

“Dear Sister it seems my cup of sorrow is overfull.”

People sometimes imagine grief was different in the past, especially when it comes to the death of young children. Examining the writing of a bereaved soul one hundred twenty-five years ago, however, we see that this is not true. Grief is a universal human emotion, overcome only by time and healing. The deaths of Eugene resident Pliny Snodgrass’ wife and child within five months of each other in 1899 left a devastated widower and father.

Pliny Snodgrass wrote letters to his sister about the deaths of his wife and child, letters that are now archived at the Lane County Historical Society. Pliny’s is the quintessential success story: in 1886 the 20-year-old started as a janitor and clerk at First National Bank of Eugene. He rose to become assistant cashier, cashier, vice-president, and finally president of the bank in 1917. Along the way, however, he lost two quite precious family members.

Pliny’s wife, Mary Virginia Cleaver, mother of two children, contracted tuberculosis around the time her second child was born. Blaming her illness in part on the rainy Eugene weather, Mary and the children moved to Pendleton, Oregon, for the health benefits of a

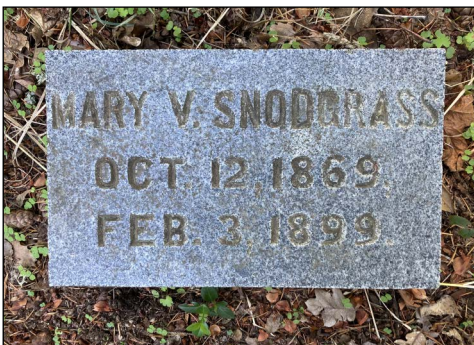
sunnier clime. But shortly after a trip back to Eugene, their younger daughter Virgie suffered an attack of typhoid fever and died within a few days. Describing in detail to his sister the child’s final days and the actions they took to ease her pain, Pliny wrote that they “never thought of losing [sic] her.” Virgie was such a blessing to their household, he wrote, “it was hard to give her up and we will sorely miss her.” The loss worsened Mary’s illness and she herself died of tuberculosis five months later. Taking up pen to his sister Nellie days before Mary’s death, a grieving Pliny wrote, “My poor darling places herself in God’s hands and faces the question [of death] bravely—she is cooler than I. Dear Sister it seems my cup of sorrow is overfull.”

Although child mortality was declining moderately across the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century, typhoid fever and measles cases persisted in Eugene. It wasn’t the rain, but contamination of Eugene’s water supply that allowed typhoid and measles to spread. A study of the typhoid fever epidemic in 1905 showed that both upstream and in Eugene, sewage flowed directly into the river, and even when it was piped, sewage contaminated wells. The State

Health Department called for boiling all water and pasteurizing all milk, in addition to digging wells farther from sewer lines. Eugene Masonic Cemetery records show a reduction in children’s deaths in the following decades.

Pliny Snodgrass is buried in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery with his first wife Mary, his second wife Amy, who also pre-deceased him, and his beloved daughter Virgie. When he died in 1947, Pliny was mourned by his older daughter Etha.

*Beatrice McKenzie,
Board Member*



Snodgrass family marker

Business Manager, Sara Besch

The cemetery has a new Business Manager, Sara Besch, a native Oregonian from the Coast Range with a fine arts background at Southern Oregon University and years of management experience in Portland. After she and her family moved to Eugene two years ago, Sara was looking for a job that was not too corporate or product-oriented and that provided a community-focused service—not your typical job, but something special that used her skills as a problem solver.



When the opening at the cemetery came up, Sara was excited. Because she lives just a few blocks

away, she was already quite familiar with the cemetery and its historic aspects, which she especially loves. The main responsibilities of the Business Manager—sales of burial rights, marketing and public relations, and office management—also seemed a good fit for her. The hiring committee completely agreed, and she has been on the cemetery staff since mid-August.

When she's not at the cemetery, Sara enjoys gardening and being an artist "as needed." A current project involves designing and constructing cabinetry for her home, which

she shares with her contractor husband and their 9-year-old daughter. In the past, she has also applied her skills to make and sell kids' hats and mittens around Christmas time.

Sara especially appreciates having such an active cemetery board, whose volunteer members care so much about their unique treasure. She's also been delighted, of course, to work side by side with Diego, Ben and Avion, our landscape crew. All in all, she considers it to be a privilege to be a part of the EMCA organization and to spend her days in such a wonderful setting. We consider it a privilege to have her on our staff.

Jon Savitz, the newest EMCA board member

It is said that owning a dog has many benefits. Meeting new people and increasing your social networks is one of them. Just ask Jon Savitz, the newest EMCA board member and current treasurer. Shiloh, Jon's gorgeous standard poodle, first made friends with Frankie, an undeniably cute corgi. This led to Jon becoming friends with Frankie's owner, a current board member, who suggested that Jon might be a great fit for the EMCA Board. Jon said he would think about it, and in a few short months not only became a member, but also assumed the role of treasurer. He claims he is still thinking about it.

Jon and his wife Donna were visitors to Eugene for many years before moving here permanently after the COVID shut down. Jon and Donna first got to know the cemetery when, as neighbors, they

spent a lot of time walking through and enjoying the beautiful grounds. Their son Sam was recently interred at the Memorial Overlook, cementing their connection to the Eugene Masonic Cemetery.

Jon's career in the passenger transportation business started in Hawaii many years ago when he found a job driving a tour bus. He quickly rose in the ranks as his talents and abilities became apparent to the compa-



ny owners. He ended up running the business, which eventually led him to Florida as an executive for their coach supplier. The effects of the shift to working from home during COVID brought an abrupt end to commuting for his Silicon Valley clients, and Jon decided it was a good time to retire.

His background in managing complicated systems will serve him well as he moves forward with the EMCA.

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (541) 684-0949 www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org

Board of Directors

John Bredesen	Beatrice McKenzie	Charles Wright	Avion Mallory, Groundskeeper
Alex Brokaw	Don Peting	Sara Besch, Business Manager	Ben Ricker, Groundskeeper
Caroline Forell Hallis	Sheri Pyron	Diego Llewellyn-Jones, Site Manager	
Denny Hellesvig	Jon Savitz		
Catherine Kordesch	Elizabeth Southworth		
	Shawn Walker		

The IRS Form 990 is available for inspection upon request.

We acknowledge that the cemetery sits on the the traditional Indigenous homelands of the Kalapuya peoples. We respect this Indigenous homeland, honor the care they provided for the land, and pay tribute to the Kalapuya peoples who continue to live and thrive in the State of Oregon.

Thinking about My Dash

— The President's Corner —

Generally, a headstone includes at least three things: name, birth date, and death date. This basic information does very little to describe the individual. For that reason, other personalized images or epitaphs are included on the headstone. Such personalization is now easier and more common with advances in head-

stone-making technology. However, even with the personalization, headstones generally contain little information about how the individual spent the time between the two dates. I am reminded of a poem by Linda Ellis:

The Dash by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
at the funeral of a friend
He referred to the dates on the tombstone
from the beginning ... to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth
and spoke the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
that they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own –
the cars ... the house ... the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
to consider what's true and real,
and always try to understand
the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
and show appreciation more,
and love the people in our lives
like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
and more often wear a smile,
remembering this special dash
might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read
with your life's actions to rehash,
would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent YOUR dash?

I think about this poem a lot as I walk through the cemetery reading the information on the headstones. I think about the “dash” of the individuals interred in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. I think about how they had such diverse experiences. I often desire to learn more of their lives and understand their backgrounds. I also contemplate how I may be remembered. In turn, this motivates me to perhaps spend less time in front of my computer screen and more time with my family and friends, being kind, and looking for ways to serve others.

As the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association, our hope is that we can provide a setting in which individuals can remember those who have passed on. We strive to provide an important cultural and natural resource to our community. We encourage you to donate to the EMCA or otherwise get involved to assist us in ensuring this community treasure is available for generations to come.

Shawn Walker, EMCA Board President

Let Us Tell Your Story

Consider a purchase of burial space in the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery. Our native and heritage landscape is environmentally welcoming for urn and ash burial. Your purchase will provide a beautiful and meaningful place for your family and friends to visit, and it will support the cemetery into the future.

**For more information, please contact
Sara Besch at 541-684-0949
or emca1859@gmail.com**



Arboretum Progress

Our cemetery has such an interesting assortment of trees and shrubs that it has been officially recognized by Arbnet as a class 1 arboretum. An article on that subject in the Spring 2023 issue of Monumental News concluded by saying, “We are also busy developing arboretum-specific resources for the community to enjoy and are looking forward to making these resources available in the weeks and months to come.”

Our plan has been to put signs by representative trees and shrubs and determine a walking path that

winds past most of the signs. We also want to create a brochure that has information about the history and overall character of the cemetery’s grounds and a map showing the path.

Diego Llewellyn-Jones, our Site Manager and project leader, has picked out the trees to mark, and by the time you read this, he will have placed signs by them. The signs include common name, Latin name and genus—information that will let a cell-phone search reveal all sorts of facts about the trees they label. To help guide visitors, we are

also placing a large sign by the main cemetery entrance on 25th Avenue.

We hope to have a brochure with map ready before long. The map we submitted for our Arbnet accreditation is a good start and we can use materials from our current Trees of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery brochure as well. All of these resources will help community members and people coming to Eugene specifically for the purpose of visiting our arboretum to more fully appreciate and enjoy what it offers.

Charley Wright, Board Member

Hidden Native Habitats

Many mid-19th century cemeteries across Europe and North America, such as the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, were created in open countryside. These cemeteries are now valued by biologists, botanists, and conservationists as places possessing hidden native habitats, i.e., small vestiges of the landscape that once was. They are havens for wildlife and native plant species. Researchers utilize these environments to collect plant seeds and to study wildlife. Professor David Bellamy, of the British cemetery conservation group Caring for God’s Little Acres, described these

fragments of the natural past as “islands of hope.”

In 2012, botanist Bruce Newhouse conducted a plant inventory of the cemetery. Bruce’s report listed 140 native plant species in the cemetery. He characterized the cemetery’s oak savanna and the wetland prairie, where the field of common camas is found, as having “unique ecological value.” Less than seven percent of the original oak savanna, and less than one percent of the original one million acres of prairie lands exist in the Willamette Valley today.

The oak savannah provides habitat to a variety of wildlife, including the western gray squirrel, listed as a “sensitive species.” Other wetland plants found in the camas field include wholeleaf saxifrage, large leaved lupine, showy milkweed, narrowleaf wyethia, and the less common Tolmie’s cat’s ear. This rich plant diversity sustains important butterfly and insect populations. They in turn pollinate the plants and are a food source for local and migratory birds.

In his recommendations, Bruce advised that the cemetery be viewed “not only as a repository of the history of Eugene residents, but also as an ‘ark’ of native vegetation and wildlife.” He asked the cemetery board to limit the number of conifers “to increase the release of oaks and madrones” and “to use headstones and plot markers as surrogate habitats for rock-associated native plants.” He further recommended “supercharging the cemetery’s sunny areas and forest understories with abundant showy native wildflowers,” which once stretched as far as the eye could see.

*Adapted from an article by
Barbara Cowan, former board member*



Cemetery camas field

These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery offers a visitor so much. Here are a few of my favorite things in the order in which they appear on my cemetery tours. Guiding cemetery tours is one of my favorite things. Recently, I've been offering monthly tours of the cemetery and Hope Abbey.

My favorite things in Hope Abbey are the golden clerestory windows and the lovely soft light they provide. The original windows, broken and blocked up when the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association took ownership of the abbey, were rebuilt over 15 years by master glass artisan John Rose, using glass from the same manufacturer as the 1914 originals.

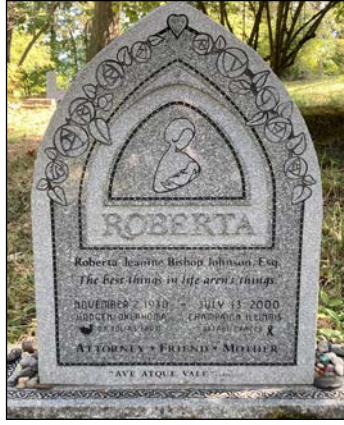
My favorite person in the abbey is KLCC radio host Gavin "Rooster" Fox, who died in 1999. People who see his crypt frequently tell me how much they loved Rooster's blues program.

I begin my tours of the cemetery itself by showing off award-winning memorial designer Lisa Ponder's stone carving works. As we start to climb the road, we find Ruth Bascom, "Eugene's First Lady Mayor," fondly remembered as the bicycle mayor. She and her husband have a beautiful stone, carved with Spencer's Butte, as well as a marker carved with each of their bicycles.

Further up the road is a Ponder stone honoring Ruth Hutchinson Hunter, who had it installed before

she died. Carved on it is a mansion with the words "No more moving. I've found my mansion."

Perhaps the most exquisite Ponder stone is one for Lisa's mother, Roberta Johnson. This beautiful memorial depicts a mother cradling her baby with the words "The best things in life aren't things." There are several other Ponder stones in the cemetery, and each tells a very personal story.



At the top of the road are the Public Square and Roz's Bench, my favorite sitting spot. Roz Slovic, "Friend to all the World," was a long-time EMCA board member and treasured member of the Eugene community, involved in numerous organizations focusing on families and the environment. Board member Sheri Pyron designed this unique bench, made from two salvaged redwood slabs.

My favorite cemetery mystery involves Samatha McAlister's banged-up monument, a few steps southwest of the Memorial Overlook. Erected in 1896 on Samantha's grave, it was included in the 1910 gravestone inventory, but missing in the 1994 inventory. Nobody knew what happened to it until in 2012 a history buff discovered a 500-pound gravestone buried under blackberry bushes at a Lake Oswego farm. The finder's research revealed that it was Samantha's, and she contacted the EMCA, which contacted Karen Offen, Samantha's great-grand-

daughter. With the farm owner's permission (he didn't know how it got there either) and with help from friends, Karen loaded the monument and drove it to Eugene, where it was later reinstalled on the McAllister plot.

Down the Carriage Road to the east from the Memorial Overlook is a very special monument that honors Wiley Griffon, the first African American recorded as living in Eugene. Wiley arrived in Eugene around 1890, and died in his home in 1913, after working as a streetcar driver, a janitor at the University of Oregon, and a well-respected porter at the Elks Club. The Elks employed a nurse to care for Wiley in his last days and paid for his burial in the cemetery. The monument was erected a few years ago as a Multicultural History Project to memorialize him. At the time Wiley lived in Eugene, the Oregon constitution still barred him from living or owning land in Oregon. It is a testament to the esteem in which Wiley was held that he did both.

There are many more favorite things I could write about. Come on one of my tours and I'll tell you all about them and more.

Caroline Forell, Board Member



Take a Video Tour

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's you, zooming over Camas Field, soaring through Hope Abbey, flitting along paths, and hovering at special grave markers. Thanks to Hugh Prichard's vision and Nick Shafer's piloting, you can enjoy this unique experience.

Just visit www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org, scroll down, and take off.

EMCA Board: Dedication and Community

As you look at lists of board members of various organizations, have you ever wondered about who they are, why they sit on the board and how they got there? I have, so I decided to find that out about the EMCA board members. Three of the current members have served on the board for over 20 years and several others have also served long terms. Obviously, this must be a meaningful and fun board to work with. Of the 13 members, five have family members buried in the cemetery. That alone is a reason to be on the board, but their reasons for involvement were many and varied. The questions I asked them are the following.

How did you find out about the EMCA and the board?

Several of the members were specifically recruited by Kay Holbo, the founder of the cemetery association. Most of the others were friends of someone already on the board, and one met a board member through common dog-walking times in the cemetery. A newcomer to Eugene found out about the cemetery from an online resource.

Why did you decide to join the board?

Many of the members were looking for meaningful local involvement after retirement. A couple are especially interested in history or organizing events or tours. Several are also taphophiles—people interested in cemeteries.

What do you like best about working on the board, or what is most rewarding for you about being on the board?

All of the members commented on how much they enjoy working with the other members, “who are passionate about the cemetery and Hope Abbey.” Several noted that even though they knew the cemetery existed, they knew very little about it, and have learned “a great deal from the people who had their own knowledge and perspectives, all dedicated to a remarkable Eugene treasure.”

What meaning does the cemetery have for you, how do you “use” the cemetery, or why is the cemetery

important to you?

“The cemetery represents for me one way to approach the history of Eugene.”

“The cemetery grounds are a beautiful space, an urban forest in the middle of homes.”

“For me, the cemetery is a place of peace where I can step away from the distractions of the world. I see the cemetery as a place of refuge and solace for those grieving or seeking peace and comfort.”

“I walk with my dog (on a leash!) frequently and seek peace and serenity each time. Both are critical to navigating in today’s world.”

“The cemetery is personally important to me because ... some of my family members are residents of the EMC,” and other family members will join them in the future.

“I love the history. I love the natural beauty. I love this connection to my hometown. I love to wander and ... sit quietly.”

The board members bring a wealth of different skills and knowledge to their work on the cemetery. Some have an architectural background, others have working electrical, plumbing and structural knowledge. There are those with accounting experience, landscape expertise, historical research background and law degrees. One is even a former mortician. But most consistent of all is their willingness to put in the time and effort which were needed to restore the cemetery and, now, to maintain it in its current state.

If you are interested in being a member of this hardworking, fun board, contact president Shawn Walker at shawnwalker04@gmail.com

Betsy Halpern, Volunteer editor



An example of restored windows in Hope Abbey

To Our Readers: If you would like to receive EMCA’s monthly eNewsletter, go to the EMCA’s website. On the pull down menu, click About Us and then EMCA publications. At the bottom of the page is a link to sign up.

Recent Contributions

The following individuals and organizations contributed gifts between April 1, 2024 through October 1, 2024. We thank you all.

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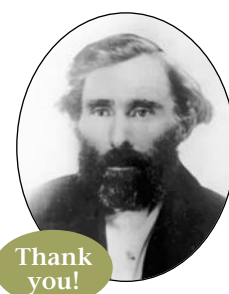
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Thank you!

Eugene Skinner

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Mark Zorn

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Robert and Merle Bottge
Rick Brewer
June Brooks
Ghost House

Dedicated Gifts

Between April 1, 2024 and October 1, 2024, the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association received gifts from the following. We wish to thank all who contributed and regret any errors or omissions.

Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

Richard Larson and Barbara Cowan for the Landscape Endowment

Rebecca Weedon Lacy in memory of Bob, Jonnie and Sam Lacy
Sharon and Michael Posner in memory of Gerry Reicher
Carol Williams in memory of Tom Williams

Adrienne Simmons in memory of Karen Seidel
Kent Kullby and Tim Smith for the endowment
Dennis Westfall in memory of two mommies
Curtis Willcox in memory of Daniel Waltzer

Supporter (less than \$100)

Larry and Paula Bangs in memory of and in honor of the Bangs family
Lorraine Bias in memory of Jerome Bias
The Codman Family Trust in memory of Nadia Telsey
Carol Garringer in memory of Jerry Garringer

Mark Zorn in memory of Preston Michael King

Recent In-kind Contributions

We happily acknowledge the in-kind services and discounts afforded to us by the following.

Dale Forrest
Lane Forest Products
QSL Printing
Sanipac

Monument Rebuilder (\$500-\$2,499)

Brigid Flannery in memory of Dan Slovic for the landscape
Devon Mann in memory of Nancy Jean Fritz

Preserver (\$250-\$499)

Martha and William Hall in memory of the Benner family

Sponsor (\$100-\$249)
Lawrence and Sandra Dunlap in memory of Erik Muller
Gale Fiszman in memory of Rachele and Joseph Fiszman
Sarah Klinghammer in memory of Daniel Klinghammer
Rinette and David Mills in memory of their son Joshua Mills
Christopher and Laura Ramey in honor of Kalvin, the dog

Summer Music

We had a successful concert season at the cemetery this summer. There were five Music To Die For concerts, including a performance by Suzuki youth violinists three years old to high school age. Music on the Square held five performances, with one other canceled due to rain. Look for next year's schedule in the spring eNewsletters.

Shawn Walker's article (pg. 3) highlights how the dash on a gravestone holds untold stories. Here are a few fun epitaphs that reveal glimpses of the person's life.

*Gravity works
The wine glass is always half full
I am still composting
This is one hole I can't dig myself out of
Oh, What the heck*

Consider your place in history...

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery offers burial rights for both cremated remains and caskets. Your purchase not only creates a beautiful family memorial spot but also supports the cemetery.

For more information, please contact Sara at 541-684-0949 or emca1859@gmail.com



If you wish to donate, please use the enclosed remittance envelope or PayPal.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

What's Inside

"Dear Sister"	1
Business Manager, Sara Besch ...	2
Jon Savitz, EMCA board member ..	2
Thinking about My Dash	3
Arboretum Progress	4
Hidden Native Habitats	4
A Few of My Favorite Things	5
Dedication and Community	6
Electronic Newsletter	8

*Newsletter by Betsy Halpern
and Beneda Design*

Donate with



Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association Electronic Newsletter

The first electronic newsletter from the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (EMCA) was published in March, 2013. The Monumental News that you are now reading was started by board member Karen Seidel in the late 1990s and is published twice a year in the spring and fall.

The idea for the EMCA eNewsletter was prompted by the desire of the board of directors to show off the interior of the newly restored Hope Abbey. The board decided to have an open house on the last Sunday of each month (except December), and used the eNewsletter to publicize the open house. Later the free Music To Die For series was started and was also publicized in the eNewsletter.

Unlike the Monumental News, we've never come up with a fancy name for the electronic newsletter, so it is known simply as the "eNewsletter." We use a commercial online company, which enables us to format the newsletter, maintain the mailing list, and send it out. (Incidentally, if you're on that mailing list, you need to know that we never share or sell information on that list, nor from the mailing list for the Monumental News.)

The eNewsletter has been published monthly since

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



"Last Sunday" Open House

its March, 2013 inception. In addition to the articles on the two programs for which it was originally created, timely articles on landscape events, work parties, personnel changes and other items of interest are included.

You can easily access archived copies of the eNewsletter at <https://eugenemasonic-cemetery.org/index.php/enewsletters/>, or scan the qr code.



If you'd like to receive the monthly eNewsletter, send an email note to jarthurbredesen@gmail.com and ask to be added to the mailing list.

*John Bredesen,
Board Member*