

Last Words

When you walk through the Masonic Cemetery, do you pause to read the inscriptions on tombstones? While many grave markers contain only the names of the persons buried there, their birth and death dates, and perhaps an indication of their relationship (e.g., “Mother,” “Father”), others provide “last words” from the person or about the person. Recent markers, particularly those in the past 20 years, exhibit an amazing variety of inscriptions—in various languages, expressing solemn to light-hearted ideas, or containing profound thoughts dealing with social justice and the future of humankind. Following are some examples.

While the majority are in English, the cemetery also has inscriptions written in:

Sanskrit..... “Namaste” (I bow to you)

German..... “In Ewigkeit” (In eternity)

Arabic..... “Inshallah” (Allah willing)

And many inscriptions are in Hebrew, such as “I am my beloved’s” and “My beloved is mine” (from Song of Songs 6:3) and “a warrior against the enemies of Israel.”

Some last words speak movingly about the deceased’s philosophy of life and the world:

“Life is Short; Love is Long”

“Change is the Ineffable Truth”

“Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters in a Mighty Stream”

“The Wine Glass is Always Half Full”

“Give Peace a Chance”

“The Best Things in Life Aren’t Things”

“Let Us Live Lovingly, Generously and with Courage”

At least one inscription is taken from a popular song, this one by Leonard Cohen in 1992:

“There is a crack, a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

Other last words, both spiritual and secular, reveal the deceased person’s final intentions or the regard of others:

“No more Moving. I’ve found my Mansion. (In my father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I



At left:
a special,
tilted top
monument

Below: close-
up of book
stack on
monument
side.

*would have told you.
John 14:2)”*

“I Rest in the Grace of the World and am Free”

“Thank You for the Music”

“Fare You Well, Fare You Well; I Love You More than Words Can Tell”

“I’m Still Composting”

And then there’s the monument (shown above) that encompasses it all. The tilted top surface contains “Food—Amore—Hugs—Stories” in a circle with a rose carved in the center. Along one side is a stack of books titled “Beautiful,” “Smart Reader,” “Love to Shop,” “Sports Fan,” and “Generosity.” Another side of the marker features more books, including the titles “Great Minds Think Alike,” “Traveler,” and “Grandbear.” (A small black bear is also inscribed on the marker along with bubbles curling up one side.) This was a true Renaissance person.

As you enjoy the spring flowers on your cemetery walk, also check out the messages on the tombstones. You’ll find some enthralling stories.

Karen Seidel, EMCA Board Secretary

Catherine Kordesch, New Board Member

Meet our newest EMCA Board member, Catherine Kordesch. Catherine may be new to the organization, but she is not new to the community. She recently retired after serving 35 years as a pediatrician in Eugene, and has added the Eugene Masonic Cemetery as one of her many volunteer activities. We are lucky to have her.

Catherine's parents emigrated to the U.S. from Vienna, and Catherine was born one year later. German was her first language and she speaks it fluently. She says she is increasing her understanding of the linguist evolution of her first language by reading the Harry Potter series—in German!

In 1984, Catherine and her physician husband moved to Eugene after finishing their resi-

dencies in California. They raised their three daughters here. The family takes full advantage of the Oregon outdoors, and Catherine describes hiking and cross-country skiing as two of her passions. She is on the Master Swim Team and enjoys playing the piano.

Catherine serves on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, focusing on climate change and biodiversity. She and her husband are currently volunteering with Lane County Public Health, assisting with the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

Catherine describes herself as

very nature-oriented, and has spent a great deal of time walking through the cemetery and enjoying the changing seasons. Her parents, who moved to Eugene in later life, are buried in the cemetery. Catherine says she loves the sense of peace that the natural landscape provides to her as she visits their graves. She hopes to apply her interest in nature and native plants to the ever-evolving landscape of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. You can see why we are fortunate to have her on the EMCA Board of Directors. Welcome, Catherine.

*Elizabeth Southworth,
Board Member*



Cemetery Definitions

As you may have noticed, this issue of Monumental News is focused on graves and gravestones, so we thought it appropriate to include some definitions associat-



One of the two steles in the cemetery

ed with cemeteries.

Mausoleum An above ground building or structure housing multiple deceased individuals.

Pilaster A rectangular, vertical wall protrusion that resembles a flat column. It gives the appearance of a supporting column, but its function is decorative.

Crypt A space or compartment in a mausoleum or other building to store human remains.

Shutter A concrete, granite, marble or glass front of a crypt.

Marker/Headstone A decorative, upright grave marker, sometimes referred to as a tombstone, placed at the head of a grave and usually made of stone. The deceased's name is inscribed in the stone, along with the date of birth and death, and often a message or quote.

Footstone A flat stone which may simply mark the foot of a

grave, serving as a boundary marker for the grave plot, but may be used to provide additional information about the interred.

Stele An upright stone slab or pillar erected for funerary or commemorative purposes. It bears an inscription or design and serves as a monument or marker.

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association
(541) 684-0949

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The IRS Form 990 is available for inspection upon request.

www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org

From the President

This issue of the newsletter focuses on the importance of our cemetery's headstones as community and family history. While many in the community think of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery as a park, it is also a sacred space. The cemetery is the final resting place for loved ones dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Headstones also make it an outdoor museum.

What makes the Eugene Masonic Cemetery so special is that it is both park-like and museum-like. We continue to enhance our cemetery's natural beauty, which makes the cemetery so welcoming to visitors. We are also improving how we provide access to the cemetery's history, and putting the final touches on Hope Abbey's return to its original glory.

With the Hope Abbey restoration almost completed, the EMCA is now making the restoration and maintenance of our headstones a high priority. To this end, we have

hired Historic Preservation Northwest (HPN) to do a survey of all our headstones. Having finished the field work, HPN is now preparing its written report, which will include a data base. We are also working with HPN on a multi-year project to repair our damaged headstones.

We have been fortunate to have had the cemetery's beautiful landscape lovingly tended by Wendi Kuchera for thirteen years. Wendi left us at the end of February, but not before training our former groundskeeper, and now new landscape manager, Giffin Glastonbury. His work with Wendi, and previous experience managing diverse landscapes, has enabled Giffin to confidently step into Wendi's giant shoes. Replacing him as groundskeeper is Diego Llewellyn-Jones who is also no stranger to the cemetery. Diego worked for us previously as a



Caroline Forell

groundskeeper before he spent some time overseas. We are thrilled to have Giffin and Diego as our landscape dynamic duo.

The EMCA is currently engaged in an oral history project interviewing people who brought the cemetery back to life. These oral histories will eventually be accessible to listen to

and/or read. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Kate Thornhill, University of Oregon's Digital Scholarship Librarian, who has made this project possible. Among the interviewees are Kay Holbo, Mike Helm, John Bredesen, Denny Hellesvig, and Rich Maris. They tell stories of how each contributed to EMCA, rescuing the cemetery from its previous decrepit state.

It has been sad for us that during the pandemic we have not been able to share the inside of Hope Abbey with the public. Nevertheless, work has continued on putting the finishing touches to its magnificent interior. As a tribute to John Bredesen and Denny Hellesvig, two men who have worked tirelessly on the Abbey, money was raised to finish one of the last projects, that of restoring the concrete pilasters. Plan to visit the Abbey in the future during our Memorial Day events, a Last Sunday open house, or a Music To Die For Concert to see the finished restoration.

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery has much to offer, but we can't do it without your financial support. We are now prepared to accept stock, as well as your always welcome donations of cash.

Come visit us soon. We're looking great.

*Caroline Forell,
EMCA Board President*



Diego Llewellyn-Jones, groundskeeper, and Giffin Glastonbury, landscape manager

Memorial Day Weekend Open House is Back!

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum will be open on Sunday, May 30, and on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31.

Over one hundred veterans are buried here, and flags will be flying over their graves. Taps will be played at noon on both days by Barry Barreau. If you haven't experienced Taps in the Public Square, you have missed a truly moving experience.

Memorial Day Weekend is an opportunity to visit the astonishingly beautiful Hope Abbey Mausoleum. Our Board of Directors will be serving as hosts to answer questions and to show you the various displays.

The History Hunt is our "cemetery version" of a scavenger hunt. It's a fun family activity, and there are prizes for all who participate! It starts in Hope Abbey.

There will be two guided walking tours. On Sunday, groundskeeper Diego Llewellyn-Jones will lead **The Cemetery's Landscape**, and on Monday, Board President Caroline Forell, will lead **A Focus on History**. They will start immediately following Taps in the Public Square and will end at Hope Abbey.

SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL: To cap off Sunday's activities, an outdoor concert will be held in the Public Square at 4:00 p.m. featuring Eugene's only all-woman brass quintet (plus percussionist!). Bring a blanket, low chair, and your own refreshments.

Remember to park your car in the surrounding neighborhood and allow yourself enough time to walk to the Public Square at the top of the hill for Taps and the concert.

We will be following all Lane County health guidelines and expect our visitors to do the same.

Schedule of Events

Sunday, May 30

- **11:30am–5pm** Cemetery gates and Hope Abbey open to the public
- **NOON: Taps will be played** in the Public Square
- **12:10pm** Guided landscape walking tour – meet in the Public Square
- **4pm** Musical performance by

Blugene Brass in the Public Square

Monday, May 31

- **11:30am–5pm** Cemetery gates and Hope Abbey open to the Public
- **NOON: Taps will be played** in the Public Square
- **12:10pm** Guided historical walking tour – meet in the Public Square

Alex Brokaw, Board Member

Looking to the Future

As Caroline Forell, President of our Board likes to say, "We all love the Cemetery!"

Board members have joined the board for a variety of reasons. Some love the majestic trees and park-like setting. Others are particularly interested in restoring the built structures and preserving Eugene's oldest cemetery. Many appreciate the events and continuing cultural impact on the community. For others, it is nearly their back yard. We can all agree it is important to take care of a place where so many people—even some of our own family members—are buried.

As a board member, when I started to do research on the best way to clean and preserve headstones, I realized that when they're gone, the meaning of the place is lost. Lynette Strangstad, author of "A Graveyard Preservation Primer," describes it well: "Each tombstone is an irreplaceable historical document containing some of America's earliest written history. The accessibility of these museums (cemeteries) allows us all, not just historians, to view, appreciate, and study these documents, and to enjoy their artwork. They are valuable tools through which we can teach our history to a new generation."

It's clear to me that we, as a board, are conservators of history, and that our gravestones are the backbone of this history. It's also important to understand this is personal history to someone's family, not just our collective community history. The fact that families trust us with the remains of their loved ones is a responsibility not to be taken lightly, and we should do everything we can to preserve their legacies.

The EMCA remains committed to the cemetery's restoration and maintenance that we began in 1995, over a quarter century ago. With the restoration of the mausoleum mostly complete, we are placing more emphasis in the coming years on monument documentation and restoration. — *Sheri Pyron, Board Member*



Tombstone Styles and Symbols

Inside the main entrance of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery at E. 25th Street and University Avenue, you'll find three interpretive signs, which have been recently updated. Each one focuses on specific characteristics of the historic cemetery. One of them describes some of the tombstone styles and symbols you can find here. If you haven't had the chance to see this sign, here is some of the information about these monuments that you'll find in the cemetery.

FINGER DOWN

Architectural details are sometimes used as in this monument with its gable roof and side dormers. The finger pointing down to the deceased grave is unusual.

WOW

A fine example of the original monument furnished to members of the Woodmen of the World fraternal organization.

DRAPERIES

This marker, which represents

the common theme of the parting draperies to the afterlife, is a very good example of monument art.

CONDON

This white marble marker is one of the most beautiful examples of fine carving with its architectural roof line and floral designs.

ZINC

Zinc monuments were available, even through mail-order, around the turn of the century.



Finger Down



WOW



Draperies



Condon



Zinc

Massachusetts Cemetery Visit

My family history dates back to the 1600s in Massachusetts. For a long time, I have wanted to go back to visit the area. The oldest house on Nantucket Island, dating to 1686, belonged to my relatives, and I had information about several cemeteries where relatives were buried. In October, 2019, my husband, John Bredesen, accompanied me on my mission.

Our first stop was in Boston where, among other sights, we visited several old cemeteries. Most of those in the city were well maintained, and many had been turned into parks.

Before we ventured out to Nantucket Island, we journeyed to Middleborough, Massachusetts, where, with the help of the internet and Google Maps, we were able to find the Parish Cemetery at the Green. This is where my great, great, great, great, grandparents are buried. It is an active cemetery, and was very well maintained.

I had a picture of the gravestones, but since they were from the 1750s, it was almost impossible to read the stones. We searched for a while, but were unsuccessful in locating the grave sites. It was Sunday, and services at the Congregational Church across the road were just getting out. We decided to wander over there to see if anyone could help us.

The church, which was established in 1694, was celebrating its 325th anniversary, and had many historic items on display. We were lucky enough to find the church historian who accompanied us to the cemetery. Using a picture of the gravestones on our cell phone, which had the church in the background, he helped us locate the gravestones.

They were encrusted with lichens, but we could make out

part of the names and dates. Our historian said the best way to get rid of the lichens was to scrape them off with a ball point pen. Whether that is a correct procedure or not, we worked on the stones until we could read a little more of the inscriptions. I hope to be able to work with whoever maintains the cemetery to install brass plaques at the graves, since the current gravestones will prob-

ably not be readable much longer.

We then tried to find another cemetery with more of my relatives, but were unsuccessful, partly because we didn't read the Google map correctly. I guess that means another trip back! It surely was a fun adventure, and John was a good sport, accompanying me on my explorations.

Betsy Halpern



John Bredesen working on the gravestone.



Gravestones of my relatives. Note church in background and lichen encrusted headstones.

Recent Contributions

The following individuals and organizations contributed gifts between October 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021. We thank you all.

Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

John Bredesen and Betsy Halpern
Caroline Forell and Richard Hildreth
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Gifts in Honor and in Memory

Between October 1, 2020 and April 1, 2021, 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

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Maram Epstein and Justine Lovinger in honor of Roz Slovic
A.J. and Roslyn Gaines
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Christopher and Laura Ramey in memory of Calvin, the dog
Ginny Reich in memory of the Robert Clark family

Cornelia Taggart in memory of Robert Dritz
Mary Darold-Tanner in memory of Gloria Semon

Recent In-kind Contributions

We happily acknowledge the in-kind services and discounts afforded to us by the following.
Historic Preservation Northwest
Dale Forrest
Lane Forest Products
QSL Printing
Sanipac

In Honor of Denny and John

The following people made special gifts to honor the services of John Bredesen and Denny Hellesvig to our cemetery.

Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

Hallis
James Northrop
Don Peting also in memory of Betty Peting
Hugh and Sue Prichard also in honor of Karen Seidel
Charles and Leslie Wright

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*Newsletter by Betsy Halpern
and Beneda Design*

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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 pages is a link to sign up.

The digital version of this newsletter is at
www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org

Music To Die For

Music To Die For, the annual music series hosted by the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, is temporarily on hold, like most other musical and performance events. After the pandemic arrived, it was canceled for all of 2020, and 2021 remains problematic at this point. When these concerts inside Hope Abbey Mausoleum can resume depends to a large extent on how quickly COVID-19 vaccines are administered, among other things. At this point, no concerts inside Hope Abbey are scheduled.

However, we're considering temporarily breaking with the indoor performance venue. Last year, we hosted a wonderful event up the hill in the Public Square on a warm fall afternoon. We were very careful to maintain a minimum six foot spacing between family groups. Everybody brought their own lawn chairs or blankets.

This year we have scheduled an outdoor concert on Sunday, May 30. The program by Blugene Brass will include patriotic favorites, American classics and Latin tangos, as well as a number of jazz standards to snap your fingers to.

We will continue to explore this way of bringing back music to the cemetery. The latest information will be available both on the EMCA website eugenemasoniccemetery.org, and in the monthly edition of the cemetery's electronic newsletter. You can easily sign up for the cemetery's eNewsletter on our website listed immediately above. — *John Bredesen, Board Member*