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## **Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter**

**Issue #79**  
**November 2009**

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### **AGS Membership**

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We invite everyone with an interest in gravestones and cemeteries to join the AGS.

Membership benefits include:

- The *AGS Quarterly*: Bulletin of the Association for Gravestone Studies
- The next published issue of *Markers*
- The AGS monthly *e-Newsletter*
- Discounts on AGS publications
- Access to the AGS Research Clearing House and Lending Library
- Discounts on AGS conferences

To join, renew, or for more information, visit [www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm](http://www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm).

### **Earn a Free Membership!**

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Any member of the AGS who brings in five new members at the Senior level or above within a 12-month period will receive a free membership renewal at the Individual level for one year (free year begins with your next renewal date). New members that you recruit must record your name in brackets, after theirs, on the membership application form.

### **2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting**

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2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting  
June 22-27, 2010 in Granville, Ohio

Updates will be posted on the AGS website,  
in the *e-Newsletter* and the *Quarterly* as they develop.

We hope to see you there!



**Our 2010 Conference Logo**

*from the gravestone of Mr. Byron Hayes who died March 6, 1836.  
It is located in Granville's Old Colony Burying Ground, established in 1805.*

**Call for Papers and Participation Sessions**

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Call for Papers and Participation Sessions  
2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting  
June 22-27, Granville, Ohio

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, 20 minutes in length, to be presented during the evening lecture sessions. Please send your proposal and 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Program Chair: Dr. Ian Brown, [ibrown@bama.ua.edu](mailto:ibrown@bama.ua.edu).

Proposals are solicited for Participation Sessions, 50 minutes in length, to be presented Thursday June 24 and Friday June 25. Please send your proposal and a 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Participation Sessions Co-Chairs, Robert Keeler and Judy Juntunen, [robertk@clackamas.edu](mailto:robertk@clackamas.edu), or Robert Keeler, 3005 S.W. Westwood Dr., Portland, OR, 97225.

**Student Scholarship Announcement**

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A scholarship is being offered for a student to attend and participate in the 33rd Conference and Annual Meeting of the Association for Gravestone Studies to be held at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, June 22-27, 2010. The scholarship will cover registration, room and board for the full conference. There will also be a cash prize of \$200, which will be presented at the conference. The recipient of this scholarship is expected to present a scholarly paper, twenty minutes in length, during the Friday evening lecture session.

Requirements: The applicant must be a graduate or undergraduate student at an accredited college or university, as well as a member of the AGS.

Application: The application will consist of the title, abstract and text for a twenty-minute paper presentation. The presentation should be in the exact form that will be delivered at the conference, including visuals. Powerpoint is the preferred medium.

Deadline: By April 1, 2010, submissions should be sent as a PDF attachment to an email, a CD, or a hard copy to [ibrown@bama.ua.edu](mailto:ibrown@bama.ua.edu) or Ian W. Brown, Box 870210, Department of

**Call for Nominations: Forbes Award and Oakley Certificate**

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We are seeking candidates for Oakley Certificates and the Forbes Award. The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2009.

**The Oakley Certificate of Merit**

The Oakley Certificate of Merit is presented periodically by the AGS Board of Trustees to individuals and groups that have helped to advance the mission of the Association. The award consists of a certificate, presented by the Board of Trustees, as well as the gift of a book to the honoree's local library, in his or her name on behalf of AGS. Whenever possible the award presentation will be made by a local AGS member. Each year's recipients will have their names printed in the conference program book and annual report. In addition they will be acknowledged at the Awards Reception at the annual conference.

**The AGS Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award**

The Forbes Award is presented annually by the AGS Board of Trustees to honor an individual, institution, or organization in recognition of exceptional service to the field of gravestone studies. The Forbes Award is the highest honor bestowed by the AGS. The presentation is usually made at the Awards Banquet during the Annual Conference. A reception precedes the banquet, at which the recipient is the guest of honor. The President makes a presentation speech indicating why the person or organization was chosen and summarizing the work accomplished. A framed certificate is presented along with a photograph of Harriette Merrifield Forbes. The recipient usually makes an acceptance speech.

For more information and nomination forms, please visit [The AGS Awards page](#).

**The AGS President's Bully Pulpit**

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**The First AGS Chapter**

November 15, 2009 was a red-letter day in the history of the AGS. On that date Joshua Segal, Vice President of our organization, ran the first official event of the New Hampshire Chapter of the AGS. A half-day meeting was held at Congregation Betenu in Amherst, which involved five presentations. Joshua started with "What is AGS? An Overview" and was followed by "Using the Graveyard as a Genealogical Tool," by Neil Jenness, "The Rhetoric of the Cemetery," by Liz Wright, "The Restoration of the circa 1796 Private Graveyard of Wentworth Cheswil," by Richard Alperin (of the New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association), and "Conservation/Preservation," by Kai Nalenz. A total of twenty-two people attended this meeting, which is an excellent start for a new chapter.

If anyone is interested in conducting a similar meeting in other states, or would just like to know what is involved in such an enterprise, Joshua has put together "A Guide for an AGS Chapter Event," an eight-part recipe for running a successful mini-conference (see below). I myself would like to thank Joshua formally for taking on this project. As Chair of the AGS Chapters Committee, he can be reached at [segaljl@aol.com](mailto:segaljl@aol.com) if you have questions, want to bounce some ideas around, or would just like to get something going in your own area.

Although our organization is national/international in scope, we recognize that the majority of our members are interested first and foremost in the cemeteries that are closest to their homes. Anything that we can do to help members in the same locale, state, or region get together on a fairly regular basis to chat about their interests ends up benefitting the entire organization. Chapter formation is one way to do this, but to make this happen we're going to need energetic, creative volunteers from around the country. Please contact Joshua if you would like to explore the issue in greater detail.

--Ian W. Brown

[A Guide for an AGS Chapter Event](#)

**Follow up: Databases to Record Cemeteries**

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In the October edition of the *e-Newsletter*, we ran a query from Mike Pavey requesting recommendations for databases to record cemeteries. Mike reported that the replies he received mostly recommended using Microsoft Access or [Cem-Editor](#). Another suggested program was [Stone Orchard Software](#).

Any additional recommendations will be included in future *e-Newsletters*.

**Stolen: Water Nymph Statue**

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AGS trustee John Martine sent in this notice. This water nymph statue (below) was stolen from Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. The cemetery office said it was stolen in February or March of this year. Perhaps someone will see it and it will be returned.



**Query: Fundraising to maintain graveyard, Philadelphia**

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This query comes from Bob Eck. He writes: "We (the Friends of Old Pine Street) are a fundraising organization in Philadelphia, Pa seeking funds/grants to maintain the historic graveyard and related structures of the Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church in center city. We have been actively searching records and have over 140 Rev. War veterans buried at this site. If you have any information on funding for this purpose please advise. We need over \$1 million just to replace the historic fence along two streets of the graveyard.

Thank you,  
Bob Eck  
RECK@mbakercorp.com."

**Query: How to Clean Soapstone Markers**

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AGS Member Dan Bell sent in this query. He writes: "A cemetery on one of our sites in the South Carolina State Park System contains a number of hand-carved soapstone markers dating from the early 1800s. All of them are thick (5 to 6 inches) and are in good condition, with crisp inscriptions. They do have some biological growth on them, though. Do any AGS members have experience cleaning soapstone markers that they could share?"

Thanks,  
Dan Bell  
Historic Resource Coordinator, S.C. State Park Service, SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, [dbell@scprt.com](mailto:dbell@scprt.com)."

**Query: Policies about Night-time Events at Cemeteries**

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This query comes from Leslie Wolfenden, President of Save Austin's Cemeteries. She writes: "Save Austin's Cemeteries has come up with a new issue regarding access to city cemeteries for paranormal investigations. We set up a night-time investigation for a paranormal group that does volunteer work with us and makes regular donations. It went very well for all concerned. However, this week another paranormal group asked to do a night-time event.

It probably would be a good idea to have a policy in place regarding how many groups per year should be allowed, how big the groups should be, etc. We don't want to upset the descendants. I'm wondering if other cemeteries have faced this issue and what they have done about it. Do any of them have in-place policies?"

Please respond to Leslie at [wolftthree@gmail.com](mailto:wolftthree@gmail.com).

**Article: Standardized Naming for Digital Photographs of Gravestones**

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This article, by AGS Member John Sterling, is about his method for naming Digital Photographs of Gravestones. He writes:

"As digital photographs take over from film photographs they have a feature which must be dealt with, the file name. A standard for this file name has many benefits. The computer's directory list with alphabetize the photographs which will make specific photos easier to find.

Combining the photos from two collections can be greatly simplified if both collections use the same standard.

For the past year I have been working with Vincent Luti to scan the negatives to digitize his collection of 8,000 gravestone photographs. As the number of digital photographs grew it became clear that we had to name them so that they could be organized and located. After several tries, some additional adjustments, and some input from John Spaulding we hit on a system that works quite well."

To read more, please click here: [Standardized Naming for Digital Photographs of Gravestones](#)

**Article: *A race against time to save history***

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This article, posted on [boston.com](#), is about the problem of deteriorating gravestones in New England. AGS members Robert Carlson and Mike Trinkley are quoted in the article.

**Articles: Cemeteries running out of space**

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London:

The City of London Cemetery is trying to persuade people to share graves, as the city is running out of burial space: [nydailynews.com](#).

Moscow:

Of the 71 cemeteries in the Russian capital, only one is open to new burials: [nytimes.com](#).

New England:

Cemeteries in New England are running out of space: [boston.com](#).

**Article: *Crypt Above Marilyn Monroe Doesn't Sell***

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In the August 2009 *e-Newsletter* we included a link to [an article](#) about a widow who sold her husband's burial spot, directly above that of film legend Marilyn Monroe, on eBay.

The sale fell through--a follow up article appears on [yahoo.com](#).

**Article: *Founder Of Dead Poets Society Visits Bards' Graves***

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This article, posted on Albuquerque's [koat.com](#), is about Walter Skold, founder of the Dead Poets Society of America, and his three-month road trip, during which he visited the graves of 150 poets in 23 states.

<http://www.koat.com/news/21486411/detail.html>

**Cemetery Preservation Workshop: Rockville, Maryland**

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Cemetery Preservation Workshop  
Rockville Maryland  
December 5, 2009, 9 a.m. until 12 p.m.

Peerless Rockville, the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites, and Historic Takoma will be hosting a preservation workshop for cemetery owners, caretakers, and historians. The session will cover researching your historic cemetery, seeking funding, cemetery preservation planning, stone cleaning and repair, landscaping issues, and best practices for the conservation of historic cemeteries.

The session will be held on Saturday, December 5 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at the Red Brick Courthouse, 29 Courthouse Square, Rockville, Maryland, with a visit to nearby Baptist Cemetery.

Presenters are Anne Brockett, Eileen McGuckian, and Robert Mosko of Mosko Cemetery Monument Services.

Registration is required. For more information or to register, contact Peerless Rockville at (301) 762-0096 or [info@peerlessrockville.org](mailto:info@peerlessrockville.org).

**New Publication: *Dragoo Cemetery, Marion County, West Virginia***

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*Dragoo Cemetery, Marion County, West Virginia*, is a new book by Vi Parsons. Dragoo Cemetery is on the property of her third great grandfather, John Dragoo. *Dragoo Cemetery* includes transcriptions of all the stones, along with information about those buried there. The book includes photos of some of the stones as well as historical documents, such as death certificates and transcription index cards from when the cemetery was surveyed in 1941.

For more information and to order, visit: <http://www.carrtwins.com/products.html>

**The City of Nampa, Idaho's Cemetery Interment Database**

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This article, posted on [ancestrymagazine.com](http://ancestrymagazine.com), is about the City of Nampa, Idaho's searchable cemetery database on the Internet. Each search result includes a photograph of the gravestone, an aerial view of the gravestone that pinpoints its location in the cemetery, and a map of the cemetery.

<http://www.cityofnampa.us/interment/>

**Updated Website: The Evergreens Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY**

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The Evergreens Cemetery, in Brooklyn, has upgraded and expanded its website, <http://www.theevergreenscemetery.com/>, to include a link to interment records for more than 300,000 people, plus materials on the cemetery's history, dating back to 1849.

**Website: Westwood Cemetery, Oberlin, Ohio**

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We received this link from Liz Schultz, the Museum Education and Tour Coordinator at the Oberlin Heritage Center in Oberlin, Ohio. The Center recently launched a database of Westwood Cemetery in Oberlin that includes photos, stone transcriptions, and personal information for over 5,000 individuals and monuments in the cemetery.

<http://www.oberlinheritage.org/researchlearn/gravestone>

**Gravestone Takes Third Place in National Trust Contest**

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The Hugh Smalling Grave in Riverside Cemetery at Macon, Georgia, took third place in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 'This Place Matters' contest. For details: [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org).

**Portland, Maine's Eastern Cemetery Receives Grant**

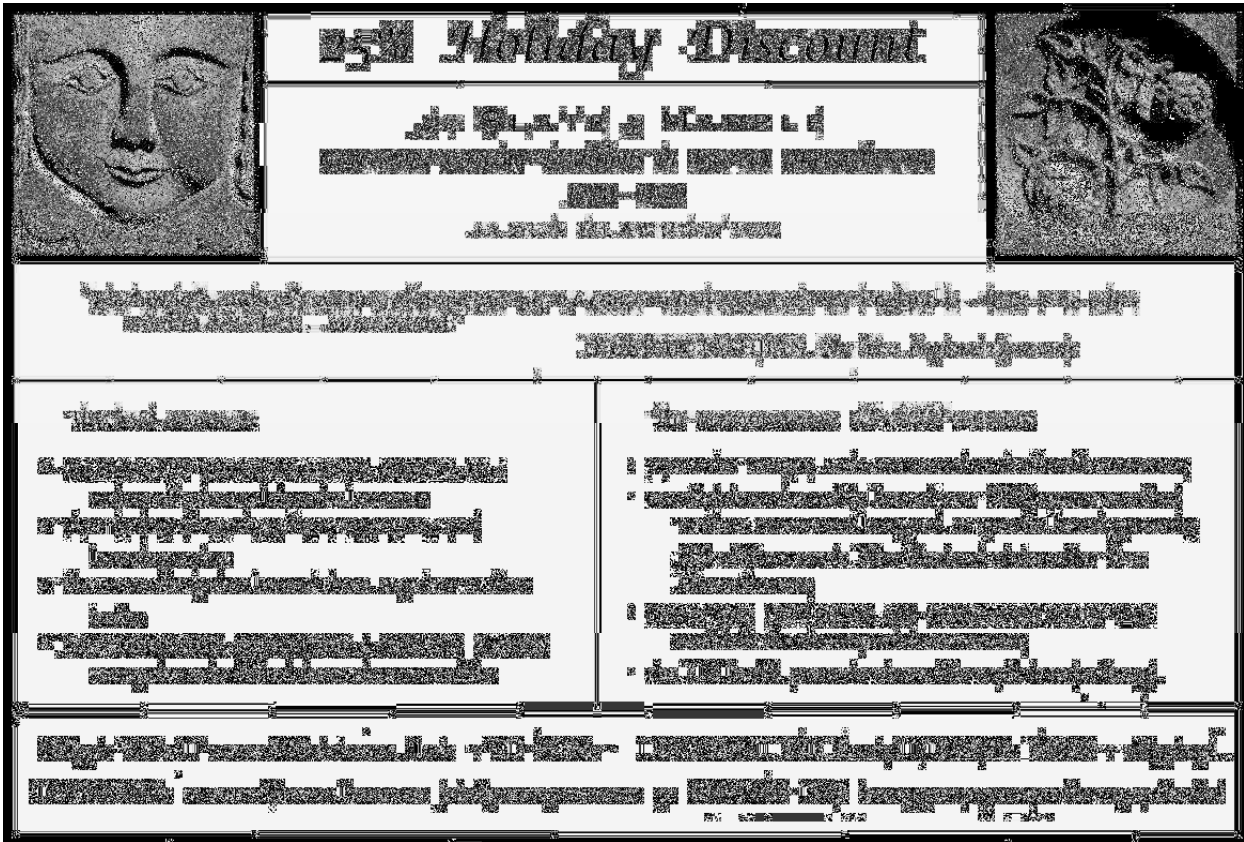
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*Spirits Alive Receives \$10,000 Grant for the Eastern Cemetery, Portland, Maine*

Spirits Alive, the advocacy group for Portland's Eastern Cemetery, has received a \$10,000 grant from the Davis Family Foundation. This grant will be used in developing a Master Plan for the ancient burial ground on Munjoy Hill. Reporting findings from an analysis of all aspects of the cemetery and placing it in its historical context, the completed Plan will be submitted to Portland's City Council and, if adopted, will serve as the blueprint for its historic preservation.

*About Spirits Alive:* Spirits Alive is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of Portland's historic Eastern Cemetery through a range of activities including promotion and education. Founded in 2007, the group carries out an active program of seasonal tours of the cemetery and a winter lecture series, and is conducting a stone-by-stone inventory of the nearly 4,000 grave markers still existing in the 340-year-old cemetery.

*advertisement*



**Contact Information**

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phone: 413-772-0836  
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