

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Major Tombstone Repairs



If you visited the Eugene Masonic Cemetery in the past few months, you may have happened upon Dave Pinyerd and Bernadette Neiderer of Historic Preservation Northwest toiling among the ever-growing spring grasses. In nine visits, using a tripod, prybars, shovels, trowels and lots of gravel, they re-set, re-grouted, re-assembled and epoxied 23 different

grave markers, each of which presented unique challenges. The duo was up to the task.

Dave and Bernadette are both graduates of the the UO's Historic Preservation master's program. Dave worked at the Eugene Masonic Cemetery as a student in 1995 repairing his first stones. Historic Preservation Northwest was founded in 2001. Dave and Bernadette later expanded their services for cemetery preservation under the tutelage of Sally Donovan and Bruce Howard.

Work on the recently completed project began in April. Dave and Bernadette used a tripod and come-along to right toppled headstones. According to Dave, the 7,600-pound granite monument to J. A. Burlingame, Civil War Veteran and survivor of the Andersonville Prisoner of War Camp, was the most challenging to re-level. "We hadn't lifted one that heavy, but we did the planning and it went off without a hitch."

Both Dave and Bernadette agree that the reassembly of the broken monument for Robert Rhea was the most satisfying project. (See the photos above showing the before and after images.) Most of the broken pieces lay wrapped in plastic for over a year, waiting to be repaired by experts. Dave found the finial in the Mausoleum and says "It fit like a glove. When the results are good, it's satisfying, no matter how much work it took".

Dave and Bernadette's observations about the Eugene Masonic Cemetery confirm the special nature of the site. "The decision to keep it a forest cemetery and to emphasize the natural aspect has made EMC unique in the Willamette Valley. There are plenty of overgrown cemeteries, but the EMC maintains that natural state which is a key difference." Unfortunately, one downside to the abundance of plant life is the slow toll taken on the old markers, due in great part to the moisture, and the ultimately destructive action of moss lichen. One of their recommendations for marker preservation is for a concentrated effort to keep growing plants of all types at a reasonable distance from the historic makers to slow the breakdown of the stone.

Bernadette's thoughts on their time in the cemetery are encouraging. "Working at the cemetery ... made it very clear that EMC is not a static memorial. We saw a constant stream of casual strollers, solo joggers, families with young children and teens enjoying the space. While extensive use makes for more difficult management, it also justifies the effort put forth by staff, board members and community volunteers. Definitely a sign of an organization that's thriving, not just surviving."

There are, of course, many more grave markers in need of repair. While there are marker cleaning work parties that concentrate on removing the dirt and plant life from the markers, the repair work requires professional services. Continued funding for this type of work relies on the generous donations of EMC supporters. You can help by clicking on the "Please Donate" button below.

We hope to have Bernadette and Dave back soon for another round of repair work.

Masonic Cemetery Operations: COVID-19

The current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives and businesses of many. For current information on sales of burial space and for burials (full body or cremains), please call the Cemetery Administrator, Sally Dietrich, at (541) 515-0536. We will be monitoring what is permitted by the state in the future.

We'd like to ask your assistance. Please report any inappropriate behavior you observe to the police at the non-emergency number: (541) 682-5111.

You can also alert the cemetery to inappropriate behavior and vandalism by leaving a message at (541) 684-0949, or by email at emca1859@gmail.com. There has been some recent vandalism and inappropriate behavior, and the police are aware of the problem. Do not interact with problematic people yourself.

Last Sunday Open House.

Now that Lane County and Eugene are in Phase 2 of the reopening, we will resume our Last Sunday Open House program with some common sense procedural changes:

- All visitors will be required to wear masks.
- Social Distancing will be required.
- The lavatory will **not** be available for safety reasons.

Hope Abbey will be open from 1 to 4 PM. There is no parking on the cemetery grounds so it's suggested that you park on Potter near E 26th, or on E 25th near the main gate.

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor
Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

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Mission Statement

To restore, rehabilitate, maintain, interpret and operate the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum as a cultural and natural resource for the community.

The cemetery is operated for the public benefit,
but it is private property.
(A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)



Eugene Masonic Cemetery
ASSOCIATION

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