

Fall, 2006

NEWS *from* OAK HILL

The Newsletter of the Friends of Oak Hill Cemetery

Report of the Superintendent

In the months since our summer newsletter, many exciting events have taken place. An extraordinary book about Oak Hill is now for sale. The two-volume set entitled *Oak Hill Cemetery, Georgetown, D.C. Monument Inscriptions and Burial Data* is available for \$150 or \$250 for a slip cased set, post-paid. On Sunday, November 19, we held an official book signing tea in our Renwick Chapel which was well attended. Wesley E. Pippenger, the author (and Secretary of the Board of Managers) was present to sign the books. Thus far we have sold over 100 sets—half of those that were initially printed. All proceeds are deposited into the Oak Hill Preservation Foundation and a portion of the sales price is tax-deductible.

I am very honored that Wes dedicated Volume One to my late husband, Joe Pozell and Volume Two to me. Joe and I talked with Wes for several years about how we would like to have such a book, and we felt it would be a tremendous aid for Oak Hill families researching their “roots”, for libraries, and for genealogical groups. Wes’s enthusiasm, high regard for Oak Hill and his determination have paid off with the production of a comprehensive guide to interments here. On a particularly hot day



Work continues on finishing touches to the new Renwick Chapel Cremation Sites.

last summer when Wes was in the last days of checks and double-checks of inscription on stones, I drove him to various sites as it was just too hot to walk the entire cemetery. I told him “I know you did the book, but I don’t know *how* you did it”. There are nearly 20,000 interments, and about one-fourth as many stones many of which are under shrubs and some are difficult to read because the inscriptions have “dissolved”

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Superintendent's Report
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in the 156 years of weathering. The book also provides information about nearly 8,000 of our burials that are not marked by a tombstone inscription. I commend the Board of Managers for their embracing of this project which will become their legacy. I commend Wes for his almost eight-year quest for which the Oak Hill Preservation Foundation reaps the benefits.

Two other projects are close to completion. The Renwick Chapel cremation sites are almost finished. The badly deteriorated circular walk around the chapel has now been replaced with a granite walkway under which excellent cremation urn sites are available.

Two flights of cremation steps of a new design are progressing well. Urns will be placed in sarcophagus-like granite niches along each side wall. Pricing for both projects will be determined at completion.

Much-needed painting of the gatehouse, carriage house and staff building has been completed.

Road paving is the next big ticket item that must be undertaken. It is now not a matter of *should* we do this, but *when*. Estimates for such work approach \$150,000.

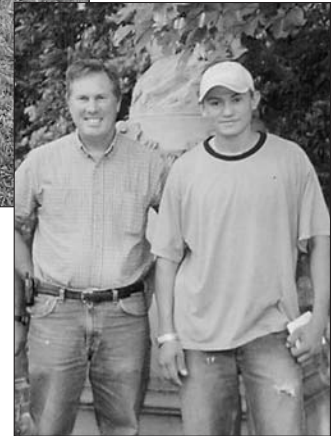
Thank you for your donations to various funds that benefit the Oak Hill Preservation Foundation, cemetery beautification or watershed restoration. We also need more donations as each year goes by. It is reassuring to know that we will receive a certain amount from each newsletter. If you can increase your donation, we will be most appreciative.

Ella S. Pozell



Left: Workmen lay trim along the walkway of the Renwick Chapel Cremation Sites.

Below: Mark Sanders and Maximo Fernandez take a break from laying stone for the Renwick Project.



Below: James Makowiecki completes work on the granite walkway behind the Chapel.



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From the President

Much has been accomplished since the last "News from Oak Hill". We are nearing completion of a project to create 90 new cremation sites surrounding the chapel. Not only does this help meet our great need for additional burial sites but also enhances the area with beautiful new stone walkways that have replaced earlier ones that were in poor condition and, therefore, dangerous to visitors. In addition to the new chapel sites, we have under construction 36 new terraced cremation niches. In order to complete the two projects we borrowed \$132,000 from our investment fund.

If you have visited the Cemetery recently, you will know of the poor condition of the roadways. The worst section might be that going down toward Rock Creek, which is now in such bad condition that we have restricted its use to our staff. Even the roadway encircling the Ellipse has several missing sections. Because of these deficiencies, we face potential and serious safety risks.

Let me give you a bit more information about the complexity of the paving require-

ments. The re-paving of our narrow and winding roadways is not the type of paving any contractor wants to do. Paving contractors like long and level stretches of roadway—we don't have that. Further, our roads are very hard to repair because the wide and heavy equipment necessary for road work has difficulty with sharp turns and steep hills of our roadways. Although a number of paving companies have turned away from our needs, we are in fact very fortunate to have received an extremely reasonable bid to address our paving requirements. What we desire is the financial resources to quickly take advantage of this rare opportunity.

In summary, I believe that in order to sustain Oak Hill Cemetery as the magnificent place it already is, we absolutely must act now and make these restorations. Please note that your donation is tax deductible under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(13).

I implore you to assist us financially to achieve these earnest and vital endeavors. Marking your donation for the general fund will allow us to apply it to the cemetery's most pressing needs.

John W. Gill

A New Coat for the Winter

What has 90 windows with countless small panes, a dozen doors, many window grates, three garages, and miles of eaves and dozens of Victorian brackets? Answer: All the buildings at Oak Hill Cemetery except the chapel. Paul Ayoub of P & A Carpet Designs Inc. and his crew of seven skilled house painters (shown with Paul in white jacket) scraped off layers of cracked paint, sanded, filled, puttied, primed and painted all of the above to produce a handsome job that will last many years. Paul bid the work on a close margin and generously donated the paint--the highest grade of exterior paint at that. Thanks, Paul, for a job well and generously done.



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Contributions to Oak Hill Cemetery
as of December 8, 2006

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Mr. Peter Armato & Mr. Randall Reaves
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Mrs. Benjamin W. Thoron
Mr. Ganni W. Tirana
Mr. Turhan Tirana
Honorable & Mrs. Russell E. Train
Mr. & Mrs. David G. Unger
Count & Countess Wilhelm
Wachtmeister
Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Walsh, Jr.
Mrs. Mary E. Weinmann
Mr. George W. Weaver
Mr. William F. Willoughby

Mr. Gary F. Heurich – *in honor of
John W. Gill, Sr.*
Mr. J. Kennedy Irelan – *in
memory of Frances White Irelan*
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Saville – *in
honor of Anita Henry von Selzam*

Mrs. Anne J. Stone – *in memory of
Nancy Abbot Generelly*

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memory of Gerta Manhal*
Mr. John R. Coon – *in memory of
Frank W. Coon*
Mrs. Barbara K. de Franceaux
– *in memory of Joseph Pozell*
Ms. Deirdre O'Hara – *in honor of
Hilary O'Hara*
Ms. Hilary O'Hara – *in honor of
Deirdre O'Hara*
Captain & Mrs. Thomas U.
Sisson – *in memory of Mrs.
Walter Gibson Peter, Jr.*

TIMBERRRRR!!!

Our summer newsletter contained appreciation for the Park Services' prompt and generous action to remove a tree which fell from Montrose Park onto a dozen monuments in the North Hill section. We also then announced that several of our own trees had reached the end of their lives and were diseased, dying, or "dead on their feet". We appealed for earmarked donations to defray the estimated \$35,000 per tree cost to remove standing giant oaks. No one responded.

I recalled our request as I stood on the 40-inch diameter, 83-foot tall white oak which dropped at dusk on October 28th. It fell eastward just behind the chapel across the main road and two terraces below it. Six gravestones were overturned and one magnificent historical monument was knocked askew, chipped and left unstable. The massive trunk of the tree ripped deep into the road surface and gouged large cavities into rain softened soil of three burial sites. A young tree and several shrubs were destroyed. Had the cem-



Vice President David de Vicq atop the fallen tree.

etry been open, the tree might have crushed a passing vehicle or caught members of our grounds crew working in the area. Visitors or members of a funeral cortege could also have been injured or killed. Reacting after Mother Nature drops a tree may be less expensive than removing one still standing, but it is a very risky gamble.

David C. de Vicq
Vice 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. de Vicq, *Vice President*
Wesley E. Pippenger, *Secretary*
George G. Hill, *Treasurer*
Ella S. 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 Millenium"

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

OAK HILL CEMETERY

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www.oakhillcemeterydc.org

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