



April, 2022

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House



The traditional Last Sunday Open House will be this coming Sunday. It's an opportunity to visit the inside of the beautifully restored 1914 Hope Abbey Mausoleum. The doors will be open from 1 to 4 PM, Sunday, April 24, 2022.

Hosts will be on hand to answer questions you might have about the historic building, as well as the cemetery itself. Masks will be optional in the building. Please park on city streets because there is no parking on the cemetery grounds.

Music To Die For—2022



Music to Die For is a free, all-acoustic summer concert series in Hope Abbey. The hour-long concerts are held at 2 PM on the last Sunday of each month, from June through October. Although MTDf was cancelled for two years, we're planning a full schedule beginning in June, but with reduced attendance. Details will be available in this eNewsletter and our Facebook page when available.

Denny Hellesvig Returns



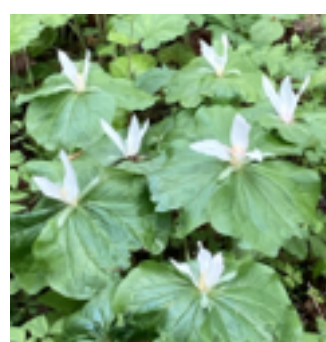
Way back in 2001, a fellow named Denny Hellesvig joined the cemetery's board of directors. He turned out to be a real winner. The first time I met him was at a work party where bark mulch was being spread on the walking paths. Pushing full wheelbarrows to the top of the hill was hard work, but then there was Denny. He had extended the sides of his wheelbarrow with cardboard so he could efficiently heap in more mulch. That attitude was a preview of his contribution to the Masonic Cemetery.

Denny had a lifelong career as a registered and practicing architect. He was in private practice until 1991, when he joined the Building and Permit Department of the City of Eugene. When he retired from the City in 2001, a friend of his urged him to explore joining the Masonic Cemetery Association as a volunteer. And so he did. He held positions at the cemetery as archivist, treasurer and vice president. He led the huge job of getting 77 reproduction stained glass windows installed so that once again the interior of Hope Abbey could be bathed in golden light. He designed and helped build the small utility building we call the garden cottage. He also designed an appropriate entrance porch with wheelchair ramps. Oh, and he helped restore and clean tombstones too. But as we all know, all good things come to an end, so in 2019, he resigned. He had served about 17 years as a board member.

But total retirement soon got the best of him, and as a good friend, I could sense the feeling of "needing to be busier" he was having, as could others. Recently he decided to come out of his retirement and has rejoined the cemetery's board of directors! So we all welcome Denny Hellesvig back to continue the task of making the Eugene Masonic Cemetery the beautiful and restful place it is. Welcome, Denny!

By John Bredesen, Board Member

Flower Walk



Any time is a good time for a walk through the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, but spring, when the flowers are starting to bloom, is especially beautiful. Earlier this month the fawn lilies and Oregon grape were at their prime. Although you can still see the Oregon grape in bloom, the fawn lilies are quickly fading.

But the spring parade of flowers, both native and cultivated, continues. There are large clusters of trillium (pictured left) scattered around the cemetery, and larkspur and fringe cap are just beginning to bud out.

Maybe as you walk through the cemetery, you try to identify and name the flowers. Maybe you play a game with your children to find as many different kinds as you can. Or, maybe you just enjoy the beauty and variety of flowers. Whatever the choice, the cemetery is a place for you to experience the beauty of nature.

Cemetery Brickyard



Stroll along a pleasant path just inside the northeast border of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, and you'll walk past the site of one of the city's pioneer enterprises. From the intersection of University Street and East 25th, walk east on the cemetery path for about 300 yards, to just before the first hairpin turn up the hill. Stop and look ahead toward the gentle slope covered with shrubs and grasses. This is where they dug the clay that made bricks for the University of Oregon's first two buildings, Deady Hall (left) and Villard Hall, as well as some of Eugene's earliest church and business structures.

The property was originally part of the 640-acre donation land claim staked out by Fielding McMurry and his wife in 1851. They built their two-story white farmhouse where the UO's Erb Memorial Union now stands, and in 1859 sold the ten-acre hill south and west of their home to the Eugene Masonic Lodge for the city's first cemetery. Their son, James Scott McMurry, carried on the brick-making business. He supplied the bricks for Deady Hall in 1873, receiving \$6 for each thousand bricks delivered to the site. The building wasn't ready to open until 1876, but the outside brick shell was completed that first year. When the university approved plans for Villard Hall in 1885, McMurry got the contract to supply bricks, this time at \$8.50 per thousand.

Some of the brick making occurred at the site itself. Frank G. McMurry, a son of James, prepared a sketch for UO records in 1956 which shows the location of the farmhouse, an orchard, the cemetery, and the clay pit which he identified as a "brickyard."

The architectural design of Villard Hall called for an exterior cement finish shaped like stones to be applied over the bricks, so the Regents called for an exact count as the bricks were laid and still visible. The count was 529,000 bricks. Assuming a similar number was used in Deady Hall, the two buildings alone accounted for more than a million bricks from the Masonic Cemetery clay pit.

You won't see any McMurry bricks on the UO campus today. The Deady Hall bricks exposed to the elements began to deteriorate, and in 1887 the exterior was covered with a cement veneer to prevent further damage. But there are several interior bricks in the UO archives, salvaged when they were removed to make room for an elevator. More than one hundred years after they were formed from raw clay, these bricks are, well, as hard as bricks.

Reprinted and edited from an article in the Masonic Cemetery's publication, *Full of Life*

REMEMBER THAT THE MASONIC CEMETERY

- Is privately owned, but opens its grounds to the public, subject to COVID-19 safeguards.
- Is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is not subsidized by the city of Eugene.
- Is eligible for the Oregon Cultural Trust match.
- Has a website, eugenemasoniccemetery.org, with lots of information about the cemetery.
- Has free informational brochures available at the Garden Cottage, including a walking tour map.
- Has burial rights and cremains space for sale. Contact Sally Dietrich at (541) 684-0949 or [by email](mailto:sally@eugenemasoniccemetery.org).
- Uses PayPal for on-line donations. Please click the link below to donate.
- Archives issues of both newsletters.

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Find past copies of the paper Monumental News [here](#).

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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