



Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter

Issue #67
November 2008

2009 AGS Annual Meeting and Conference



The 2009 conference registration form will be included in the Fall issue of the AGS *Quarterly*, to be mailed next week.

The form will also soon be posted on [the conference section](#) of the AGS website.

2009 Conference Logo

The Veeder Monument

Vale Cemetery, Schenectady, NY

2009 AGS Annual Meeting and Conference

CALL FOR PAPERS

June 24-28, 2009

Union College

Schenectady, New York

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, 20 minutes in length, to be presented

during the evening and daytime lecture sessions. Please send your proposal and 250-word abstract by February 1, 2009 to: Program Chair: Dr. Ian Brown, ibrown@bama.ua.edu.

Proposals are solicited for Participation Sessions, classes of 50 minutes in length, to be presented Wednesday morning and afternoon, June 24. Please send your proposal and a 250-word abstract by February 1, 2009 to: Participation Sessions Chair: Frank Calidonna, frankc@twcny.rr.com.

News From the AGS Board of Trustees

The AGS Board of Trustees is happy to report that Ian Brown has been selected to be the new interim vice-president, effective immediately. The position had previously been filled by Jon Appell until October when he resigned the office.

Ian Brown, in addition to serving as Vice President, is also heading up the Scholarship Committee which provides scholarships for students coming to AGS Conferences.

Dr. Brown received the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Awards, presented by the University of Alabama National Alumni Association. To read about Dr. Brown and the award, please visit [the University of Alabama website](#).

Farewell to a gravestone scholar and friend

Many longtime AGS members will be saddened to hear of the death of a good friend and colleague, Dr. James Slater. Jim died at home at the age of 88 on Sunday evening, November 2, 2008, after many months of struggling health.

Jim was one of the founders of AGS, a scholar, friend, and quiet inspiration to countless gravestone enthusiasts. His unique sense of humor brings to mind his most often remembered "bird poop" lecture at the 1979 Conference. Delivered in a totally serious style, it was well into the lecture that it dawned on the audience that he was not being serious at all. Through his research and writings, he taught many of us about gravestones and how to do gravestone carver research. In 1982, Jim was selected to receive the fifth Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award at the AGS Conference held that year at Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. He served on our Board of Trustees from 1985 through 1997, serving as vice-president during 1991-1995. Jim spent many years studying and documenting the old gravestones and stonecutters of eastern Connecticut. He often presented his findings at AGS conferences. Jim wrote articles on Connecticut gravestone cutters for *Markers* and other publications, and edited a column on 17th and 18th century gravestones and carvers for the *AGS Quarterly*. In 1987, he published *The Colonial Burying Grounds of Eastern Connecticut and the Men Who Made Them*, a guide to eastern Connecticut stonecutters and their work. And in 1991, he edited *Markers VIII*, a collection of Dr. Ernest Caulfield's work on Connecticut gravestones.

For those who knew Jim and Betty Slater, notes of condolence may be sent to Betty Slater, 1633 Meadow Circle, Rockford, Illinois, 61108. Jim was a professor of entomology at the University of Connecticut at Storrs for many years. Because he so generously shared his research findings with many novice and advanced gravestone enthusiasts, some of you may wish to send memorial gifts to an AGS Conference Scholarship Fund in Jim's name. It will go to help college students with conference fees so they may attend the AGS Conference. Contributions may be sent to the AGS Office, 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301.

Stone Angels Project

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Director Shannon Nolte announced that the Stone Angels Project has formally incorporated. The national nonprofit foundation will be dedicated to assisting communities in preserving and restoring their old and damaged gravestones through training in restoration and education in fundraising strategies. All levels of memberships will be available soon on their website, [www.stoneangels.org](http://www.stoneangels.org).

"Through oversight of spending, our member chapters will be able to raise tax-deductible funds in their communities for the restoration and preservation projects they've been putting off because there just wasn't enough money - or for unexpected need, like vandalism."

"The IRS makes it tough to make donations to cemeteries because of private property issues and other problems. As a national nonprofit dedicated entirely to preservation of gravestones, we will be able to offer the spending oversight the IRS requires for community fundraising, plus training in the most historically and environmentally sensitive conservation methods to date."

"Right now, we're on bended knee, courting Dennis Rude, CEO of Cathedral Stone Products ([www.cathedralstone.com](http://www.cathedralstone.com)), to come on board as a corporate partner. That man is one tough nut to crack," Nolte said, "and we are badgering him during the worst economic environment, but Cathedral Stone makes the best sense as a partner because theirs are the only environmentally green products I'm aware of specifically formulated for the different types of stone we work with in cemeteries. He's used to working with major building preservation projects, like the Empire State Building, and Grand Central Station, but it's our hope he'll be convinced that an association with the cemetery preservation folks will be a beneficial one."

"We're also looking forward to working hand-in-hand with the Association for Gravestone Studies," Nolte said. "Tom Malloy and others there have been instrumental in encouraging me in the formation of the Stone Angels Project. I'm hoping that any AGS members interested in assisting me on the advisory board will drop me a line at [Shannon@stoneangels.org](mailto:Shannon@stoneangels.org). We definitely hope to partner with them for fundraising and their annual conference, and when it's time for our bricks and mortar location, we'll be close by."

### **Stones & Bones Teaching Packet has been updated**

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The Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA) has updated and republished its popular teaching packet, *Stones & Bones: Using Tombstones as Textbooks*. The packet was originally written and assembled by four Vermont teachers in 1996.

This is a 72-page teaching packet suitable for use in grades 4-12 as a resource on how to use a cemetery as an educational tool. Sample units include symbolism, field trips, research and restoration tips.

The packet costs \$20 plus \$4 shipping. It may be ordered from VOCA Secretary Charles E. Marchant, (802) 365-7937, P.O. Box 132, Townshend, VT 05353, e-mail: cemassoc@svcable.net. Mention "Stones and Bones" in your subject line.

AGS Member in the News: Charlie Marchant

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AGS member Charlie Marchant was featured in the September/October 2008 issue of *Vermont Magazine*. Charlie was interviewed about The Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA) and some cemeteries in Vermont.

**AGS Member Gregory Vogel Leads Cemetery Walk**

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This announcement comes from AGS member Gregory Vogel. He writes:

"I have been selected as a speaker for the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholars Program. This program brings humanities speakers to non-profit organizations in Illinois. One of my programs is a cemetery walk, where I take groups through local cemeteries to help them learn about cemetery recording and cemeteries in general.

Details of the program are here:
<http://www.prairie.org/bios/road-scholars/gregory-vogel>."

Query: Easley, South Carolina Cemetery needs new owner

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The AGS office recently received a query from Leon Szlezinger of Mesirow Financial, NYC. He is handling the dissolution of the Old Easley Mill, Easley, SC. On the property is a small cemetery and he is trying to find someone who will take over ownership. He has an endowment he can use for this purpose. He tried the local government, historical society and others, but hasn't found an interested party. Do any AGS members have any suggestions, or know of someone in the area that might be interested in such a project?

The cemetery is quite small, about a half an acre with around 100 graves dating from 1905 to the 1950s. Szlezinger believes they could find someone to do maintenance work if ownership could be transferred.

Please contact Leon at: [leonszlez@optonline.net](mailto:leonszlez@optonline.net), or (917) 929-6362.

### **Information about Washington State Cemeteries**

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The Washington state cemeteries listserv has had limited activity for a couple of years, but now has a new moderator and is up and running again.

To browse or join the listserv, please click on the link below:

<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/other/Cemeteries/WA-CEMETERIES.html>

The Washington State Cemetery Association records are kept at The University of Washington Library. For information on the collection, please visit [the University of Washington Library website](#).

Green Burials now offered at West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Bala Cynwyd, PA

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On November 7, 2008 West Laurel Hill Cemetery and Bringhurst Funeral Home announced their offering of green funeral services (through Bringhurst), and the dedication of its new "green burial" section, Nature's Sanctuary. In this new section within the cemetery, the goal is to be 100% environmentally friendly. No embalmed bodies will be allowed, and only non-treated wood or biodegradable shrouds will be permitted. Natural markers will be used, and the terrain will be landscaped with indigenous trees, plants, shrubs and grasses.

Green funeral services will offer the opportunity for family participation in many, if not all, aspects of the funeral. This includes participation in the transfer of the deceased to the funeral home, preparation of the body (at home or at the funeral home), building of the casket, and at-home ceremonies. Bringhurst Funeral Home and West Laurel Hill Cemetery are the only funeral home and cemetery in the United States that offer both natural burial and green funeral services at a single location.

<http://forever-care.com/>

### **Call for Instructors: Architectural Records, Inventories and Information Systems for Conservation**

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The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) is pleased to announce that the training course on Architectural Records, Inventories and Information Systems for Conservation - ARIS09 will be held

in Rome from September 2 - October 2, 2009. This course is offered by ICCROM and the Getty Conservation Institute.

The ARIS09 Course aims to improve architectural conservation practice through the use of methods and tools of recording, documentation, inventories and information management. This architectural conservation course will be based on cases and experience drawing upon the vast wealth of cultural material that the city of Rome and other cases offer for the advanced study of conservation issues.

ICCROM is interested in inviting applications from conservators, architects, planners, engineers, archaeologists, historians, topographers, photogrammetrists, surveyors, cartographers, restorers, documentalists, and other conservation professionals involved in the field of recording, documentation and inventories through information management systems.

Applications should reach ICCROM by February 16, 2009 to ensure inclusion in our selection process.

For more information about the course and an application, please visit the [ICCROM website](#).

Video Enhanced Gravemarker Radio Interview with Inventor

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Robert Barrows, inventor of the Video Enhanced Gravemarker was interviewed on XZone Radio on October 23rd. To listen to the program, please [visit the XZone Radio website](#). Scroll down to Thursday, October 23rd, and click on "Segment 1" on the right hand side.

The Video Enhanced Gravemarker will enable a gravesite visitor to click on a remote control device and listen to anything the deceased person might have wanted to say before they died.

For more information about the Video Enhanced Gravemarker, please visit [Robert Barrows' website](#).

### **Website: Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford, Connecticut**

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Please take a moment to check out [Cedar Hill Cemetery's website](#). They have a blog, a link to their newsletter, a printable map, information on restoration of their monuments and history of the cemetery.

Article: "A Date with the Departed"

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This article was featured in the November 1 edition of [the New York Times](#). *Markers*

Editor June Hadden Hobbs is quoted in the article.

**Article: "Veterans cemetery idea grows in popularity," Fairbanks, Alaska**

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This article, posted on newsminer.com, is about efforts to create a Veterans cemetery in Fairbanks. The only other Veterans cemeteries in Alaska are in Anchorage and Sitka.

Article: Preservation Efforts in Lafayette, Colorado Cemetery

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This article is posted on [dailycamera.com](http://dailycamera.com). AGS member Mary Reilly-McNellan is interviewed in the article.

**Article: "Historic Dalton (Georgia) cemetery gets money for walking tours"**

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This article is posted on the Chattanooga Free Times Press.

Article: "Graveyards help unearth city's history," Jacksonville, FL

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This article is posted on [jacksonville.com](http://jacksonville.com) and is about Jacksonville's cemeteries.

**Contact Information**

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phone: (413) 772-0836, e-mail: info@gravestonestudies.org

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