Arlington Cemetery National Wreath Project

For the last 16 years the Worcester Wreath Company based in Harrington, Maine has been honoring our nation’s fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery. Over 5,000 headstones at Arlington Cemetery receive a wreath each December. The evergreen wreaths include a red bow and are placed to recognize the sacrifices our Veterans and their families have made in service to their country. The annual tradition has been expanded and there is now a program entitled “Wreaths Across America” that lays over 100,000 wreaths at 350 state and national cemeteries.

Last year I learned that the section in Arlington Cemetery where my great aunt and uncle are buried would be receiving the wreaths. Jeff and I were able to stop at Arlington Cemetery on Christmas Day to pay our respects and to see the wreaths firsthand. The picture above is in black and white but if you visit the Coalition’s website you will find a more dramatic picture in color.

http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mdcpmbs/newsletter.html

Diane Nesmeyer
Editors’ Corner

We’re back. Yes, it is true, we came out of retirement when Barbara and Gary Kraske advised it was necessary to step down as your editors. We are sure that we have the Board’s agreement when we say that they did a fine job producing the Courier since early 2007.

There is not much news on our front except working and commuting with a little bit of volunteering thrown in for good measure. And speaking of volunteering, your Coalition Needs You. Now that the holidays have ended and the New Year has begun we hope that your resolution is to step up and help out, especially when the Board sends out an S.O.S. Our organization is only as good as the members who are willing to step forward and volunteer their time to help, so let’s step up and make the Coalition an outstanding organization.

We would like to thank Amanda Becker, Luann Moorman, Gary Kraske, Kristin Kraske, Melvin Mason, and Thomas Mason for their contributions to this issue.

We included a number of websites in this issue. We will put the links on the Courier page of our website to make it easier for you to click on the link to visit those sites.

Diane and Jeff Nesmeyer

Coalition To Protect Maryland Burial Sites, Inc.

October 25, 2008 Minutes

Attendance:
President Melvin Mason
Treasurer Gerhardt Kraske
Secretary Amanda Becker

Board of Directors
Ann Bolt
Thomas Mason
Luanne Moorman
George Horvath
Kristin Kraske

Members

Dennis Green
Ann P. Horvath
Hasan Wilson

Board members not in attendance were excused.

At 11:07 am, at the office of Preservation Alliance in Baltimore City, MD, the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites meeting was called to order by President Melvin Mason. Directors unable to attend were excused and a quorum was so noted.

A resignation letter by Board member, Robert Lyons, was read by President Mason. Treasurer Gary Kraske made a motion and George Horvath seconded to accept the resignation of Board Member Robert Lyons.

Recording Secretary’s Minutes: President Mason stated that we had three different copies of the previous minutes; the official minutes, the Courier minutes, and the Web page minutes. The official minutes sent by the secretary are the correct minutes in which to view. The official minutes were then read by all present and changes were presented as follows: Secretary Becker stated that it was left out in paragraph seven to thank Sandra Wright and the Union Cemetery for help at the annual meeting. Also in paragraph seven it will be changed to just Leonard Becraft from the 2008 Annual Committee on the future annual committee. President Mason requested any motions or changes to the minutes and Ann Bolt made a motion to accept the minutes as amended and Gary Kraske seconded and the minutes were passed.

As the Corresponding Secretary was excused Recording Secretary Becker shared with the group that thank you letters had been written to Sandra Wright and the Union Cemetery Association and a letter sent to the Advisory Council to the Cemetery Oversight Committee.

Treasurer’s Report was given by Treasurer Kraske. The net worth as of October 25, 2008 is $8,909.39. Income of $231.00, expenses of $47.41, cash in hand of $124.18 and CD worth at $1,125.57. A list of Donations from 2003 until present was given as $4,628.23. The Courier has been printed for free by TRC, Inc for the last two issues. This has saved the Coalition $180.00. President asked for a motion to be made to accept
the Treasurer’s Report. Kristin Kraske and Luanne Moorman made the first and second motions and the motion passed.

The Membership Report was given by Kristin Kraske who stated that we have 83 members, 67 of them are paying members. Ms. Kraske would like to take some of the non-paying members off the membership list. It was discussed that letters to libraries, historical societies, etc. to invite people to join would be beneficial to the membership drive. Presentations at events would perhaps begin to get representation in each county. As the discussion continued it moved from the Membership Report to the Preservation Kit and how it will be a resource to aid with the Coalition’s cause. Selling this item or giving it to the community at no charge was spoken of. President Mason called for motion for the Membership Report to be approved in which Gary Kraske and Ann Bolt made the first and second nominations. There were no objections so the motion passed.

The Courier Report was given by Gary Kraske who is stepping down along with Barbara Kraske as editors. Diane Nesmeyer was said to be willing to take the editors position. Mr. Kraske was going to share shipping charges of the Courier and also request that we send Couriers to future members. Thanks was given to Barbara and Gary Kraske for all their work and diligence on the Courier.

Web Page Report was sent in by Diane Nesmeyer. New pages are on the website as follows – By-Laws page, 2008 Annual Meeting page, 2008 Directors’ page and 2008 Periwinkle page. Page that needs attention is the Items for Sale page.

President’s Report: The Coalition is not registered in the State of Maryland as of present. This will be worked on. The Outreach Committee has been working diligently and progressing with the updated version of the Preservation Kit, President Mason stressed. Nominations for the new slate of Officers and the Annual Meeting content need to be worked on. The Archives Report was also shared during the President’s Report. Discussion involved the Archives and the way in which the Officers and Board of Directors would like it to be maintained. President Mason will work with Secretary Becker and whomever willing to work on the Archives to get it up to date.

2009 Annual Meeting Report: Diane Nesmeyer, President Mason and Secretary Becker have been preparing for the Annual Meeting. It is tentatively being held at St. George’s Parish in Harford County in May. Tentatively scheduled are a stone repair demonstration and a lecture on mapping cemeteries.


By-Laws Committee was next on the agenda. Director Luanne Moorman wanted to rescind the nomination she voted for about Art V. Officers. Discussion was presented and then President Mason presented that option. Director Moorman made the motion to rescind her previous motion of Article V: Officers. George Horvath seconded this and the motion was passed.

The Events Committee had no report except that Director Moorman stated that Erika Hall and Aisha Almond do not want to be on the committee anymore.

Fundraising Committee is working on a new sales brochure to add the new items in stock.

Legislation Committee is extinct and there of course was no report. This committee needs to be filled.

Outreach Committee has been working and attending meetings. The reports of their meetings are on the web page.

Old Business: Office of Cemetery Oversight Advisory Council on Cemetery Operations Meeting – Leonard Becraft and Brenda McNeal attended the meeting on July 24th for the Coalition.

The Mosko Proposal has been tabled for the moment because of lack of interested willing participants of the Coalition.

Happy Birthday Montgomery County Day was successful.

Mt. Auburn Cemetery now has prisoners working on cleaning debris and trash. The Methodist Conference owns it and Peggy Elliott has not returned Director Moorman’s calls.

The Outreach Committee has met three times to
work on the Preservation Kit.

New Business: Preservation Maryland will be meeting in 2009 where we can submit a nominee/s for designation of Endangered Places in Maryland. This needs to be worked on early in the new year.

The Cracked Claw restaurant in Urbana, Maryland (Frederick County) had gravestones in the back behind its building. Somehow the gravestones have mysteriously disappeared.

Ann Horvath invited all to attend the Annual Visitation at Holy Trinity Cemetery (Carroll County) at 3:00 pm on October 26, 2008. An article on the front page of the Carroll County Times along with a photograph shared the Holy Trinity Cemetery’s progress.

Dennis Green relayed that there is an old military pet cemetery on part of Ft. Mead (Patuxent) with about thirty stones. Suggestions were given to Mr. Green such as to contact Candy Warden and James Lanier as they are also dealing with starting a friends group.

Gary Kraske told the group that Maine has a good cemetery conservatorship in that they take care of the cemeteries. The Coalition and Maryland should emulate this model.

President Mason called for the meeting to be adjourned. Directors Mason and Kraske agreed and all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 1:34 pm with the next meeting being on January 24, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Becker
Recording Secretary

Outreach Committee Report

The Outreach Committee has been meeting monthly since August. The members: Melvin Mason, Jeff Nesmeyer, Amanda Becker, Brenda McNeal, Robert Mosko, and Diane Nesmeyer have drafted an outline for the new Preservation Kit. Anyone wishing to view the outline can visit the Coalition’s website at:
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mdcpmb/outreach.html. We will gladly accept any and all comments, suggestions, and assistance from Coalition members.

The members of the committee have been assigned sections of the outline and tasked with drafting the language from their assigned sections that will be used for the publication. The group will be meeting again after the first of the year to review and edit the language proposed by each member.

Outreach Committee

Outreach Committee: Brenda McNeal, Melvin Mason, Amanda Becker, Thomas Mason (seated), Robert Mosko, and Diane and Jeff Nesmeyer

The Graveyard Rabbit

By Frank Lebby Stanton

In the white moonlight, where the willow waves,
He halfway gallops among the graves---
A tiny ghost in the gloom and gleam,
Content to dwell where the dead men dream,
But wary still:
For they plot him ill;
For the graveyard rabbit hath a charm
(May God defend us!) to shield from harm!
Over the shimmering slabs he goes---
Every grave in the dark he knows;
But his nest is hidden from human eye
Where headstones broken on old graves lie.
Wary still!
For they plot him ill:
For the graveyard rabbit, though skeptics scoff,
Charmeth the witch and the wizard off!
The black man creeps, when the night is dim,
Fearful, still, on the track of him;
Or fleetly follows the way he runs,
For he heals the hurts of the conjured ones.
Wary still!
For they plot him ill;
The soul's bewitched that would find release,
To the graveyard rabbit go for peace!
He holds their secret---he brings a boon
Where winds moan wild in the dark o' the moon;
And gold shall glitter and love smile sweet
To whoever shall sever his furry feet!
Wary still!
For they plot him ill:
For the graveyard rabbit hath a charm
(May God defend us!) to shield from harm.

**Upcoming Cemetery-related events:**

**Green Mount Cemetery Walking Tours**

The next set of walking tours through historic Green Mount Cemetery will take place on Saturday, May 2, 9, 16, 23. Cost is $15. The cemetery opened in 1839 as the city's first urban-rural cemetery, Green Mount is the final resting place of Johns Hopkins, Enoch Pratt, William and Henry Walters, Mary Elizabeth Garrett, Theodore McKeldin, John Wilkes Booth, Betsy Patterson, Walter Lord, and other famous Marylanders. Tours begin at 9:30 a.m. from the main gate located at Greenmount Avenue and East Oliver Street, and are led by Baltimore historian Wayne R. Schaumburg. For information, call 410-256-2180 or e-mail: wschaumburg@earthlink.net. See the Baltimore Messenger newspaper from October 23rd for an article on Green Mount written by Larry Perl. [Article was posted online on October 27th at http://www.explorebaltimorecounty.com/community/4305/wilkes-booth-green-mount-cemetery/](http://home.earthlink.net/~wschaumburg/)

**2009 AGS Conference**

The 2009 AGS Conference at Union College in Schenectady, NY will begin Wednesday, June 24 and end after breakfast Sunday, June 28, 2009. Registration will be open from Tuesday, June 23 at 1:00 PM until Saturday, June 27 at 4 PM.

The workshops include:

Two days of conservation workshops: On Thursday there will be two half-day sessions, a basic/beginner's sessions and an all-day advanced session. On Friday there will be an all day basic/beginner's session and an all day advanced session.

Two days of photography workshops: On Thursday there will be one half-day session on digital photography and computer follow up led by Frank Calidonna. On Friday there will be one half-day session on point and shoot photography led by Jeff Richman.

Two half-day workshops on basic stone carving will be offered on Thursday.

Two half-day workshops on foil impressions (basic and advanced) will be offered on Thursday.

Two half-day workshops on stone rubbing (basic and advanced) will be offered on Friday.

On Friday there will be a car pool tour to a Jewish cemetery and on Saturday the participants will choose from among three bus tours scheduled. For information visit: https://www.gravestonestudies.org/conferences.htm

**News from Our Counties**

**Anne Arundel County News**

Inmates Cleaning Cemetery Grounds

Also Veterans

Reported Richard Sher on August 18, 2008, WJZ-TV

The Maryland Veterans Cemetery in Crownsville is getting help from Brockbridge Correctional Facility inmates. There are eight minimum security inmates who have been working five days a week since April to clean up the grounds at the cemetery.
At least one of those inmates is a honorably discharged veteran from the U. S. Army.

Summary by Diane Nesmeyer

**Baltimore City News**

**Mt. Auburn Cemetery Records.**

As many of you already know, I have been working on many aspects of revitalization and preservation of Mt. Auburn Cemetery. One of the most important factors to any cemetery is its records. There have never been a detailed set of Mt. Auburn records available in Maryland. The only records that existed were part of a commissioned study of African American Churches by the Lily Foundation in the mid 1980s. These records were housed in the Schomburg Center for African American Studies at the New York Public Library System where they still reside today. Baltimore has never had these records for private or public use and those of us interested in viewing them were only allowed access to the Schomburg Center catalogs with the expressed written permission of the Sharp Street Church, the “stewards” assigned by the Methodist Church to oversee the Mt. Auburn burial grounds.

I have lobbied tirelessly over the last 13 months to everyone and anyone who would listen, on the importance of housing these most important historical records here in Baltimore. I actively and strongly stressed the importance of having these in a public environment so that all who are interested would be allowed unencumbered access. These priceless records list the majority, if not all, of the burials at Mt. Auburn Cemetery from 1872 to the late 1970's, along with other important related records.

I just received a phone call from the Enoch Pratt Library (to whom I also spoke and wrote to over the many months) saying that finally, all of the records are here (except for Reel 3 which was damaged) in Baltimore! They are as excited as I am to have them here as part of their collection and have invited me to be the first person to access and use them! I cannot tell you all what it feels like to have a treasure of this magnitude here, at their true home, available for all to use.

I wanted to thank all of those who ventured with me on this path of our journey to preserve and restore Mt. Auburn Cemetery. This is a major milestone but our voyage and fight to save the most historic African American Cemetery in Baltimore is far from being over.

In the coming days, I will be sending notification to all members of families that have contacted us looking for information on their relatives at the cemetery as well as posting the announcement on our web site and on the Afrigeneas site. Hopefully, this acquisition will help family members and genealogist reconnect and confirm the branches of many family trees.

My best to you all!

Luann Moorman

**Revealing headstones of history**

Baltimoresun.com

By Liz F. Kay

December 1, 2008

Residents of the Westport area are seeing headstones again at Mount Auburn Cemetery. The cemetery, at one time known as the “City of the Dead for Colored People”, had disappeared behind an overgrowth of honeysuckle vines, brambles, and trees because the Sharp Street United Methodist Church, who purchased the cemetery in 1871, could not afford to maintain the 34 acre site.

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services has stepped in and provided inmates, all in pre-release programs, who are slowly clearing the overgrown brush with hand tools and hard work. The inmates have been working 7 hours a day, five days a week since Labor Day and have cleared about 8 acres. In addition to the hard work of the inmates the church and the Maryland Cooperative Extension are looking for ways to control the foliage more permanently. [Editors’ Note: If they can figure out a way to control the growth without harming the cemetery, the stones, or the environment they will have a marketable product for every burial ground in the same predicament.]

There are more than 48,000 people buried at Mount Auburn. Some notables include “Dr. Louise Young, the city’s first black woman doctor and Jo-
At Calvert Cemetery, Scandal Is A Footnote
Mourners’ Service Blurs Theft Scheme
By Matt Zapotosky
Washington Post Staff Writer
December 18th, 2008

Southern Memorial Gardens cemetery in Dunkirk held its annual luminary service in which 350 people attended. Those in attendance lit candles, decorated a Christmas tree, and watched a video that honored their friends and relatives who had passed away. What was not in attendance was little talk of the former owner who was sentenced to five years of supervised probation for not placing into trust over $1 million dollars in prepaid burial money into trusts.

[Summary by Diane Nesmeyer]

Grave suit stays alive
Case of home believed to be built over a cemetery survives appeal
Baltimoresun.com
October 31, 2008
By Jonathan Pitts

James and Linda Rhee moved to Brighton Pines subdivision 17 years ago. Four years ago a man called and informed them that their backyard contained a 300-year old cemetery. The man further told them the people who built the house removed the tombstones but left the remains of 26 people in the ground.

The caller told the Rhees that the original developers found the old cemetery with 26 headstones, some dating to the 1700s. The owner of Highland Corporation and two others dug up the headstones and carted them away in a dump truck. The parties then removed all references to the cemetery in their work sheets and redrew the plans so that no construction would be on top of the grave sites.

The suit filed by the owners for “fraudulent concealment” has been given the go ahead by the state Court of Special Appeals after being dismissed by a lower court. The Howard County Circuit Court dismissed the case stating the defendants had no duty to subsequent buyers of the property. According to Appellate Judge Sally D. Adkins’ opinion, “the state’s criminal laws prohibit the destruction, damaging, defacement or removal of an ‘associated funerary object’ … in a cemetery,” thereby giving the case new life.

[A case of “Poltergeist” in Howard County. As news becomes available we will keep you informed.]

Cemetery overgrows as church struggles to maintain Scouts’ efforts
By Joe Beck, Gazette Staff writer
Sunday, October 5, 2008

A Germantown graveyard becoming obscured from the combined effect of high rainfall, lack of volunteers.

The Members of Trinity United Methodist Church are losing a battle with brush, weeds, and saplings that are overrunning their churchyard. A wet summer and lack of volunteers has led to the current overgrown condition at the graveyard. The yard that dates from 1872 has been cleaned up as part of several Eagle Scout projects in the past. Chris Brown, a cemetery trustee says, “The Scouts have done a terrific job”, but the church has trouble maintaining a regular maintenance schedule after the Scouts complete their projects. The members are intending to clean up the grounds since the church is not in the business of neglect.

[Summary by Diane Nesmeyer]

Your help is requested in collecting information regarding the location and history of cemeteries in Prince George's County!

The Prince Georges Planning Board and the Prince Georges Planning Department are requesting the
public’s help in collecting information regarding the location and history of cemeteries in Prince George’s County. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission – Historic Preservation Section will be coming to the county to identify the location of historic cemeteries and assess their current conditions. Veteran cemeteries, memorial parks, church graveyards and family burial plots will be assessed by completing a survey of the site.

There are approximately 225 known cemeteries in Prince George’s County. The location and history of these cemeteries is incomplete and there are likely additional cemeteries that may only be known to property owners. The Planning Board and Department are asking if you have a burial ground on your property, or if you know the location of an abandoned cemetery, please complete the questionnaire found on their website.

http://www.mncppc.org/preservationplan/PDF/cemetery_questionnaire_web2.pdf

This information will assist the surveyors from the M-NCPPC to locate the cemetery.

If you have any questions concerning the cemetery survey project, please contact Jennifer Stabler at 301-952-5595 or jennifer.stabler@ppd.mncppc.org

For more information visit the following:

http://www.mncppc.org/preservationplan/CemeterySurvey.cfm


Summary by Diane Nesmeyer

On the Internet


00weedrich  Online copy of the 1912 “classic work” by Howard Evarts Weed, “Modern Park Cemeteries”.

Periwinkle Awards

Our Annual Meeting will be coming up in a few short months. During the Annual Meeting the Coalition designates one or more persons or organizations to receive its Periwinkle Award in recognition of their outstanding efforts and perseverance in helping to save an historic cemetery from neglect, desecration, or other illegal activities. The periwinkle plant (vinca minor) was chosen as it was the plant typically used in 18th and 19th century cemeteries throughout the State of Maryland.

Recipients receive a small monetary award and the certificates are decorated with a periwinkle motif. A list of previous winners can be found on our website at http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mdcpmbs/periwinkle.html. The Awards Committee will be looking for names of those persons who should be recognized for their work with historic cemeteries. Do you know of anyone that should be considered to receive a Periwinkle Award? Contact Board Member Ann Bolt with your nominations.

The Awards Committee

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Board Meeting

Sunday, January 25, 2009
At 1:00 p.m.

Miller Branch, Howard County Library
9421 Frederick Road
(across from Plum Tree Drive)
Ellicott City, MD

All members are welcome and encouraged to come to the meeting.
The Coalition Courier is published quarterly by the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites, Inc., P. O. Box 1533, Ellicott City, Maryland 21041, (410) 772-8602. Members of the Coalition receive the Courier as part of their membership which runs from June 1 through May 31st of each year. Individual memberships are $10.00, household memberships are $15, student memberships (grade 12 and under) are $5, and organizational memberships are $20.00 per year. Dues should be mailed to the Membership Chairperson at the address listed above.

The President, Board of Directors, and the Courier editors encourage all members to submit articles to the Courier. They further invite members to write to the Courier with questions or comments about any topic that pertains to burial sites. The topics can include preservation, protection, restoration and maintenance, historical and cultural significance, and documentation. They are also looking for questions or comments you may have about the Coalition. The questions, answers, and comments will be printed in future editions of the Courier. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about your Coalition and to have questions answered that you may have regarding burial sites.

All articles, questions, items of interest may be sent directly to the Coalition at the address listed above or e-mailed to the editors at their address listed below.

Reprint Policy

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Coalition’s Objectives

The Coalition, through its members in each county, hope to reach out to all areas of the state to:

Facilitate the exchange of information among individuals and organizations concerned about the protection of Maryland burial sites.

Increase public awareness of the historic and cultural significance of burial sites and the serious threats to them.

Draft and gain passage of new laws to more effectively deal with criminal acts against burial sites and to establish effective and uniform procedures for the protection and preservation of burial sites regardless of their age, cultural affiliation or condition.

Organize support for stronger laws in Maryland to protect burial sites–Native American burials as well as traditional cemeteries.

Raise funds for statewide public education programs, focused on burial site protection, and to provide information and guidance to any government agency, group, organization or individual interested in preserving human burial sites.

Editors

Diane and Jeff Nesmeyer, de_nesmeyer@yahoo.com
14326 Springbrook Ct., Woodbridge, VA 22193-3421

2009 Publication Deadlines

Spring March 15, 2009
Summer June 15, 2009
Fall September 15, 2009
Winter December 15, 2009

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held quarterly and scheduled by the President. Meetings are first posted on the Coalition’s Web Site and announced in the issue of the Courier published just prior to the meeting.

The Annual Meeting is held during the board meeting in April of each year. Election of new officers and Board members takes place as well as presentation of the annual reports, adoption of the budget for the coming year, and presentation of the Periwinkle Awards.

2008-2009 Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

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Vice President Jeff Nesmeyer (703) 680-7724
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Past President Gerhardt Kraske (410) 730-8278

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Standing Committees

Archives Awards Courier Events Family Remembrance
Finance Fund Raising Legislative Outreach Publicity Nominating

Web Site
http://www.cpmbs.org
Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites
Membership Form

NOTE: This is NOT a renewal notification; it is provided for convenience only.
Membership year is June 1 through May 31st

Name______________________________________________________________________________________
Address____________________________________________________________________________________
City_________________________County_________________State________ ZIP______________________
Phone______________________E-mail_____________________________Date_________________

____New                   Annual Membership Rates:
____Renewal

Individua………………………$ 10
Student (grade 12 and under)……………………$ 5
Organization……………………$ 20
Household……………………$ 15

Questions? Call Kristin Kraske, Membership (410) 772-8602
Make Checks Payable to: Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites, Inc.
P.O. Box 1533
Ellicott City, MD 21041-1533

Can you help us in our various efforts? Please list occupations / skills / interest. ________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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