuries, French Canadian traders, settlers, immigrants, religious leaders, farmers, homemakers and craftspeople. Each in his or her own way helped make Southwest Iowa a pleasant, creative, energetic place to live. Many people from various ethnic backgrounds are buried here as a quick reading of names on the markers will indicate.

The Fremont County Cemetery Record Book includes a short history of each cemetery, plus pictures of some of the tombstones in each. Maps showing how to find graves by row numbers is also part of the way this book gives information that is helpful.

Occasionally members of the Society are asked if they will ever update the book and include information from new gravestones. The answer right now is "No." Information of the most recent burials is simple to get from morticians or county recorders. The earlier graves are more difficult to find and that makes the book so valuable to researchers.

Cemeteries are interesting places to visit for your own research but also for the picture they give of the history of an area. Burial grounds give a glimpse into the past that may not be found in any other place.

Evelyn Birkby writes weekly column, *View from the Attic*, for the Fremont County Historical Society. To receive these columns via email, contact her at [ebirkby@bitwind.net](mailto:ebirkby@bitwind.net).

*Photo: Tombstones like this one dating to 1891 are often difficult to read due to years of exposure to poor environmental conditions.*

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From the *Ottumwa Courier*, March 14, 2009: "Italy dig unearths female 'vampire' in Venice." ROME (AP) -- An archaeological dig near Venice has unearthed the 16th-century remains of a woman with a brick stuck between her jaws -- evidence, experts say, that she was believed to be a vampire.

The unusual burial is thought to be the result of an ancient vampire-slaying ritual. It suggests the legend of the mythical blood-sucking creatures was tied to medieval ignorance of how diseases spread and what happens to bodies after death, experts said.

The well-preserved skeleton was found in 2006 on the Lazzaretto Nuovo island, north of the lagoon city, amid other corpses buried in a mass grave during an epidemic of plague that hit Venice in 1576.

"For the first time we have found evidence of an exorcism against a vampire," said Matteo Borrini, a forensic archaeologist and anthropologist at Florence University.

A photo shows the 16th century remains of a woman with a brick stuck between her jaws.

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**A copy of any news article summarized in this or any previous newsletter may be obtained from Pat Shaw, unless it specifies that it cannot legally be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. The articles that are mentioned in this newsletter will be available for your perusal at the April 18 meeting.**

**The "Address Correction Requested" stamp on your newsletter envelope is required by and intended for the postal service, so you do not need to respond unless your address has changed.**

*It is hard to understand how a cemetery raised its burial rates and blamed it on the cost of living!*

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Instructions on resetting stones from the Chicora organization in South Carolina: <http://chicora.org/resetting.html>

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From the *Ottumwa Courier*, March 7, 2009:

"Medieval remains of decapitated girl to get burial in England village." LONDON (AP) - The funeral of a teenage girl will finally be held this month 700 years after her decapitated body was buried in unconsecrated ground outside an English church in a gruesome medieval ritual.

A horse-drawn carriage will carry her remains through the village where archaeologists two years ago discovered the body with the head removed and placed by her side.

Experts believe that she may have been executed or committed suicide and then decapitated after she died, said the Rev. Andy Harding, the vicar of Hoo St. Werburgh parish church who will conduct the service. The body was buried close to the church, parts of which are more than 1,000 years old.

Harding said the ritual was sometimes done during medieval times to deny Christians eternal life. "There was a belief the spirit was housed in the head," he said. "That's condemning them really ... which I think is brutal and awful."

Harding said local businesses will provide a coffin, headstone and the carriage to take the remains through the village to the church, about 30 miles southeast of London.

"She will be back with me in the next couple of days," he said. "We've got a lot to make up for."

The funeral is scheduled for March 14.

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From [Iowa@rootsweb.com](mailto:Iowa@rootsweb.com):

For those of you who don't subscribe to "The Iowan" magazine, I thought I'd tell you about an article in the March/April 2009 issue. There is a story entitled "Gone But Not Forgotten, Resurrecting Iowa's Stone Cities." It's a

great story about a group of volunteers and members of Cemetery Commissions in various counties who restore old Iowa forgotten cemeteries. The article features photos of stone markers restored in the old Van Buren Cemetery in Jackson County. Volunteers even use "dowsing" to find where the graves are located and then work to piece together and reconstruct the broken headstones. Volunteers also use county and church records to identify those buried in the cemeteries. It's great to know that folks are taking an interest in restoring these old historical burying grounds. The story relates that, since being restored by volunteers, the Old Springbrook Methodist cemetery has 40 standing monuments. Good job Iowans!  
Mona Sarratt Knight

## **COUNTY REPORTS**

### Allamakee

New on the Allamakee County GenWeb site, Nov. 30, 2008: CEMETERY RECORDS - Oak Hill Cemetery burial update, adding burials 2005-2008. Gravestone Photo Project (GPP) - Gravestone photos were submitted for Sixteen, Sandy Point/Harper's Ferry, Thompson Corner, Positive and Dorchester Catholic aka St. Mary's - Dorchester cemeteries.

### Clayton

New on the Clayton Co GenWeb site, Nov. 30, 2008: CEMETERY RECORDS - Immaculate Conception cemetery survey 2008, alpha-list. Bierer cemetery updated burial list & photos. GRAVESTONE PHOTO PROJECT - 345 photos have been contributed for Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

### Clinton

From the *Observer*, DeWitt, Iowa, Saturday, Oct. 11, 2008, page 11: "Pioneer cemetery commission plans first project," by Jeremy Huss, Staff Writer. A full page story with seven photos tells of the cleaning of the Hess Cemetery on 13th Avenue North in Clinton was the first project tackled by the new Clinton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission. Linda Gasper, member of the Commission, told the Clinton County Board of Supervisors that she and other commission members have spent the last several weeks visiting pioneer cemeteries on the eastern end of the county. The Conservation Board has planted prairie grass and arranged controlled burns at the Hess Cemetery in the past. That Board will be asked if the cemetery commission can be allowed to start work at the site.

### **Activities of the Clinton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission 2008**

Organizational meeting was held in March, established terms of commission members and elected officers. The group was not able to get to the cemeteries in the spring because of the very wet weather.

Saturday, Sept. 20, members of the Clinton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission met at the home of Ann Soenksen to tour neglected cemeteries.

Present were Ann Soenksen, Linda Gasper, Jill Zimmerman, Ellen Mayberry, Ruth Wilson and new member Bill Fatchett.

The group began a riding tour, beginning with a stop at the Smith-Cousins Cemetery along Hwy. 30. The grass had not been mowed in some time and many of the trees were becoming overgrown. It was decided to contact the township trustees about care of this cemetery. The next stop was the Pleasant Hill Cemetery, off the Elvira Road, where stones were completely hidden in woods and brush. After searching, a majority of stones were found in the northeast section of the wooded area.

At the Hess Cemetery on 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. No., Clinton, conditions were poor, brush cut down by conservation employees had not been cleaned up, and tall weeds, not prairie grass, were everywhere. Names of stones were matched with names on printed list.

Attempt was made to stop at the Miller Cemetery, north of Clinton, but Jane Rickertsen, nearby landowner, talked with Ann and others. Livestock were blocking path to the cemetery, and she agreed to contact Ann when there is a possibility to get to the cemetery.

At the Hickory Hill Cemetery, off Hwy. 136 near Goose Lake, the path to the cemetery was found with gateway damaged and much overgrowth and downed trees around stones. Attempt was made to mark off names on stones with names on list, some were not found.

The group returned to Ann's home.

A week and a half later, Oct. 1, Corson's Cemetery Restoration business came to Ann's home. Ann, Linda Gasper, her husband and son, Ruth Wilson and the Corsons did a similar driving tour to these cemeteries, plus a couple more, to analyze condition of cemeteries and what it would take to clean them up. Mr. Corson stated using a weed whip to clean area around the stones, straightening up to 50 stones in one day and using plywood boards to mend broken stones, plus using lime and dirt to level stones.

At the next meeting of the commission, it was decided not to hire Corson's, but Linda Gasper's husband Leon is interested in taking his equipment to the Hess Cemetery to begin cleanup operations. A date of Oct. 26 was set and a group of approximately 10 people began the task of flagging the stones, tearing up the old fence and posts and clearing brush. Leon Gasper used his tractor and accomplished a great deal of work. After discussions with the Clinton County Conservation Board on preservation of the native prairie in the cemetery it was agreed to clear a 10-ft. perimeter around the fence line. After more work days and the end of the growing season, the conservation board allowed clearing of the entire area. The Gaspers were able to install new fence posts and a new sign before winter weather set in.

Plans are being made to work on other cemeteries in the spring and also to tour the unkept cemeteries in the western part of the county.

From the *Observer*, DeWitt, Iowa, Nov. 15, 2008:  
"Cleanup efforts at pioneer Hess Cemetery deemed successful. Pictured is the cemetery after volunteers cleaned the grounds and mowed the grass.

#### Blackhawk

From the *Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier*, February 25, 2009: "Supervisors approve private burial grounds," by Tim Jamison, *Courier* Staff Writer. Members of the county Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 to approve a zoning change which will allow Joseph and Penny Jenkins to set aside about half an acre of their land southeast of Gilbertville as a private "burial site" for their relatives. Plans include wooden caskets and simple grave markers in what will remain a wooded area. The county required the Jenkins family to sign an agreement stating their heirs or successors, if the land is sold, will be required to maintain the site. Grave markers must be simple rocks or boulders which would not require much future care. The restrictions would go with the property even if new owners take over. E-mail: tim.jamison@wfcourier.com

#### Buchanan

From the *Waterloo Courier*, June 16, 1913: "Aged Buchanan Woman tells of the stirring Indian days - Trouble experienced in recording records of Spring Creek Methodist Church - John Lowrey, pioneer member, is in feeble health - "Mother" Ilam remembers when cemetery was moved from Shady Grove. "Mother" Ilam, who is 83 years old and who is, perhaps, the only pioneer resident of Spring Creek Valley living, yesterday told a reporter many tales of Indian life that came under her purview during the early 60's. Her recollections of the Spring Creek Church date back to after the close of the Civil War, when the cemetery was moved from the Shady Grove to Spring Creek. She recalls how the bodies were exhumed from the graves and borne to the new burying ground. A few were left in the Shady Grove Cemetery. Since that time the fence around the cemetery, which is located on the farm of John Runel, has rotted away, and cattle roam at will over the graves.

#### Chickasaw

From the *Chickasaw County Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 25 Number 4, Fourth Quarter, J.L.Kottke, Editor, p. 25. Rose Hill Cemetery in Fredericksburg has been completely updated and

revised. Our first burial record for Rose Hill Cemetery was published back in August 1990. The revision to the Rose Hill burial record goes well beyond the scope of what we did previously, which was merely a basic listing of burials, reflecting what was found on the grave stones themselves. In this new revision each burial has been thoroughly researched in order to provide complete birth and death dates, as well as women's maiden names, which are enclosed in parentheses. Another objective of the research conducted for this revision was to identify as many unmarked graves as possible. This revision for Rose Hill contains approximately 2400 entries.

We now have a new burial record ready for publication, which is for St. Joseph's Calvary Cemetery in New Hampton. Many years of work have gone into the compilation of this burial data. In fact, this document is more than just a burial record as it contains extra genealogical data for the majority of entries. Intense effort has been devoted to research in order to provide complete birth and death dates, names of the parents of each of the deceased, to include the mother's maiden name, and other information, as deemed appropriate. In addition, another high priority objective of this research was to identify and document as many unmarked graves as possible for this cemetery. The original release of this document will contain just over 1700 entries. For purchase of these documents, contact CCGS, PO Box 434, New Hampton, IA 50659-0434.

#### Jones

From the *Waterloo Courier*, June 16, 1913: "Few visit Reformatory Cemetery," by Joe Wells. Photo of a grave stone in the Reformatory Prison near Anamosa with the caption, "Unknowns in a little-known cemetery ... the unidentified remain a mystery." This cemetery has had few visitors in the last 10 years. Several stones list as many as nine and ten burials, and some of those buried are listed as "unknown." Prior to 1927 records of deaths at the reformatory were poorly kept. It is a known fact that the cemetery was moved sometime around the turn of the century and it is quite possible that in the process of the moving skeletons were found of men for whom no grave markers could be found. When the bodies were moved, they were placed in common graves. When the reformatory was in the stone-cutting business, cemetery headstones were cut



by the inmates. Concrete markers will be made in the future listing the man's full name, reformatory number, and the date of his death.

#### Lee

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, January 20, 2009:  
"Preservationists concerned about Fort Madison site - Site finalist for America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list." FORT MADISON (AP) - state archaeological officials are saying the historical site at Fort Madison is the most threatened in Iowa. However, owners of the ruins of the fort, which was abandoned in 1813, are in no danger. Bill Whittaker, with the Office of the State Archaeologist, said the Old Fort Madison site is expected to be included on the 2009 list of Iowa's Most Endangered Properties compiled by the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance. It's also a finalist for the 2009 America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list put out by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, he said. The site rests under the parking lot adjoining the former Sheaffer Pen Co. factory. It is the probable site of the oldest U.S. military cemetery in the upper Mississippi.  
william-whittaker@uiowa.edu

#### Linn

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, October 22, 1904:  
"N. E. Brown Furnishes Valuable Information - Responds to request for data as a former pioneer of the city." ..... John Vardy was one of the early settlers of Linn county. He was the father of Mrs. John G. McCloud, from whom the springs north of Cedar Rapids take their name. Mr. Vardy was by trade a cabinet maker, and a craftsman of the first order. Mr. McCloud lies buried in what is perhaps the oldest cemetery in Linn county. This cemetery is located upon one of the highest hills of the Hubbard or Cold Stream farm, a couple of miles northeast of this city. When a boy I frequently visited this little old burying place of pioneer days, and often wondered whether it and its occupants would be as completely forgotten as they seem to be. .... I would here suggest, Mr. Editor, that the historical society which I understand was organized and is principally composed of pioneers of hereabouts, take measures to preserve the old cemetery above alluded to. Undoubtedly the present owner of the land will contribute that portion of it for the purpose of its preservation.

#### Wapello

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, December 6, 2008:  
"Eldon Cemetery joins Wreaths Across America," by Scott Niles, *Courier* Staff Writer. Christmas wreaths are often meant as decoration only. But this year in Eldon, some wreaths will hold a deeper meaning - like freedom. More than 15 years ago, Worcester Wreath Company began a tradition of placing wreaths fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery during the holidays. They have now donated more than 90,000 wreaths, all placed by volunteers each December. Local organizer, Connie Davis, hopes the idea of placing a wreath on every veteran's grave will spread all across southeast Iowa. The Eldon Cemetery is one of only five in the state participating this year.

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, December 13, 2008:  
"Wreath-laying ceremony today." Members of the Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the Ottumwa Civil War Round Table will conduct a wreath-laying ceremony at the Dahlonga Cemetery north of Ottumwa. Jonathan R. Woody, a Revolutionary War veteran, is buried at the Dahlonga Cemetery. He is one of only 40 Revolutionary War veterans buried in Iowa.

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, December 15, 2008:  
"Wreaths Across America." A color photo shows volunteers holding wreaths and flags at the Eldon Cemetery. The ceremony took place all across the nation at the same time.

#### Out of Iowa

##### Arizona

From Nil DuShane: APCRP is honored to inform you we have just surpassed the 200 mark finding Pioneer Cemeteries and graves in Arizona (203 to be exact). This represents almost 7,782 graves that had been abandoned and the cemeteries melting back to mother earth. Most are non-recognizable they are so decayed. Each time the APCRP staff goes out we add to this number after discovering abandoned and derelict graves. Keep up the search and submitting your finds. It is our belief there are graves at every abandoned mine and ghost town dotting Arizona. Many are on the sides of the roads leading to these sites.

<http://www.apcrp.org>  
Click: Cemeteries

### Nevada

From FOX NEWS, February 20, 2009: "Photos help find original spot of stolen headstone," by Martin Griffith, Associated Press Writer. Since this article is copyrighted by The Associated Press and states that it may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed, please refer to this web site for information: <http://www.comstockcemeteryfoundation.com>

### South Carolina

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, January 5, 2009: "CSI Hunley: Fate of historic sub a cold case file - What happened to the Confederate sailors aboard the H.L. Hunley?" by Bruce Smith, Associated Press Writer. It could be one of the nation's oldest cold case files: What happened to eight Confederate sailors aboard the H.L. Hunley after it became the first submarine in history to sink an enemy warship?

"She was a mystery when she was built. She was a mystery as to how she looked and how she was constructed for many years and she is still a mystery as to why she didn't come home," said state Sen. Glenn McConnell, chairman of the South Carolina Hunley Commission, which raised the sub and is charged with conserving and displaying it.

Thousand of people, many re-enactors in period dress, turned out in April 2004 when the crew was buried in what has been called the last Confederate funeral.

### Wisconsin

From the *Daily Register*, Portage and Columbia County, WI, October 29, 2008: "Ho-Chunk restore wayside containing burial mounds," by Lyn Jerde. Pictured are volunteers as they use tanks of fuel (a mixture of diesel and gasoline) to ignite fires to create a barrier in preparation for a prescribed burn on Ho-Chunk mounds. The 40-acre site had been a Ho-Chunk Nation encampment and burial grounds for more than 1,000 years before Europeans settled Wisconsin. It was a former Wisconsin Department of Transportation wayside along Highway 16 about 15 miles west of Portage. The Ho-Chunk took possession of the site from the state about a year ago. Plans are for it to remain open to the public as an educational spot to learn about the Ho-Chunk people. According to Jay Toth of Black River Falls, a Ho-Chunk Nation archaeologist, the mounds on the site were built over several generations and held in place largely by prairie grasses.

From the *Portage Daily Register*, Portage and Columbia County, WI, November 30, 2008: "Burial mounds stop future development on site of Academy Building," by Kevin Kirkpatrick. ENDEAVOR - Native American burial mounds have been discovered in the area of an Academy Building that housed a Christian school from 1902-1925. It then became Endeavor High School, an elementary school, and finally headquarters for Endeavor's city government until 2006. Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation officers and archaeologist, Jay Toth, used ground-penetrating radar to find human remains. "Once these mounds are catalogued, you won't be able to put a house here," said Toth. All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under state burial laws.

Thanks to Ralph Hendersin who sent a copy of the laws pertaining to cemeteries and burials from the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. For a copy, contact Pat Shaw or check this web site: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html>

### Florida

From the *Dallas Morning News*, December 10, 2008: "Reform school burials probed - Some wonder if cemetery contains bodies of abused teens," - Associated Press. TALLAHASSEE - Florida law enforcement officials are investigating the mystery: Who lies beneath the more than 30 white metal crosses - bearing no name or dates - at a makeshift cemetery near the grounds of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, where youngsters were routinely beaten and otherwise abused in the 1950s and '60s. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement will determine what is in the graves, identify any remains and assess whether any crimes occurred. The State Department of Juvenile Justice has no records that explain what's in the cemetery near the 108-year-old reform school. A book has been written on the subject.

### Massachusetts

No source given, September 8, 2006: "News of the Weird." The Green River Cemetery in Greenfield, Massachusetts, began hurriedly moving and re-burying bodies, which had begun sliding down a muddy slope into the river in July.

### Michigan

From the *Dallas Morning News*, October 25, 2008: "Bodies evicted from funeral home - Remains removed after mortuary business goes into foreclosure," - The Associated Press. Five bodies and the cremated remains of 22 people were evicted from a funeral home in Pontiac. The remains from the House of Burns Memorial Chapel were delivered to the Oakland County medical examiner's office for storage after the funeral business went into foreclosure. Some cremated remains date back to the 1990s. The county will send the bodies to another funeral home if family members make claims.

### Georgia

From The *New York Times*, October 11, 2008: "Atlanta Saves Battered Gem, A Home for the Dead That's Prized by the Living," by Robbie Brown. Pictured is the grave of Gov. Joseph E. Brown in the historic Oakland Cemetery that was ravaged by a tornado in March. Restoration work is under way on the monument. The 49 city-owned acres are a popular spot for Halloween tours, school field trips and charity runs in which hundreds of joggers pass the graves of Margaret Mitchell and Maynard Jackson. "Every great city has great institutions of higher education, great art institutes, important green space - and a great cemetery," said David S. Moore, executive director of the Historic Oakland Foundation. "This is Atlanta's great cemetery." The tornado crushed trees, decapitated statues, and old gravestones were toppled. Damage was assessed at more than \$1 million and the cemetery was closed for three months. View slide show at: [nytimes.com/national](http://nytimes.com/national)

### Louisiana

From the *Dallas Morning News*, October 20, 2008: "Caskets unearthed by storm put to rest," by Melinda Deslatte, The Associated Press. Pictured are Sgt. David Conner, an officer with the Phelps Correctional Center in DeQuincy, La., and an inmate as they examine an identification vial located in a coffin found in Cameron Parish. The casket was rescued after Hurricane Rita. Hurricane Ike washed an estimated 200 caskets out of their graves in the Parish's 47 cemeteries and others in coastal Texas and southwest Louisiana. Bodies found after Rita were tagged with special markers, as were the coffins in which they were buried. Reburying the

dead is estimated to cost as much as \$100,000 on top of the recovery costs. Some caskets floated 30 miles from their cemeteries, and some ended up in Texas.

### New York

From the *New York Times*, October 11, 2008: "When Home Can't Be a Final Resting Place," by James Barron. Pictured is Jeff Marvin who helped scatter his grandfather's ashes in Monument Park in Yankee Stadium in 1999. When the Yankees move to their new stadium next year, they will leave behind many scattered ashes of loved ones who enjoyed the game. Officially, the teams have never permitted ashes to be scattered in their stadiums, but many family members do so "on the sly." Some relatives are returning to get clumps of dirt from the area before Yankee and Shea stadiums are razed.

From the *New York Times*, November 27, 2008: "Cemeteries of New York City." A lot of people live in New York City, which is part of what makes the city so great. But it comes with a corollary: a lot of people die here, too. And in the mid-19th century, the city had the foresight to set aside some real estate - some is now in prime locations - for cemeteries.

[nytimes.com/travel](http://nytimes.com/travel)

### Texas

From the *Star-Telegram*, December 24, 2008: "Convicted of corpse abuse, man gives prominent apology," by Deanna Boyd. Pictured is a billboard mandated as part of punishment by a judge against a driver for a cadaver transportation company. The billboard reads, "I should treat the deceased in my care with dignity and respect. I utterly failed them, their families and the community. I am remorseful and I apologize. - Donald Short" Mr. Short mishandled 3 bodies that were found inside a repossessed van almost four years ago. He was also ordered to write letters of apology to the families, pay a \$4,000 fine and restitution, perform community service and never work in the funeral industry again. Cost of renting the billboard for a month is \$2,500 to \$3,000.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, November 30, 2009: "Papal artifacts are latest undertaking at museum - Site of funeral history provides resting place for popes' lives, deaths," by Monica Rhor, The Associated Press. The National Museum of Funeral History, located north of Houston, has exhibits from the birth of embalming to

the mourning rituals of the Victorian era. Open since 1993, the museum is hoping to lure a wider audience with an ambitious new addition: "Celebrating the Lives and Deaths of the Popes," that marks the only display of papal artifacts outside the Vatican. The slogan of the museum is: Any day above ground is a good one.

Learn more at: [www.dallasnews.com/extra](http://www.dallasnews.com/extra)

From the *Dallas Morning News*, November 1, 2008: "Halloween's over; make room for Day of the Dead - Mexican celebration for departed artfully spreads across cultures," by Dianne Solis. Dia de los Muertos, the Mexican homage to the departed, runs for three consecutive days (Oct. 31 - Nov. 2) in which the living build altars to those who have passed on. The altars can include favorite foods and paper cutouts that represent wind, candles to symbolize fire, and a liquid to signify water. In recent years, the Internet has fueled the popularity of Day of the Dead traditions and led to elaborate celebrations in non-Latino communities.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, November 2, 2008: "Day of the Dead revelers reconnect," by Orlando Arriaga. A Day of the Dead celebration at Dallas' Latino Cultural Center drew a crowd of about 400 seeking to reconcile with their culture, as well as lost loved ones. "We are trying to help people keep their roots and culture," said Irasema Romero, spokeswoman for the center. Along with musical entertainment and a play by Teatro Flor Candela, the event featured 10 altars created by community artists.

From the *Star-Telegram*, November 3, 2008: "Paying respects to the dead." Pictured are residents as they mark the Day of the Dead in Janitzio, an island of 1,500 people in Lake Patzcuaro, Michoacan state, Mexico. Dia de los Muertos is one of Mexico's most important holidays, when people go to cemeteries to pay their respects to loved ones who have died.

From the *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 2008: "Forgotten veterans get honors they deserve - Volunteers try to identify unclaimed remains, give them military burials." The Associated Press. The Missing in America Project is a volunteer organization that seeks to identify and honor the unclaimed remains of American veterans. Fred Salanti of Redding, Calif., founded the organization after discovering that unclaimed remains of veterans were being buried in California veterans' cemeteries without the honors he felt they deserved. The group has begun identifying unclaimed remains and - when possible - returning

them to family members. Pictured is a military guard saluting the remains of four American war veterans during a ceremony at the Vermont Memorial Cemetery in Randolph, Vt.

### Italy

From the *Star-Telegram*, October 17, 2008: "Tombs found under Rome," by Ariel David, The Associated Press. Workers renovating a rugby stadium have uncovered a vast complex of tombs beneath Rome that mimic the houses, blocks and streets of a real city, officials said as they unveiled a series of new discoveries. The area may have been inhabited by the living during the Dark Ages after being used for centuries for burials during the Roman period. Archaeologists believe that at least some of the dead were freed slaves of Greek origin. A separate dig in the north of the city has turned up the tomb of a nobleman who led Rome's legions in the second century AD. Archaeologists will keep working at the digs to make them accessible to visitors.

### Thailand

From the *Dallas Morning News*, September 28, 2008: "Temple offers spiritual rebirth (for a \$5 fee) - Visitors lie in coffins, hear prayers, believing they are cleansed of past," by Seth Mydans, *The New York Times*. A Buddhist temple offers, for a small fee, an opportunity to die, rise up again newborn and make a fresh start in life. Wat Prommanee, 66 miles northeast of Bangkok, has offered it unusual daily resurrection service for more than three years. On weekend, as many as 700 people a day pay 180 baht each, a little more than \$5, for the ceremony.

### Spain

From the *Star-Telegram*, November 24, 2008: "Cemetery a source of energy - The 462 solar panels rest on mausoleums in Santa Coloma de Gramenet," by Daniel Woolls. Santa Coloma de Gramenet, a gritty working-class town outside Barcelona, has placed a sea of solar panels atop mausoleums at its cemetery, transforming a place of perpetual rest into one buzzing with renewable energy. The graveyard was just about the only viable spot to move ahead with its solar energy program. The project began three years ago and will produce enough energy for the yearly use by 60 homes.

# A Date With The Departed

By Thomas Lynch

**T**HE pumpkins, penny candy and neighborly hordes of goblins and ghosts shouting "Trick or treat!" remind us of the ancients and their belief that the souls of the dead must be appeased. But it's the days that follow Halloween that most interest me.

All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are time set aside to broker peace between the living and the dead. Whether you are pagan or religious, Celt or Christian, New Age believer or doubter-at-large, these are the days when you traditionally ac-

## Why are we afraid of All Saints' Day?

knowledge that the gone are not forgotten. The seasonal metaphors of reaping and rotting, harvest and darkness, leaf-fall and killing frost supply us with plentiful memento mori. Whatever is or isn't there when we die, death both frightens and excites us.

Thus, throughout most of the Western world, graves are decorated on these first days of November with candles and fresh flowers. Picnics are held among the old stones and markers, relatives gather round family plots to give the dead their due of prayers and remembrances.

We humans are bound to and identified with the earth, the dirt, the humus out of which our histories and architectures rise — our monuments and memorials, cairns and catacombs, our shelters and cityscapes. This "ground sense," to bor-

*Thomas Lynch, a funeral director and lecturer at the University of Michigan, is the author of the memoir "Booking Passage."*

row William Carlos Williams's idiom, is at the core of our humanity. And each stone on which we carve our names and dates is an effort to make a human statement about death, memory and belief. Our kind was here. They lived; they died; they made their difference. For the ancient and the modern, the grave is an essential station.

But less so, lately, especially here in the United States, where we whistle past our graveyards and keep our dead at greater distance, consigned to oblivions we seldom visit, estranged and denatured, tidy and Disney-fied memorial parks with names like those of golf courses or megachurches.

In her honors seminar, "Death in American Culture," at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, N.C., June Hobbs takes her students on a field trip to Sunset Cemetery in nearby Shelby. She believes that cemeteries have much to tell us about ourselves. For most of her students, it is their first visit to a cemetery.

"I find this astonishing," says Professor Hobbs. "This county had more casualties during the Civil War than any other. The dead were everywhere, the churchyards filled up, Sunday afternoons were spent visiting graves. The dead were very much a part of the community, kept alive in everyday conversations." Now they've been downsized or disappeared.

She speaks to a culture that quietly turned the family "parlor" into a "living room," the "burial policy" into "life insurance" and the funeral into a "celebration of life," often notable for the absence of a corpse, and the subtle enforcement of an emotional code that approves the good laugh but not the good cry. Convenience and economy have replaced ethnic and religious customs.

The dead get buried but we seldom see a grave. Or they are burned, but few folks ever see the fire. Photographs of coffins returned from wars are forbidden, and news coverage of soldiers' burials is discouraged. Where sex was once private and funerals were public, now sex is everywhere and the dead go to their graves often as not without witness or ritual.

Still, there remains something deeply human in the way we process mortality by processing mortals in the journey between life as we know it and life as we imagine it, in whatever space the dead in-

habit. Wherever the dead go or don't, it is the duty of the living to get them to the edge of that oblivion.

Since the first cave-dwelling Neanderthal awakened next to a dead kinsman and knew something would have to be done about it, we humans have looked into the tomb or grave or fire and asked ourselves the signature questions of our species: Is that all there is? Can it happen to me? What comes next? Only the dead know the answers. And the living are well and truly haunted by them.

Perhaps Professor Hobbs is right. The dead have something to teach us still. A visit to your local cemetery, here in the month of all saints and souls, is a course in humanity. There are inklings to answers among the stones. □

## Grave Situation



*Cemeteries wage a constant battle against wind and storm, fire and rampant foliage. Tombstones are toppled and defaced by death-taunting adolescents. Acid rain melts marble statuary.*

*An army of preservationists has heard the alarm. Boy Scouts earn merit badges for cleaning, patching and resetting tombstones. The Chicora Foundation helps restore cemeteries in the Carolinas and Georgia. And the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, Calif., oversees pioneer Jewish cemeteries in the gold country. The tombstones in the photo above await repair by volunteers at a Japanese cemetery on the coast of Maui.*

*— MARILYN YALOM, the author, and REID YALOM, the photographer, of "The American Resting Place" □*

# The Dallas Morning News

Saturday, December 13, 2008

## EDITORIALS

# Hits and Misses

### Extreme to the end

File this one under, "Seriously, you can't make this stuff up." PETA, not exactly known as a voice of reason in the animal rights world, has a new line of coffins splashed with activist phrase like "Go Vegan." Let's hope this is not the start of a broader "coffins for a cause" movement. We'd prefer that people use their lives, not their deaths, to stand up for what they believe in.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR SAPIC

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Donation or Memorial \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (List name of honoree, if desired) \_\_\_\_\_

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