



September, 2023

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



"Last Sunday" Open House



We'll be hosting our monthly "Last Sunday" Open House this coming Sunday, September 24, in Hope Abbey Mausoleum. The doors will be open for visitors from 1 to 4 PM, 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 general public parking on the cemetery grounds. Hope Abbey is the large concrete structure at the end of E. 26th.

What Do A Cemetery and a Coffee Shop Have In Common?

In describing the challenges that cemeteries face, author Amy Biegelsen states that "private cemetery owners face the same problem coffee shop owners do: people pay once, up front, then stick around forever." This comparison struck me as the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association has faced the challenge common to cemeteries—how to pay for ongoing expenses related to maintenance and operations. We are now tackling this challenge head on as we strive to ensure the cemetery has the necessary resources in the decades to come.

I have been reading about the "Rural Cemetery Movement," and also some more in-depth reading about the history of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. I realized that in order to get a better understanding of the history of our cemetery, with its high points and low points, one must be familiar with the Rural Cemetery Movement (RCM).

The RCM refers to a period of time in the mid-19th century when communities desired to set aside a better place to inter their loved ones. Rural cemeteries offered a solution to the need for more burial space, and allowed the opportunity to experiment with landscaping. Interestingly, rural cemeteries of this type were not necessarily located in rural areas—it was more a reference to the rural-like setting and not necessarily the rural location. The RCM turned cemeteries into beautifully landscaped parks that allowed people to spend time memorializing their loved ones in a garden-like setting. These cemeteries often served as parks in a time when public parks were rare. In such cemeteries, people could take walks, take carriage rides, picnic, and of course remember loved ones that have passed on.

Along with the rise of the Rural Cemetery Movement came the concept of owner-maintenance of the burial space. With a rural cemetery, a family often purchased a "family lot" with perhaps 10 burial plots. That lot was then considered the family's personal real estate to care for and maintain. This concept is evident in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery as the cemetery was laid out in these family plots. Some families kept their lots carefully manicured, while others kept the lots more consistent with the surrounding nature.

This idea sounds good in theory, but in hindsight, there is a serious flaw. It relies on families and lot owners to maintain the space—there are typically no caretakers of the cemetery as a whole, and there are no funds set aside for perpetual care. This may not be an issue in the first few decades of the life of the cemetery, but as time passes, plots fill up, generations die, and family members move away. The result is no one is available to care for the burial spaces, or no one is interested in caring for the burial spaces. This issue increased as society became more mobile and folks were less likely to live where their ancestors resided.

Hence, the comparison to a coffee shop—people pay once, up front, then stick around forever. The rural cemetery then has no funds for maintenance when family members die or move away. Such was the fate of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. The cemetery (and the Hope Abbey Mausoleum) fell into serious disrepair as there were no funds available for perpetual care. After decades of neglect, a group of motivated individuals established the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association. In the nearly thirty years since its inception, the EMCA has worked to bring the cemetery back to life. This has been accomplished through hard work, donations, and sales. Sales of interment rights have provided a solid financial base for the maintenance we've been doing. However, we're running out of saleable coffin lots, our largest single source of income. We recognized this years ago, so our focus in recent years has been to build up our endowment fund so the cemetery will never again fall victim to neglect due to lack of resources. We're over half way to our goal, but our projections show that there is more to be done. We ask that you join us in this endeavor by contributing to the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association's endowment.

By Shawn Walker, EMCA Board President

Music To Die For



Music To Die For Concert Series 2023

October 8: Alder Street Winds

The Alder Street Winds, a quartet consisting of flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon, play serious music for fun and take fun music seriously. Their program this time, bookended by a couple of familiar theme songs, will include music from a wide range of periods and styles, from

the 18th century to the 21st, with a generous mix of toe-tapping pieces from the ragtime era.

Concerts begin at 2 PM, and finish about 3 PM.

Music on the Square



Music On The Square is scheduled to return next Summer. Information on the outdoor concert series will be listed here and on the Eugene Masonic Cemetery's Facebook page.

As always, both *Music On The Square* and *Music To Die For* are free, but donations are gladly accepted for maintenance.

We apologize for cancelling the last scheduled MOTS because of weather concerns.

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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