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September, 2020

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery will continue its traditional open house at Hope Abbey Mausoleum on Sunday, September 27, from 1 to 4 PM. There will be two hosts to answer questions about the historic building and those interred in the mausoleum. All are welcome!

Because of COVID-19 health restrictions, masks and social distancing within the building and in the cemetery are required. Lavatory facilities will not be available.

Brass On The Grass



In a normal year, the EMCA presents *Music To Die For*, a series of free monthly concerts, which run from June to October, but which was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of our board members, Sheri Pyron, is a member of a women's brass quintet. She and the group offered to play an outdoor concert instead. And so it was done.

Sunday, August 30, proved to be a perfect night for the EMCA's first concert in the cemetery's Public Square. Folk from all over trekked up the hill, with masks in place. "Ushers," using 6 foot pool noodles as spacers, settled people on blankets or chairs. Many brought picnic baskets. It's estimated the concert was enjoyed by 70-90 people.

On the gorgeous summer evening in the shade of the trees, Blugene Brass offered up a wide range of delightful music. No genre is off limits for Eugene's only all-woman brass quintet, which includes, of course, EMCA Board member Sheri Pyron. Others contributing to the delightful sounds included Shira Fadeley, Carla Lamb, Kalin Marks and Molly Robertson. Vocalist Madeleine Rowell lit up the concert with several expertly delivered, crowd-pleasing jazz standards. The group also welcomed Jack McGaughey, who played the drums and arranged several pieces on the program.

We were very gratified at the attendance and the positive comments afterwards. And we were surprised by the acoustics. Even the audience members seated quite far from the performers easily heard the music. It's good to know that we have another venue for concerts on warm summer evenings. It's something we'll keep in mind in future years as an option to augment the monthly concerts which are held inside Hope Abbey Mausoleum.

Women Who Made a Difference

The EMCA is commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. This is the sixth in a series about some of the women "who made a difference in our community," and who are interred in the historic Masonic cemetery.



Ellen Condon McCornack

Ellen Condon McCornack (1855-1929) was born to Thomas and Cornelia Condon in 1855 in Forest Grove, the second of eight children. Her older brother, who had helped his father hunt fossils, died at age 18, and Ellen gradually took over his role as the geologist's assistant. The family moved to Eugene in 1876 when Condon became one of the University of Oregon's original faculty members. In 1878, Ellen was the valedictorian of the UO's first graduating class of five students. She had studied geology with her father and had worked with him on specimens.

Ellen married Herbert McCornack the following year, and they moved away from Eugene for his medical practice. In 1887, they returned with their two young sons, and soon Ellen again became her father's helpmate. She taught his geology classes when he was traveling. Together, they classified and codified his fossil and mineral collection of several thousand specimens.

After Thomas Condon died in 1907, Ellen continued his professional work. She corresponded with eminent geologists in other parts of the country, such as Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and Oliver Hay at the U.S. National Museum in Washington, D.C. She edited the second edition of her father's book with the new title *Oregon Geology: A Revision of Two Islands*. She also guest lectured in the UO's geology classes, wrote scholarly articles on the Pleistocene period of Oregon history, and facilitated the purchase of Condon's collection of fossils and minerals by the UO.

In 1926, Ellen completed her manuscript of her father's family and professional life. In his preface to *The Odyssey of Thomas Condon* (Oregon Historical Society, 1989), Robert Clark states: "Materials on Condon are extremely limited. The most valuable—indeed, indispensable—source is Ellen Condon McCornack's biography, *Thomas Condon: Pioneer Geologist of Oregon* (Eugene, 1928)."

Thomas and Cornelia Condon and Ellen and Herbert McCornack are all buried in the Masonic Cemetery.



Road & Drainage Maintenance

Moving through the grounds of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery was made easier last month by the work of Steve Wheeler of Wheeler Construction. It had been a number of years since the historic carriage road, once used by wagons to carry remains of loved ones to their final resting places, had been resurfaced. Erosion over the years had worn the road, and other graveled roads into rutted

and uneven surfaces somewhat difficult to navigate. With groundskeeper Wendi Kuchera advising adjustment of edges and drainage conditions and helping direct public movement through the cemetery, Steve leveled and re-graded the principal avenues. After adjusting the surface of the roads to ensure proper drainage and bringing in over 100 yards of gravel, he compacted the surfaces.

In addition, significant re-grading was done around the mausoleum for better drainage, and some handicapped parking spaces were added nearby for special events that will again be taking place at the mausoleum once COVID-19 is gone.

The steep terrain of the cemetery presents challenges with rain runoff, as mentioned above. A major part of the restoration of Hope Abbey since 1997 consisted of the installation of good roof and foundation drainage. Water was piped underground to a little creek running behind the Garden Cottage, but where the water spilled into the creek was not optimum, resulting in excess water getting into a neighbor's yard. It was decided to redo the underground piping to fix that problem while the road repair contractor was on site.

It wasn't a huge job for a professional, but as the photo above shows, some of the piping was impressive.

Did You Know: Over the 25 years of restoring Hope Abbey Mausoleum, the cemetery board of directors has taken special care to make the building friendly and accessible to persons with disabilities? The full story will be in the Fall issue of Monumental News.

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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