

Fall, 2005

# NEWS *from* OAK HILL

*The Newsletter of the Friends of Oak Hill Cemetery*

## From the President

I, like all of the Oak Hill family, am still missing Joe Pozell. I would like to report that Ella Pozell, our new Superintendent, has settled into the job, and the office is running like clockwork; the groundskeeping crew continues to do a wonderful job under her direction.

I am happy to report that, after our monumental expenditures, the tiers secured overlooking Rock Creek appear to be holding for which we are grateful.

I am sad to report that the large white oak near the chapel suddenly died and had to be removed at considerable cost. Also, a large elm near the stone bridge had to be removed because it was dead and dangerous. Next on the list is a white oak near the intersection at the Corcoran Terrace Pathway Crypts which is fruiting at the base, an indication that the tree is dying.

Because of our financial situation, we are delaying any road work until our finances improve. To help improve them, we have engaged the services of Sanford Bernstein & Company in hopes of increasing the endowment and its income. So far, we have been very pleased.



*Work crews use a crane to remove a dead oak tree that was endangering the Renwick Chapel.*

The Linthicum Mausoleum remains on site and is precarious to all who walk by it. We have notified the descendants of the Linthicum family, but we have had no response. We continue to look for someone who would restore it, thus creating a new mausoleum burial site.

There are plans for the formation of a new mausoleum owners' group. We will keep you informed as plans progress.

Our next increment of Chapel Hill Pathway Crypts is well underway where we are creating 20 double burial sites and three single sites. There is *continued on page 5*



## From the Superintendent

**I**t has now been six months since my husband Joe died, and the Board and I have been very busy with many projects in the cemetery.

As you know from our late publication of the summer newsletter, we had many problems with our database because of its inaccessibility. We had various computer technicians assist us, but no one could break into all parts of the database. Finally, Tammy Gill, my computer/office assistant along with Amy Wooden were able to get what information we needed to reconfigure all of the names Joe had added over the past 10 years.

The Board gave me permission to purchase a new computer which would be compatible with our one remaining iMac. They also gave me permission to hire an assistant when I felt I needed one. By October I needed one, and Tammy Gill began working here on the database and related matters. She performs a variety of other tasks as needed. She makes her own hours as she has two children in school. Tammy joins my other assistant Cherie Cannon who has worked in my absence for more than 10 years. I am very fortunate that each assistant has mastered different aspects of the Oak Hill office and each is invaluable in the job she does and greatly appreciated.

David de Vicq, Vice President of the Board, has spent many hours here helping me with numerous “guy issues” such as road and path assessments, drain matters and other technical



*New Pathway Crypts being installed.*

matters that Joe understood and enjoyed. David is spearheading efforts to complete long-overdue and much-needed repairs in the gatehouse. Asbestos will be removed from the basement, and the kitchen wall that is crumbling will be replastered and painted after the outside repointing is completed. David and my son Joseph have also embarked on several special projects that required hours in the dreadful heat. Joseph has painted almost every bench in the cemetery and quite a few decorative pots. He and David have made a good team.

I do not know how I would have made it though these past months without the support and understanding of our Board—John Gill, David de

Vicq, Patricia McGrath and George Hill. There are days when I have felt overwhelmed and wondered how everything could possibly be accomplished, but they have shown great patience and good humor as we carry on.

The groundskeeping crew has worked tirelessly to maintain the cemetery as they have for many years. Their cooperation and ability to anticipate what needs to be done and at what time has made my job easier. We are all learning about gardening which Joe knew so well and which he kept track of in his head. We are challenged to continue his many projects and areas of interest throughout the cemetery.

The Oak Hill families have also been a great source of comfort and support. I appreciate all cards and visits. Thank you for your donations to all categories especially the Friends of Oak Hill Beautification Fund which meant so much to Joe.

Ella S. Pozell, *Superintendent*



*Joseph Pozell at work painting benches.*

## From the Board

Since the last Annual Meeting, the Board of Managers has begun a program to inspect all physical assets, determine necessary repair and replacement projects, estimate their cost, prioritize their execution and identify funding sources. It has also begun to study methods and costs of broadening interment options and developing new burial sites. While these efforts are ongoing, we want to share with you our progress to date. We would appreciate your comments, preferably in writing, to facilitate distribution to each Board member for our serious consideration.

The most important building is the Superintendent's residence where time and water have taken their toll. It needs new gutters, leaders and downspouts; extensive pointing of brickwork, replacement of missing and badly damaged brownstone, repair of the kitchen wing's damaged foundation, removal of all asbestos heating system insulation and application of modern high-performance insulation on both heating and potable water piping. These are immediate requirements, and work has already begun with existing funds. A major restoration program for the important structure will subsequently be developed and grants sought for its accomplishment.

The entire 1.1 mile road system is in disrepair. Road consultants have advised that virtually all of it is beyond patching and resurfacing and requires rebuilding from the sub-base up, the first since horse-drawn equipment graded the roads circa the Civil War. As each section of the road is rebuilt, adjacent stone gutters and the drain inlets to which they lead will be repaired. Some 20 inlets will be refitted with cast iron frames and grates. Curbs will be added where necessary to help keep vehicles off the edges of burial sites and steep grass slopes. The

cost of this roadwork alone far exceeds foreseeable income from our customary annual appeals. It is a major capital investment requiring prompt and imaginative funding. One approach already selected is to offer sponsoring donors or donor groups, the right to re-name any of the eleven avenues whose reconstruction costs they underwrite. Some roads might have to be closed if they are not soon sponsored for repair.

Our landscape architect has been contacted to develop a design which would support larger monuments and perhaps one sarcophagus on a swath of land running parallel to East Gate Avenue. The surface is currently paved but may be rebuilt and reshaped to provide a number of grass covered lots. Such premium sites in a most accessible location should appeal strongly to those who have long sought the size and style of lot no longer available in most historic cemeteries.

Two locations where columbariums might be constructed are under discussion and we will seek suggestions from various sources but most specifically from owners of mausoleums near the larger site. The second possible location is near the camel back bridge and might lend itself to a modestly sized circular structure. Improved access and some parking must be considered. Both options would require sensitive original designs by architects of known excellence since we do not desire a closed building design typical of the mass market columbariums found in modern memorial gardens. Funding arrangements not unlike those used by property developers will be investigated.

Many other important repair requirements may yet be identified and several new initiatives to enhance our cemetery are in the early stages of discussion. We will report out progress in future newsletters. Again, your ideas and opinions are most sincerely solicited.

David C. de Vicq, *Board Vice President*

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## Contributions

May, 2005 – November, 2005

We apologize to those left off of the list of donors in our Summer newsletter:

Elizabeth Dunlop Edgeworth  
Cantacuzene  
Mrs. David S. Brown

### *Donations Received in Memory of Joseph Pozell*

Mrs. Anne H. Baker  
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Dr. David S. Brown*)  
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(*In memory of Beulah Hill Sherfey*)  
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M. & Mrs. Michael Zekonis

## Pozell Endowment

The Board of Managers has given me the honor of announcing the establishment of the Pozell Superintendents' Endowment Fund. Patterned after academic chairs, this endowment will insure stable financing of the Superintendency and attendant office management and will serve to attract and retain the most qualified and capable future incumbents. It will isolate their support from the vagaries of annual budgets. The endowment is a separate investment account of the Oak Hill Preservation Foundation, our 501(c)(3) organization.

Our target for the Pozell endowment is three million dollars and we want to achieve it in just two years. I had the privilege of making the first contribution which was smaller than I wished but nevertheless equal to about a fifth of my retirement income. The other 3 Board members have committed to donate the same contribution. I believe that only gifts of this sort will let us realize our goal. Please join me in recognizing Joe's friendship, leadership and many accomplishments with the most generous gift you can afford. Let's make it happen!

David C. de Vicq, *Board Vice President*

## Report of the President

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already considerable interest in this group.

Our new Board consisting of David de Vicq, Patricia L. McGrath and George G. Hill is working well, and they are enthusiastically taking care of the needs of the cemetery.

As we all know, the cemetery is always in need of funds. We have found, like all other charitable institutions, that donations are seriously reduced because of the contributions to

the hurricane victims. This is especially true here at Oak Hill. It seems as if it is the same loyal donors who give. There are literally hundreds of lot owners and their descendants who we never hear from although their loved ones are cared for through the contributions of others. We continue to enclose an envelope to make it convenient for you to send us your badly needed gifts.

John W. Gill, *Board President*

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***Cemetery Hours***

Office and grounds: 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, M-F, closed Saturdays and National Holidays. Sunday (grounds only) 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, weather permitting. Please observe rules posted at gate.

***Board of Managers***

John W. Gill, *President*  
David C. deVicq, *Vice President*  
Patricia L. McGrath, *Secretary*  
George G. Hill, *Treasurer*  
Ella Pozell, *Superintendent*

***We need your help*** If you currently reside in an apartment or townhouse, please contact us with your correct "Zip+4" number. This will help ensure that you continue to receive our mailings.

***Cemetery Materials***

Available in the cemetery office

***"Oak Hill Cemetery"***

A brief history – contains a map of the cemetery, list of notable people buried in Oak Hill and a brief history of our founding. \$3.00

***Oak Hill Note Cards***

Set of eight note cards featuring four scenes of Oak Hill Cemetery through the seasons. Envelopes included. \$5.00

***"Oak Hill in the Third Millennium"***

Descriptions of the burial spaces currently available in the cemetery. *Free*

**OAK HILL CEMETERY**

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[www.oakhillcemeterydc.org](http://www.oakhillcemeterydc.org)

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