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Association for Gravestone Studies e-newsletter

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AGS Conference & Annual Meeting, 2007

**The Association for Gravestone Studies Thirtieth Anniversary Conference
Rivier College, Nashua, New Hampshire June 21-24, 2007**

Keynote Speaker

Our keynote speaker is David H. Watters who holds an A.B. from Dartmouth College and a Ph.D. from Brown University. Presently he is a faculty member in the English Department at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, where he teaches courses on New England literature and material culture, with a special emphasis on the colonial period. His publications include books and articles on early American literature and gravestone art, and on such authors as Jonathan Edwards, Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Also, he is presently serving as coeditor of the *Encyclopedia of New England Culture* (Yale, 2005) and as the director of the Center of New England Culture. As a long time member of AGS, David served on the AGS Board, as the editor of *Markers II-IV*. He is presently a member of its editorial board, and has contributed articles to the journal. His keynote address will be:

How Gravestones Speak and Who Listens:

Reflections on Commemoration, Community and Contexts

Since Cotton Mather quipped that New England gravestones had "grown so witty as to speak," conversation has flourished over the interpretation of gravestone imagery and epitaphs as indicators of social, cultural, economic, political, and religious meanings.

Since the advent of serious scholarly study, with the work of Harriette Merrifield Forbes, and the extraordinary outpouring of publications, starting with Allan Ludwig's *Graven Images*, work has moved across an array disciplines, from art history and American Studies, to cultural anthropology and material culture, all of which sought to locate gravestone studies in broad interpretive schemes. The most important work of the past decade, inspired by the Association for Gravestone Studies, and most notably by James Slater, Laurel Gabel, Ted Chase, and James Blachowicz, has emphasized the importance of carver identification. Such work, centered in New England, is balanced in the pages of *Markers* by significant examination of traditions across America and, lately, on other continents. Given the diversity of this work, and its increasingly atomistic focus, it may be time to renew an understanding of the ways in which gravestones contain meanings for the cultures that created them, and how these meanings evolve as the objects speak to new generations long disconnected from the society and religious tradition of origin.

PRE-CONFERENCE AND FRIDAY BUS TOURS

Detailed itineraries of the Wednesday pre-conference tour and Friday bus tours are posted on the AGS website conference page. Also included are photos of some of the gravemarkers we'll be seeing on these tours.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, twenty minutes in length, to be presented during the lecture sessions. We encourage papers on gravestone subjects from around the world as well as specific to the New England region. Presenters are encouraged to incorporate visual images in their paper, through the use of slides or power point, and the type of visual presentation should be stated.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION SESSIONS

As part of the Association for Gravestone Studies Conference, we host fifty minute "Participation Sessions"--programs conducted in a workshop format where cemetery scholars, preservationists and educators can exchange ideas. These programs are ideal for panels and we recommend including others in your presentation. All Participation Sessions proposals should allow time for questions and audience discussion. We are encouraging Participation Sessions that focus on four themes:

- Cemeteries in the Digital Age
- New Resources for Cemetery Research
- Development and Promotion of Cemetery Tours
- Current Issues in Preserving Cemeteries

All proposals should include the paper or session title and a 250 word description of the topic which focuses on its value to the audience. A brief biography of the presenter should also be included. Presenters are required to register for the conference. All proposals must be received by the close of business on Friday, March 30, 2007. Please send proposals for papers or participation sessions via traditional mail or email to:

Association for Gravestone Studies, 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301, info@gravestonestudies.org.

AGS End of the Year Appeal

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In December of 2006 President Tom Malloy sent out an End-of-the-Year appeal to raise funds for the general AGS budget. The response of our membership was excellent, contributing \$14,600 which the Board of Trustees truly appreciates. Following is a list of contributors:

Denise Anderson  
Mary Ann Ashcraft  
Paul & Cherry Bamberg  
Richard Batchelder  
Ian Berke  
Michael Bieling  
Marie Booth Ferre  
Sherri Burgess  
David Clark  
Gary Collison  
Donald Connelly  
Bob Drinkwater & Carol Foster  
Sharon Drumgool  
Melissa Eiring  
Patricia H. Ferguson  
Bruce & Virginia Finnie  
Irene Forbes  
The Forest Lawn Group  
Ross Mitchell, Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery  
Laurel Gabel  
James Garvey  
Donna & John Geary  
Daniel Goldman  
Marianne Greenfield  
Echols Hansbarger  
Margaret Hauter  
Janet Heywood  
Margaret Jenks  
C.R. & Susan Jones  
Philip & Priscilla Kallas  
The Kensico Cemetery  
Cheryl Lebeau  
Peter & Rachel Lipowicz  
William Lowenthal  
Nancy Maiorana  
Tom & Brenda Malloy  
Charles Marchant  
Thomas Mason  
Melvin Mason  
Zena Beth McGlashan  
Richard & Lotte Meyer  
James Miller  
Marion Moir  
Henry & Donna Ninde  
Fred Oakley  
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Patricia Poland  
George Reynolds  
Jeffrey Richman  
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Antoine Roy  
John & Nancy Salvinsky  
Ralph & Ella Sexton  
Ruth Shapleigh-Brown  
Frank Smucker  
John & Elizabeth Spaulding  
Doris Sydnor  
Jacqueline Thursby  
Judith Trainor  
P. Van Alstine  
Marjory West  
Gray & Marian Williams  
Neilson & Carolyn Wood  
Marilyn Yalom  
Carol R. Yaster  
Robert Young  
Robert Ziegenfus

A special contribution of \$2,500 has been received from Jessie Lie Farber. Jessie was one of AGS's founders, Editor of *Markers I*, an editor of the *AGS Newsletter* which became the *AGS Quarterly* and the Forbes Award recipient in 1985. She and her husband, Daniel Farber, have long been financial benefactors of AGS, and we are grateful that she continues to be supportive of our work by making this generous contribution.

And how do you express adequate appreciation for an unbelievably generous gift from someone that you only know by name? AGS received such a gift in December from Denise Anderson of Eagle River, Alaska, recently deceased, who was an AGS member for three years. In her will, she instructed her executrix, Janet Upton of Anchorage, Alaska to make a contribution to AGS in her name. A check arrived at the AGS office for \$10,000 from Janet Upton as a bequest from the estate of Denise Anderson. To say we are profoundly grateful hardly begins to express our delight!

### **From the Archivist**

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While attending the New England Regional Genealogical Conference as a vendor last Labor Day weekend, our AGS booth was across the aisle from a charming gentleman representing Tempus Publishing. On display were many tempting titles relevant to our interests. I knew I had to have at least one, and chose *English Churchyard Memorials* by Hilary Lees (Tempus 2000).

The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England did a survey of monuments which included notable memorials in churchyards. Hilary Lees has based her study on that survey, seeking to locate and record these memorials, to note their state of repair and to raise awareness of this valuable heritage. The book begins with a history of the churchyard, then is divided by historical periods from Anglo Saxon to modern, and concludes with chapters on sculpture, epitaphs and materials. There are 100 photographs (25 in color), well integrated into the text.

The book reads well. Lees has even managed to inject some wit. Perhaps best of all, however, are the appendices and index. These turn the book into a valuable travel guide for AGSers! There are memorial types listed by place name, then an index of place names by county. How I wish I'd had this when I was last in England trying (usually in vain) to locate interesting old churchyards. This book will now be in the Archives if you want to check your itinerary with us!

--Marie Booth Ferré, AGS Archivist

AGS Featured on Commonwealth Journal Radio Show

AGS was featured on the UMass Boston based radio program, Commonwealth Journal produced by WUMB Public Radio on January 14th. The topic was "Gravestones in Massachusetts History," presented by Bob Drinkwater, charter member and past president.

[The Commonwealth Journal](#)

Tours: Historic Cemeteries in Phoenix, Arizona

The public is invited to the series of "open cemetery" tours at the historic cemeteries in downtown Phoenix, Arizona, on Jefferson St. at 14th Ave. The "posse," made up of members of the Pioneers' Cemetery Association, will be on hand to guide you. They will tell of some of Arizona's Founding Fathers, early pioneers, and of their families, who now lie in these seven cemeteries at Pioneer & Military Memorial Park. On the grounds is the 1897 Smurthwaite House, a shingle style residence which will also be open for your pleasure.

The open houses will be from 11 AM to 3 PM on February 25. Call (602) 534-1262 or email pioneercem@yahoo.com for further details. Visit their website at azhistcemeteries.org.

Tour: Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington, North Carolina

Birding Tour of Oakdale Cemetery

Join your feathered friends for an early morning tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery. James F. Parnell, Ph. D., noted ornithologist, will conduct a two-hour birding tour of Oakdale Cemetery on Thursday, February 1, 2007 beginning at 7:30 AM. Participants should meet at the entrance gate at the end of North 15th Street. The fee is \$5.00 per person; free for members of The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery. Please phone the cemetery office at (910) 762-5682 to make a reservation.

Friends Of Oakdale Annual Meeting And Angel Sculpture Lecture

On Friday, February 23rd at 5:30 PM, the Friends of Oakdale Cemetery will conduct their Annual Meeting for members and friends in the Great Hall of St. James Church, 3rd and Market streets. Following a brief review of the activities and a financial report for 2006, the highlight will be a presentation by Elisabeth Roark, Ph.D., titled *Angels In America's Garden Cemeteries*.

The annual meeting will conclude with light refreshments. The program is free to members and guests.

Angel Sculpture Tour

On Saturday, February 24th at 2:00 PM, the Friends of Oakdale Cemetery will sponsor a tour of Oakdale Cemetery conducted by AGS member Elisabeth Roark, Ph.D., titled Guardian Angels of Oakdale Cemetery. Dr. Roark will talk about angels that have appeared in funerary art since ancient times. Few compare with the striking full-bodied angels that populate America's large garden cemeteries, of which Oakdale is one. The tour will highlight seven distinct types of angel sculptures that appear repeatedly in cemeteries across the east and mid-west, their meaning and messages.

The fee is \$5.00 per person; free for members of The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery. Please phone the cemetery office at (910) 762-5682 to make a reservation.

Meeting: Mementos, Memorials and Mourning, Rochester, New York

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 "WHEN THIS YOU SEE, REMEMBER ME"

Mementos, Memorials and Mourning

The Genesee County Chapter cordially invites all Historical Society of Early American Decoration (HSEAD) members and the public to join them at the Clarion Riverside Hotel in Rochester, New York for the Spring 2007 National meeting, to be held May 4-6, 2007.

A very different program will be presented focusing on many aspects of memorial art that a myriad of artists have left behind to serve as remembrances that they were here. Topics to be explored include early samplers, love tokens, rewards of merit, silhouettes, coverlets and quilts signed by makers, mourning memorials in the form of paintings, and jewelry, as well as gravestone art.

For details and registration, please visit [HSEAD's website](#).

## Event: Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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 In honor of the 175th Anniversary of Mount Auburn Cemetery, the nation's first garden cemetery, Peter Dobkin Hall, Hauser Lecturer on Nonprofit organizations at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, will lecture on *No Margin; No Mission: Mount Auburn Cemetery as a Charitable Enterprise* and how non-profit organizations in 19th century Boston were founded with a mission and the imperative to be entrepreneurial. The lecture will February 7, 2007, 6:00 PM

The lecture will be in the Rabb Auditorium of the Boston Public Library, Copley Square, followed by a reception with the lecturer. Please visit [Mount Auburn's website](#) for further information.

Request for Comments on Cemetery Website

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 Heather Norton sent an email asking if AGS members would be willing to check out [her new website](#), which she created to educate students at Freed Middle School in Pueblo, Colorado about the Pioneer Cemetery located next to their school.

You can email your comments to Heather at [HeatheN753@msn.com](mailto:HeatheN753@msn.com).

## Featured Website: Friends of Valley Cemetery, Manchester, New Hampshire

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 Please take a moment to check out Friends of Valley Cemetery and Arboretum's [website](#).

The site features photos, links to previous issues of their newsletter, tours and events listings, and history.

Article: Windows Smashed in Cemetery Chapel, Washington, DC

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The article, linked below, is from *the Washington Times*.

[The Washington Times](#)

**Contact Information**

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