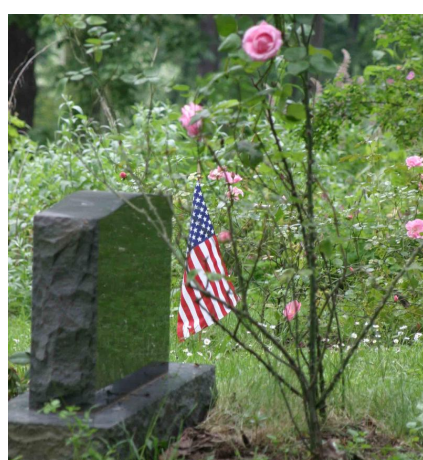


Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Memorial Day



Decoration Day, originated as a day in 1868 when Civil War soldiers' graves were adorned with flowers, flags and wreaths, became Memorial Day in the 1880s. It was not until 1967 that it became a legal holiday now observed on the last Monday in May.

It continues to be a day to honor those who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. One of the traditions which the Masonic Cemetery is committed to continue is to place American flags on each veteran's grave.

The gates to the cemetery will be open from 11:30 to 5 on Sunday and Monday. Pedestrian access will be as usual. Taps will be played at noon on Memorial Day, but no other events are planned. Hope Abbey will be opened on request, to place remembrances for loved ones.

Music To Die For cannot be scheduled at this time because of COVID-19 safety concerns.

Women Who Made a Difference

The EMCA is Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. This is the third in a series about some of the women "who made a difference in our community" and who are interred in the historic Masonic cemetery. These entries are compiled by EMCA board member Alex Brokaw.

Maude Irvine Kerns



Maude I. Kerns (1876–1965), the namesake of the Maude Kerns Art Center, was a visionary artist and educator, and a nationally and internationally recognized artist. She was well known for her abstract paintings in what was then called the "non-objective" art movement.

She was born and raised in Portland by pioneer parents who migrated to Oregon in the 1850's from Indiana. Her father, Samuel Irvine Kerns, was in the Oregon Infantry, and her mother, Elizabeth Claggett, was a school teacher. Maude had an older sister and two younger brothers. The family moved to Eugene City (now Eugene) in 1884.

In 1891, Maude enrolled at the prep high school administered by the University of Oregon. She graduated from the University in 1899 with a BA degree. In 1900 she attended the Mark Hopkins Institute (now the San Francisco Art Institute). She moved to New York City in 1904 to attend Columbia University Teachers College where she received a diploma in Fine Arts and a BS in Art Education under the guidance of Arthur Wesley Dow who described her as "a person of dignity and presence, very quiet in manner, but firm and positive in her opinions."

She studied with acclaimed artist William Merritt Chase and renowned art teacher Hans Hofmann, among others. She spent time traveling through Asia and Europe studying the works of Kandinsky, Mondrian, Klee and others from the avant-garde art movement.

In 1921 Kerns was hired to teach at the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts as the first head of the Normal Art Program (art education for teachers). She was an innovative teacher, and was a mentor to many UO professors. She taught until 1947. She was a founding member and major donor of The Eugene Art Center, established in 1950, and later renamed in her honor.

Her first exhibition was in 1925 at the Seattle Art Museum. From the 1930's through the 1950's, her work received widely recognized attention. A spiritual woman, Maude was influenced by Asian art and embraced the art-as-spiritual expression philosophy of Kandinsky. His influence is clear in the geometric elements of Kern's Composition #22, Sharpness (1943) (image above) with its half circles, angles, straight lines and curves (now in the collection of the Portland Art Museum).

Her work has been shown in Paris at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles as well as leading museums and galleries in the United States, including the National Gallery of Art. A number of her paintings are in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City, the Portland Art Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Jordan Schnitzer Art Museum. More than 75 pieces are in the permanent collection at the Maude Kerns Art Center, but sadly, many of her early works were destroyed during a fire at the art school.

Sleep Well Tonight. The Cemetery Walker is Awake.

For the past 35 years I've been the night security guy for the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. Back in the early days of my tenure, the cemetery was a wild and woolly place, especially at night.

My family and I had just moved in to an old day care center on the boundary of the cemetery, right in front of Hope Abbey. Our nights were frequently interrupted by the sound of beer bottles crashing on tombstones, fireworks, obscenities shouted from the top of Hope Abbey and loud, late night, drunken laughter. Vandalism and litter ruled the place; tipped over tombstones, graffiti on Hope Abbey, needles, broken glass and empty beer cartons.

I decided I wasn't going to raise my family next to such a place, so it had to change or I had to move. I decided to try to change what had become a neighborhood nuisance. I knew I couldn't do it alone, so I enlisted the help of my friend, the Cemetery Walker. Some of the late night hell raisers hadn't heard of the Cemetery Walker, but when they learned of his existence, they were more reluctant to enter the cemetery at night.

Last week, at about midnight, I found a group of young people up there and...

"This is private property," I tell them. "You are trespassing and can be arrested. But it's a beautiful night and you're being quiet and respectful, so just stay here for a bit longer, but remember that everything that came in with you must go out with you.

"Also, this is not a good place to be at night, so don't tell your friends about it and don't come again at night."

"Okay", they say, heads nodding.

Then, as I turn to leave, "And you all know about the Cemetery Walker, don't you?"

A chorus of no's, but from one girl. "I think I've heard of him."

"Well," I say, "he's my friend, sort of an assistant night watchman. He lives over there, by the old quarry. He never comes in here until I'm gone. He's a great big hairy guy, sort of a mix of Bandage Man and Bigfoot. He has really bad breath, so you might smell him before you see him. Personal hygiene is not his long suit. Also, he has a terrible acne kind of oozing from his face And he has a way of moving through the cemetery very quietly, so that he might be right behind you and you'd never know it until he pounces."

Heads turned in unison as they all looked behind themselves.

"But you don't have to worry about him until I'm gone," I reminded them.

"He won't hurt you. All he wants is a little affection.

Who's the slowest member of this group?"

Nobody volunteers.

"Well, never mind," I tell them. "You don't have to outrun the Cemetery Walker, because you can't. All you can do is outrun your friends, because he'll catch the slowest one. But all he wants to do is to wrap his big hairy arms around you, nuzzle his head up next to yours and stick his tongue in your ear. Then he'll let you go. But, like I told you, he won't come in the cemetery 'till I'm gone.

I'm leaving now."

That night that little group was about 5 steps behind me as I left the cemetery.

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery is a peaceful place almost every night now. The Cemetery Walker deserves some of the credit.

This tale was related by Mike Helm, a retired teacher who during his career taught at Roosevelt Middle School, South Eugene International H.S. and Sheldon H.S., and is a local writer. Mike was a cemetery Board member for years, and is still a close neighbor.

Signs of the Times

Reminder: 9 PM is the time to remove your day pajamas and put on your night pajamas.

Many parents have discovered the teacher is NOT the problem.

Day 30 without sports. Found a lady sitting on my couch. Apparently she's my wife. She seems nice.

Now that we have everyone washing their hands correctly: Next week—turn signals!

Masonic Cemetery Operations: COVID-19

The current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives and businesses of many. For current information on sales of burial space and for burials (full body or cremains), please call the Cemetery Administrator, Sally Dietrich, at (541) 515-0536. We will be monitoring what is permitted by the state in the future.

Respect the Space

We'd like to ask your assistance. Please report any inappropriate behavior you observe to the police at the non-emergency number: (541) 682-5111.

You can also alert the cemetery to inappropriate behavior and vandalism by leaving a message at (541) 684-0949, or by email at emca1859@gmail.com. There has been some recent vandalism and inappropriate behavior, and the police are aware of the problem. Do not interact with problematic people yourself.

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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