



July, 2021

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House

We will be hosting our Last Sunday Open House on July 25. It's an opportunity to visit inside the beautifully restored 1914 Hope Abbey Mausoleum. The doors will be open from 1 to 4 PM, Sunday, July 25.

There will be two cemetery board members on hand to answer questions you might have about the historic building, as well as the cemetery itself.

There are no indoor *Music To Die For* concerts yet scheduled.

What's Going On Over There?



It's summer in Eugene, when typically disruptive, but necessary projects take place. Construction, street repair and power tools used in gardening, all contribute to the annoying increase of the noise level just as it's time to throw open the windows and move to the outside. The Eugene Masonic Cemetery has contributed its fair share to the cacophony, as it is not possible to tend to the ten-acre site without the noise of mowers, blowers and chainsaws.

This summer, however, has been different. It was not necessary to experience the 111-degree heat in June to realize that climate change is upon us, but it was a powerful reminder. Nor is it necessary to cast back to last fall's catastrophic fires to know that the danger of fire is real. As temperatures rise with global weather changes, Douglas Firs, among others, become stressed, and this is happening in our cemetery. Giffin Glastonberry, EMCA Landscape Manager is leading his team on a very necessary program to reduce the fuel load in the cemetery which, as we all know, is in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

"We started mowing and string-cutting the long grasses earlier than normal to help control the possibility of a grass fire leaping into the tree canopy. We are actively removing ladder fuels which include low-lying tree branches and shrubs under the canopy of a large tree", explains Giffin.

On a personal note, close relatives of Giffin's lost their home in Glide last year in a fierce fire and spent 8 weeks sheltering with Giffin and his young family. "We are doing our best to be prepared," says Giffin. "No one wants that to happen here."

As our immediate neighbors can attest, three days of intense and loud work on limbs and diseased trees happened right before the infamous "heat dome" in June. The EMCA values the natural setting of the cemetery, and each of these remedial steps taken is to ensure both the safety of visitors and the health of the unique setting of the cemetery. Wild flowers, ferns, flowering trees, heritage roses and lilacs continue to thrive in what is essentially a dry forest, although the extreme heat earlier this summer has taken its toll.

As funds permit, we are switching to appropriate battery powered electric tools to help minimize noise and pollution. Even routine landscape maintenance creates noise, and we want to do as much as we can to be a good neighbor. We apologize for the noise and disruption, and want everyone to know we have the best interests of the cemetery, the neighborhood and the public at heart.

By Elizabeth Southworth, Board Member

The EMCA Oral History Project

In the Fall of 2020, a wonderful thing happened. Kate Thornhill, Digital Scholarship Librarian at the University of Oregon, asked EMCA board members if they would like to create a digital archive. We unanimously agreed that we would like very much to do that, but we didn't have the knowledge. Kate is a fan of the cemetery, and this offer came about after a conversation with a neighbor and former EMCA board member. She graciously volunteered her time and expertise to make it happen.

Kate also spoke about the importance of oral interviews for our archives, in addition to the digitization of existing archival material. We discussed capturing the memories of our early board members so that future boards, staff, and the public would be able to get a mental picture of the hurdles involved in rescuing a historic cemetery and mausoleum from ruin, the condition the cemetery and Hope Abbey were in when the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association was formed in 1995. The Board readily gave its approval to proceed with the oral interviews and to digitize the archives.

The interviews started in January of this year, the first with Kay Holbo, EMCA's fearless founder. They were conducted remotely on Zoom because of COVID-19, with Alex Brokaw, the association's current archivist, asking the questions. She was guided with "on-air" direction and expertise from Kate and tech expert, Carolina Hernandez, Instruction Librarian at the University of Houston. Another person, "in the room," is a Master's student intern from the University of Denver who transcribes the interviews. What an interesting world we now live in!

There will be a total of twelve interviews. Most of those interviewed were a little apprehensive beforehand, but to a person, they all enjoyed the experience and were delighted to have been asked to contribute to the project. The interviewees are (alphabetically): Alice Adams, John Bredesen, Barbara Cowan, Hallis, Dennis Hellesvig, Mike Helm, Kay Holbo, Rich Maris, Hugh Prichard, Mary Ellen Rodgers (first sexton/administrator), Karen Seidel and Charles Wright.

There's been almost no expense for this project since all involved are volunteers. After the interviews are completed and transcribed (only one more to go!), there will be the cost of a monthly web hosting fee, but it will be quite reasonable. The oral interview digital archives should be available through our website by the end of 2021. It will take longer to post our paper archives. That project will start in early 2022. We're pleased that the audio recordings and transcriptions will also be available at the Lane County Historical Museum!

This is obviously an important step in documenting the significant efforts of a totally volunteer Board of Directors and a small paid staff, who over the last quarter of a century have brought back the beauty and serenity of the original 1859 cemetery. Our special thanks go to Kate Thornhill for bringing the EMCA into the 21st digital century. We also thank Carolina Hernandez and the three interns who have given up many Saturday mornings to help us create The EMCA Oral History Project.

By Alex Brokaw, Board Member

Diego Llewellyn-Jones My Story—Landscape Crew



When I first started working with Wendi in 2017, I enjoyed all the stories she would share of the years she'd worked with David Lynch, the EMCA's first Landscape Manager, and of all the ways the landscape had changed in that time. I loved the cemetery and would sometimes fantasize about her eventually leaving, and wondered if there would ever be the possibility of me someday becoming Landscape Manager. But I only ever let that be a dream.

When I left for South America in 2019, I never thought I would get the chance to work at the cemetery again, let alone become the new Landscape Manager. Giffin Glastonbury was hired as my replacement. While I was away, Wendi did resign, and Giffin was promoted to that position in March. I had returned to Eugene about that time, and in a stroke of extraordinary luck, I was rehired as the groundskeeper.

Unexpectedly, Giffin was recently accepted into the Landscape Architecture program at the University of Oregon, and I was offered the Landscape Manager position, to start when Giffin's graduate degree studies begin this Fall. The EMCA recently hired a new groundskeeper, Alex Shumaker, who is very happy to be working with us and is showing strong signs of being an excellent addition to our team.

I am delighted to be back with the Masonic Cemetery, and look forward to a long future with the organization.

By Diego Llewellyn-Jones

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 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 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

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