



February, 2023

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House



We'll be hosting a Last Sunday Open House in Hope Abbey this coming Sunday, February 26th. The doors will be open for visitors from 1 to 4 p.m., and there will be two knowledgeable Board members present to answer questions about the mausoleum and the cemetery grounds.

Please park on city streets because there is no parking on the cemetery grounds.

Music To Die For



Music To Die For will return on June 11, at 2 p.m. You can mark your calendar!

This first indoor concert of 2023 will feature Linda Danielson and Janet Naylor. Janet will bring her Celtic harp, with Linda featured on the fiddle. That's June 2nd at 2 p.m.

Here is the line-up for the rest of the *Music To Die For* season:

July 9: Clefs of Insanity: an a cappella ensemble
August 13: David Gross: guitar & vocal, plus a guest
September 10: Sheri Pyron: horn, vocal and piano
October 15: The Ineffable Bassoon Trio (enough said)

Concerts will finish at about 3 p.m., but Hope Abbey will remain open for visiting until 4 p.m., so plan on staying after the concert if you wish.

Music on the Square



The musical offerings by the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association are expanding. We've experimented with presenting live music in the public square at the top of the hill in past seasons. These worked so well that we've programmed a full season of outdoor music. Thanks to Board Member Sheri Pyron, we have a delightful summer series of *Music on the Square*. Please note that these outdoor programs are separate from the

Music To Die For (MTDF) performances held in Hope Abbey. As always, both MTDF and *Music on the Square* are free. These concerts will begin at 6 p.m.

Here's what's coming up.

Music on The Square Concert Series 2023

May 28: Memorial Day—Blugene Brass with Shirley Andress vocalist
June 4: Oregon Brass Society
July 2: Swing Shift
August 6: Kef Balkan Band
September: 24 Blugene Brass

A Visit

The President's Corner



I recently visited the cemetery to find inspiration for this column. As I entered the front gates, I heard a distinctive cry, looked up, and had my column's theme. There above me, heading for a tree up near the Memorial Outlook, was a beautiful pileated woodpecker, the largest woodpecker still in existence in North America. (The Imperial and Ivory-billed, which were larger, are believed to be extinct). This was my first sighting of this magnificent bird at the cemetery.

I truly find joy in seeing wildlife like this. And so, with its song in my heart, I started my visit. First, I walked up the Carriage Road to the Whiteaker crypt to see how it looked after having been covered in very offensive graffiti a couple weeks earlier. Landscape manager Diego Llewellyn-Jones and board member Elizabeth Southworth were able to remove almost all the black markings within 12 hours of discovery. Wow! It looked like it had never been defaced. How did they do it? A cleanser especially for graffiti removal called Elephant Snot! That's really what this amazing product is called.

From there I walked up to the Public Square to enjoy a seat on Roz Slovic's beautiful memorial bench and looked out at the cemetery and beyond. While sitting there, I started noticing all the bird sounds. I then had an "ah ha" moment, took out my iPhone, tapped my free Merlin bird identification app, and had it start identifying all the birds around me by their songs. Here are the birds it told me (with pictures!) were nearby: Northern flicker, red-winged blackbird, bushtit, black-capped chickadee, Townsend's warbler, dark-eyed junco, cackling geese, golden-crowned kinglet, chestnut-backed chickadee and brown creeper. What a delight to know all those birds were present at this particular point in time.

Next, I wandered down to visit my mother's marker and made sure all the heart rocks on it were in their correct spots. From there I walked by some of my friends' markers and bid them greetings. At the same time, I admired the many newly cleaned markers that were now visible because our intrepid landscape crew has removed a lot of the brush that had blocked visitors from seeing the hardscape.

The cemetery is looking great. Snowdrops and hellebores are blooming with more spring flowers soon to follow. Come visit. See how many birds you can spot or hear and photograph some wildflowers. And be sure to admire the many newly visible markers before the grass grows too tall.

By Caroline Forell

A 1920's Snapshot

Historical Death Certificate Examination (Part one of three)

It will surprise no one that the records of the cemetery are as old as the cemetery itself. Although most are businesslike, there can be fascinating surprises contained within the archives. In a plastic file box in the possession of our cemetery sexton, Sally Dietrich, is a folder of death certificates of early interments in the cemetery. The file is doubtless incomplete, but as anyone who has worked on a family tree knows, death certificates contain a wealth of information. I'm lucky to be the historian of the cemetery, and I was fascinated by what these copies of 100-year-old documents could tell us as a snapshot of those whose bones and bodies the mausoleum protects.

There are 69 death certificates in the folder. From these, I extracted some basic data, omitting the names of the people out of respect for their privacy. Although it's common now for death certificates to be available on websites like Ancestry or FindAGrave, it wasn't always the case that the knowledge of potentially sensitive information like the cause of death, or a person's age, went beyond the possession of the family members. It's enough to say that some of the children and grandchildren of these folks are still our neighbors to this day.

The two earliest certificates are dated 1905 and 1919, but the rest of them date from the 1920's, with the exception of six from the 1930's (ending in 1938). Although the sexes are equally represented (35 men to 32 women and 2 female children), those in this cross-section are 100% white. Given that the voters didn't officially end Oregon's Black Exclusion Act until 1926 this comes as no surprise. It faithfully represents the actual composition of the county at that point in time. Four men and one woman are listed as "retired"; two women and one man have no occupation listed.

The greatest difference between adult women and men in this group is their occupation. Of those working men—males not listed as "retired" and with an occupation specified—13 out of 35 were farmers. Farmers did very well in Oregon's economy at this time, with plenty of fertile land available and an increasing number of mouths to feed every year. The University of Oregon Law School was founded in 1888, so lawyers might be overrepresented; nevertheless, there are 3 of them. Three lumbermen (a timber dealer, a timber cruiser and a logger) are present. Three merchants and two carpenters represent the town's commerce and growth. Also counted are a handyman, a banker, a railroad worker, a stonemason, a clerk, and an importer. What that last man imported is currently a mystery—at least for now!

The women's occupations are far less varied, with 27 out of 29 women listed as "homemaker". We would do well, however, to remember that this is a gross oversimplification of a pivotal role in 1920s Eugene/Springfield and indeed everywhere. By then, indoor plumbing and electricity had begun to make life easier for city folk. Younger women in the 1920s would have been more likely to work outside of the home than the women from this group's time. These younger generations' home lives were changed by the availability of appliances like vacuums and washing machines that increased the time available to them for other pursuits. In subsequent decades, many more women would work outside the home.

This group of documents has more to tell. The causes of death are fascinating, and so are the two funeral directors, Veatch and Branstetter, who each have a story in their role as the helpers of Lane County's families. More to come in Part Two next month.

By Ariana White, EMCA Historian

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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