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February, 2021

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House **CANCELLED**

The normal Last Sunday open house is cancelled for February because of the COVID-19 restrictions currently imposed by the Governor's office.

We normally have a Last Sunday open house every month except December, but it's simply not safe to do so yet. To gain access to visit a loved one in Hope Abbey Mausoleum, please contact Charley Wright to make arrangement for a private visit. He can be reached by phone at (541) 485-4399, or by email by clicking [here](#).



Music To Die For

Music To Die For, the annual music series hosted by the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, lies in limbo like so many other musical and performance events. It was cancelled for the entirety of 2020 after the pandemic landed in March, and 2021 remains problematic at this point.

When concerts inside Hope Abbey Mausoleum can resume depends to a large extent on how quickly COVID-19 vaccines are administered. It doesn't appear that this will happen as quickly as many would desire. 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 afternoon. We were very careful to maintain a minimum six foot spacing between family groups. Everybody brought their own lawn chairs or blankets.

We will 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.



Crocus

**This isn't Texas
They have ice
We have flowers!**



Oregon grape



Snow Drops

Any time is a good time for a walk in the cemetery, but right now is especially fun as the flowers are starting to bloom. Some are natives like the Oregon grape, and others are cultivated. On a walk right now, along with the Oregon grape that is just about ready to burst into bloom, you can see snow drops, violets, crocuses, and hellebores of many different colors. On your next walk, see if you can find all of these. And look for new ones to bloom in the coming months.

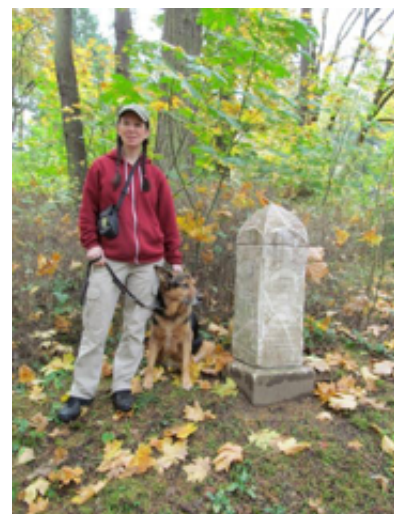
Mystery of the Missing Monument



Monument on arrival



500 pound stone being



Sarah DeMerritt and

In the summer of 2013, the EMCA cemetery administrator received an unexpected email. It was from Sarah DeMerritt, photographer and Lake Oswego history buff, who had discovered some old grave markers lying on the grounds of an historic farm.

Only one stone, buried under blackberry bushes next to a barn, was intact, and on it was inscribed the name of Samantha McAlister. After doing some research Sarah learned that Samantha was buried in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, and that is when she contacted the cemetery.

Samantha McAlister died in Eugene in 1896. We know that a monument was erected on her grave because it was included in a gravestone inventory conducted by the Masons in 1910. However, a 1994 inventory, conducted shortly after EMCA took over the cemetery from the Masons, revealed no marker on the McAlister plot. Because cemetery records during the mid-20th century were incomplete or nonexistent, when the monument disappeared is unknown.

The discovery of Samantha's monument led to a flurry of activity. EMCA contacted Karen Offen, Samantha's great-granddaughter and a senior research fellow at Stanford University. Karen was thrilled. She had visited the cemetery ten years ago to find Samantha's grave, and she also serves as the McAlister clan genealogist. Karen contacted Sarah to get the name of the farm's owner, and from him she obtained permission to remove Samantha's monument. A few days later Karen flew to Portland and, with help from a cousin and friends, loaded the monument and its detached base into a vehicle and drove it down to Eugene. EMCA board members were waiting for her at the cemetery and unloaded the stones into the garden cottage. Some weeks later Jeff Hilts, professional monument installer, re-installed monument and its base on the McAlister plot.

We may never know when, how, or why the monument was removed from the Masonic Cemetery and ended up in Lake Oswego. The monument is a marble obelisk and weighs almost 500 pounds, so clearly its removal was not a spur of the moment college prank. Sarah discovered that the late Herbert Kruse, past owner of the farm, collected tombstones, particularly tombstones with errors in their inscriptions. But Samantha's tombstone has no errors, and this doesn't answer the question as to how Kruse acquired it. We're just happy to have it back and in its proper place.

A wonderful ending to this story is that great-great-granddaughter Karen Offen was able to contact descendants of Samantha McAlister living on both coasts, and a family reunion was held the following spring in Hope Abbey Mausoleum. It was the first time some of them had met.

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.
- Has burial and cremains space for sale. Contact Sally Dietrich at (541) 684-0949 or

- by email clicking [here](#).
- Uses PayPal for on-line donations. Please [click](#) here to donate.

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor
Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

Please Donate

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

Visit our website