

# Old City Cemetery

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401 Taylor Street, Lynchburg, Virginia 24501 ~ 434-847-1465 ~ [www.gravegarden.org](http://www.gravegarden.org)



## Notes from the Gravegarden



*"So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, good night; I hate to go, and leave this pretty sight." ~ Von Trapp Children, The Sound of Music*

At this moment, I am scouring the internet, looking for quotes about saying good-bye, because after eight years as your Public Relations and Visitor Services Manager, I am retiring to stay at home with my 15-month-old son. Why am I looking for quotes instead of writing from the heart, as I usually do? Because I don't know how to tell you, dear friends of Old City Cemetery, farewell, so I am looking to borrow someone else's words. You see, for the first time in my life (and if you have ever met me, you know this to be true) I am at a loss for words, possibly because there is so much to say.

Some of the most rewarding experiences of my life have been the events, programs, tours, and research that I have been privileged to be a part of here. (My first day was on September 18, 2004, at the release party for our now famous cookbook, *Food to Die For*. See picture.) And the people I have met, grown to love, what could I possibly say?

The people I am most proud to have known are the many hundreds of volunteers I have met over the years. You are not just my friends, but my dearest family members, and I will truly treasure you always. It has been an



SMA/Ted Delaney

absolute joy to know you.

I will still be around for the upcoming Candlelight Tours, writing scripts and helping with auditions, but this time, I actually get to be a tour patron and take my family along. I will try not to make too much noise during the scenes!

As for my replacement, I am thrilled to have you meet Karen Bracco. She has blown me away with her go-get-em attitude, amazing ideas, and true passion for a job that she has been in only since mid-June. I know she is going to be an amazing manager. To read more about Karen, see my interview with her on page eight.

Thank you for all you have done and you will be truly missed.

*~ Dawn Fields Wise*

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# From the Director

By Bruce Christian, Executive Director

Here we are in the dog days of August and things are actually very green around the Cemetery this year. In spite of the derecho, intense heat, and other crazy weather patterns, our visitation is up and interest in Old City Cemetery continues to increase. For the record, we did not lose power here so we were a small oasis for visitors seeking some air conditioned relief from the power outage around town. Ted and Laurie will provide more information about Cemetery damage in their articles.

Our new Pest House Garden has filled out beautifully in the past few months. What started off with a wonderful variety of small plants has now matured into a truly beautiful garden. Special thanks go to our regular rosarians, Kaye Moomaw and Lisa Trebilcox, for their careful attention to planting, watering, and weeding. The garden is an extension of our Medicinal Herb Garden as well as a place to spotlight some of our shrub roses. Our hope is visitors who are unable to navigate the walkways and grounds can now get a taste of what special plantings the Cemetery has. SMA board member Margi Vaughn helped develop the planting scheme. If you have not done so, please come through and see all the surprises.

Most of you know by now we lost what I call our “public face” here at Old City Cemetery. After nearly eight years, Dawn Fields Wise decided to retire and stay home with baby Grayson, a.k.a. The Prince. While we are happy she is able to do this, we are all deeply saddened to think her smile will not greet us when we first enter the Cemetery Center door. I know I have learned so much through the years just in watching her interaction with all our visitors and volunteers. Thanks Dawn!!!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see an article about our “New Dawn,” Karen Bracco. Karen has hit the ground running and comes in every day knowing she is going to learn something new and meet someone who will ask just the right off-the-wall question or bring a fascinating piece of information. If you have not been in to meet Karen, please come by and say hi.

We are gearing up for all our fall activities. Candlelight Tour tickets are on sale at [lynchburgtickets.com](http://lynchburgtickets.com) and are already selling briskly. The tours will be the last two weekends (Thurs-Sat) in October. We have the always popular and most interesting Bawdy Ladies tour on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Blessing of the Animals will be held on October 7<sup>th</sup>. For a second year we are offering an Autumn Afternoon Tour of the Cemetery on October 21<sup>st</sup>. We will close October with the All Hallows Eve service the 31<sup>st</sup> led by the local Episcopal clergy. So there is lots to see and do this fall at Old City Cemetery. We hope to see you here!



All photos: SMA/Ted Delaney



Top: Nancy Weiland leads the bi-annual Bawdy Ladies of 19th-Century Lynchburg walking tour.  
Bottom: Garden staff works on the extension of the Medicinal Herb Garden.

## 2012 Candlelight Tour Auditions

Tickets for our Candlelight Tours quickly sold out for a fourth year in a row and much of its success was due to the amazing group of actors we had cast. This year we are not only adding an extra night, but also an additional performance time at 6:10 p.m., to accommodate the demand we know we will have for tickets, and we can't do it without great performers!



All photos: SMA/Jocanna McGlothlin



Old City Cemetery is looking for professional actors to portray citizens buried in the graveyard for its annual Candlelight Tours being held on **October 18th, 19th, 20th, 25th, 26th, and 27th, from 5:30—10:00 p.m.** (This includes call time).

Actors must be available for all rehearsal dates on October 2nd, 4th, 9th, 11th, 15th, 16th, and 17th, and all performance dates.

**Auditions will be held Saturday, September 8th at 2:00 p.m. and Sunday, September 9th at 7:00 p.m.,** in the Cemetery's Chapel. Auditions are expected to last at least two hours and actors should plan to stay for the entire time, though will only need to audition one day. Scripts will be provided in monologue format, approximately five minutes in length. There are roles for 7-10 actors, and all ages are needed.

**Auditionees must have prior acting experience, preferably in theater.**

Actors will be paid a stipend of \$150. Unfortunately, travel costs cannot be paid at this time. Scripts will be available for pick-up after Sept 1st. For more information, please call 434-847-1465 or email [occ@gravegarden.org](mailto:occ@gravegarden.org).



# Horticultural Highlights

## Too Hot, Too Cold and Lots of Toads



*Harlequin Glorybower*

show of flowers followed by a heavy seed crop that may produce seedlings to carry on the line. Ours tried to leaf out but the hot scorching summer sun took its toll. This was an example of a tree preferring full sun in its native habitat, but here at the far reaches of its comfort zone, afternoon shade would have been a welcome relief.

This fall it will be replaced with a *Quercus palustris*, Pin Oak, selected by our City Urban Forester, Klaus Schreiber. This is very appropriate as this species is growing at Ground Zero and also likes our climate.

Another unique oddity at the other end of the temperature spectrum is *clerodendron trichotomum*, Harlequin Glorybower, and it can be found near the pond. Anyone unfamiliar with this shrub would liken it to paper mulberry on a quick first inspection. A closer look and the velvety soft leaves have little or no serration, and hang on more horizontal branches than mulberry's upward form. Harlequin's dilemma in the cemetery is too much cold weather. We are near the most northern range for this heat lover than can thrive in most of Florida. That said, our recent heat waves have pushed this fussy-to-bloom shrub into a dazzling display of dainty white blooms. This may not seem like a leap of faith deal-breaker to add it to your own garden, but renown horticulturist Mike Dirr was so discouraged with this plant not blooming four years running in Athens, GA, he rags on it negatively in his woody plant manual. I feel we are so fortunate to have one on the grounds even if it dies back most winters.

There have been many unique plantings introduced to the Cemetery grounds and some have thrived while others have taken to heart the USDA plant hardiness ratings. Originally based on minimum temperatures, the map has recently been updated to include heat indices as well.

One such tree was the Sorbus *aucuparia*, European Mountain Ash, planted in 2001 in memory of the 9-11 attacks. Although more heat tolerant than the American species, it had slowly declined to a point that it was embarrassing to highlight on tours. Each year it struggled with our hot humid summers and always looked tired. An early sign of stress can be an abundant



*Visitors had to watch their step closely in order to miss these migrating toads*

By Laurie McMinn, *Historic Grounds Supervisor*

The hot dry weather has not been appreciated by most humans who venture outside (though there were still the usual amount of school tours, such as the regular group of kindergartners from Paul Munro that come every year just for our nature), but the heat has helped with our bug population on the grounds. Few tell-tale signs were observed of tent caterpillar leaf munching, and both Japanese and June bugs found it troublesome to dig their way back to the surface through the compacted earth. Even the poor cicadas were exhausted after reaching top-side and their exoskeletons were found inches up tree trunks instead of feet. Two that had already shed made their way to the Cemetery Center's porch, probably drawn there by the lights, and could be picked up by a gentle hand and moved out of Arthur the Cat's line -of-attack vision.

An update on the late winter Pond renovation project includes the timely refilling for the migrating toads to gather and mate this spring. If you didn't have a chance to observe the thousands AND thousands of tadpoles wiggling along the rock walls, you may have been lucky to see them mature and navigate the slippery rocks on their trek back to land. In comparison to human proportions, it would have been like us climbing 400 feet—practically straight up! Some visitors thinking they were frogs, plopped them back in the water less they be inadvertently stepped on, so they had to try to get out again! I am sure many slid back into the water on their many attempts to return to dry ground and four tries would have been like you scaling the entire 1200 feet of Crabtree Falls!



*Paul Munro Elementary School kindergartners learning about trees*



*A teeny toad in my hand*

The derecho on June 29, 2012, spared the Cemetery major damage and although 128 trees were recorded with varying degrees of broken limbs, not a single one had to be completely removed! Keith and I cannot thank the wonderful volunteers enough that assisted cleaning up the debris while we were on emergency clean-up City-wide for two long, hot weeks. We had 90 cubic yards hauled off so far and probably have another 60 by the time we finish. There are still some hangers out of reach, mostly along the fence line, and in time they will come down too.

Hope to see you here for the much-anticipated cooler fall months ahead!

## Curator's Corner

By Ted Delaney, Assistant Director

**I sent out this report to the Southern Memorial Association Board a few days after the derecho hit Central Virginia and with it, the Old City Cemetery, on Friday, June 29, 2012. Since so many people have asked to see pictures, I thought it would be a great Curator's Corner topic for this issue.**

“For those of you out-of-town, or who haven't been able to drive through the Cemetery yet, here are a few photos of the worst damage from Friday night's severe wind storm. I took these photos at 8:30 on Saturday morning, so some of the smaller debris has already been removed or piled along the driveway. In general the damage was not bad, and, considering other things I've seen in Lynchburg, we were VERY lucky. So far, I've only found two fallen grave-stones, and neither was truly 'broken.’”

“Volunteer Sue Meyer and I spent several hours in 100+ degree heat on Saturday afternoon installing 50 feet of temporary fencing for the goats, since so many fallen trees have compromised their pen fence. I expect it will be several weeks before we get completely cleaned-up. Our groundskeeping crew will likely be off-site all week. Fortunately, the Cemetery Center does have power and AC. If you need a place to cool off, please stop by. Staff is usually here from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. We are closed on Wednesday for the holiday.”



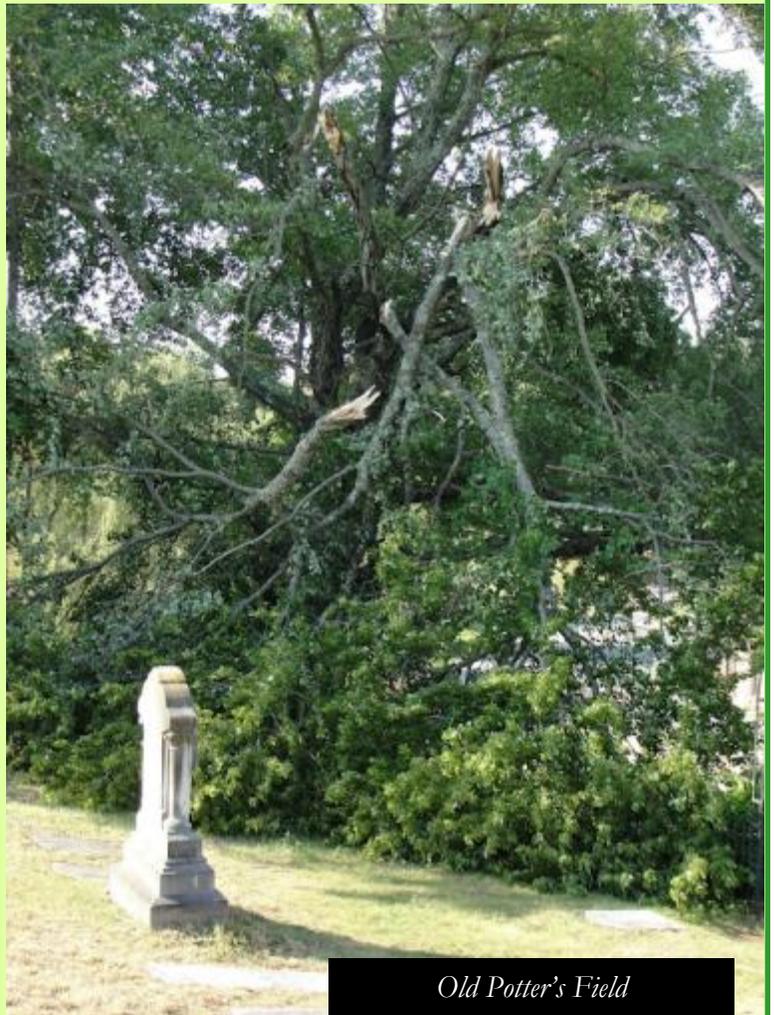
*Confederate Section*



*The leaves of this branch covered the grave of Terriza Wallace, the oldest recordable tombstone in the Cemetery, but did not damage her.*



*This maple tree in the "first acre" has lost many branches over the past few years.*



*Old Potter's Field*



*Across from the swing*



*The wind took this aluminum plaque right off the stone. I found it across the driveway.*



*The Pest House, as well as the other five museums on the grounds, narrowly escaped damage from the storm.*

*All pictures: SMA/Ted Delaney*

## *Meet Karen Bracco: Our New Public*

**Dawn Fields Wise: Being the Public Relations and Visitor Services Manager of Old City Cemetery is such a unique, exciting, yet, challenging job with many facets. What drew you to this position at Old City Cemetery?**

**Karen Bracco:** I had recently moved back here from New England after being gone my whole adult life. I was a History Education major in college and besides substitute teaching the past few years, I had never been involved with historical education on a daily basis. My other love has been "cultivated" in the past four years, working at a Botanical Garden on coastal New Hampshire. I was involved in all aspects of the Garden including maintenance, rose care, long-term planning, and fundraising efforts. The possibility of working at the OCC appealed to all sides of my personality.

**DFW: Expanding upon the first question, what are you most passionate about in the Cemetery and where do you think you can take that passion into the future of that aspect of OCC?**

**KB:** My first goal from the beginning is to try to absorb the history and culture here. The opportunity to build on [your] "creation" of this job is a challenge but I can honestly say all aspects are of great interest to me. I feel very strongly about getting the local population of Lynchburg involved or, more importantly, aware of this backyard gem. The African-American community has so much history here and I want to reach out as much as I personally can to them. With more local awareness we will be able to grow our volunteer base, increase educational activities, and hopefully create more local involvement.

**DFW: You have a horticultural background and one of your job responsibilities is to oversee the gravegardener program. What are some plans you have for this group of vitally important volunteers?**

**KB:** I think the outside rose areas are where I would really like to jump in feet first. My thoughts are to meet with grounds staff and local rosarians to completely understand how roses grow and bloom in this zone. My goal is to create a group of volunteers who would be willing to meet on a regular schedule to take care of the roses. I am guessing a 5:00 p.m. (or so) time slot might fit into most schedules. I think we can achieve more amazing results throughout the season than just in the springtime here. I would also like to assist part-time horticulturists Kaye Moomaw and Lisa Trebilcox with a core group of outside "helpers." Our weeding particularly needs to be addressed before next spring. A weekly organized weeding group might be an answer. I also want to work with current volunteers, and new ones, to maximize their interests and talent.



## *Relations and Visitor Services Manager*

**DFW:** Another important part of your job is to continue many of the annual events and programs we have on the grounds, but also to continue to come up with new ones as well. Any ideas you want to share with our readers which they may want to be on the lookout for in the next couple of years?

**KB:** I have looked at previous years' calendars and some events have been held every other year. I think that is a good way to keep these events fresh. As an example, I am talking about the Bawdy Ladies of 19th-Century Lynchburg and the Botanical Illustration Course. A new idea that I am thinking about is a possible road race (walk/run) in the Cemetery. Events done in the past that I would like to put on a future calendar are conducting a "how to" pruning workshop, grafting-a-tree workshop, maple syrup tapping, and a summer art workshop for children.

**DFW:** Thanks, Karen! I wish you all the best and can't wait to see what you do!

### **Thanks to Ragged Robin Garden Club**

If you have ever visited the Cemetery Center and noticed the beautiful floral arrangements outside on the Cooling Coffin, like this one done by Susan Timmons (*lower right*), you may have mistakenly thought it was something the OCC staff did, but it is actually done by volunteers of the Ragged Robin Garden Club. Once a week, for the past six years, members of this club scour the Cemetery grounds for unique flowers and shrubs that happen to be blooming at that time. They then clip these items, label them for educational purposes, and arrange the specimens for everyone to see and enjoy! The club is also responsible for the gorgeous holiday decorations done in the Historic Chapel each December.

Thanks Ragged Robin!

SMA/Ted Delaney



SMA/Karen Bracco



*Two members of Ragged Robin work on an arrangement for the Cooling Coffin. This picture was taken in 2006, the first year the ladies began this wonderful project.*

# Legacy Museum Opens New Exhibit

Originally printed August 6, 2012 in *The News & Advance*

By Dave Thompson

The News & Advance/Sam O'Keefe



**I'm so glad trouble don't last always!"**

Shortly before 3:30 p.m. Sunday, a resonant female voice began singing the lyrics of the spiritual, and a few other voices joined in. The singer, Dianne Jackson, hadn't planned on leading a hymn at the Legacy Museum, but when a curator asked, she obliged. "I knew the tune. I just didn't know the words," Jackson laughed. But she made it through easily with the help of a smartphone, to the

appreciation of those who were gathered to see the museum's new exhibit. The exhibit, titled "Trouble Don't Last Always," outlines the lives of African-Americans in Central Virginia from the time of the Civil War toward the turn of the century. Exhibit curator Dianne Swann-Wright said the project was in the works for just about a year before it opened to the public. "I think we have a very good snapshot," she said, of what life would have been like at the time.

The exhibit features artifacts from books to farming implements to Swann-Wright's favorite part of the exhibit — a hand-stitched doll with a clay head. Outside of the seams on the doll, she said, each stitch represents something. The doll's back is crisscrossed with dozens of stitches, denoting scars. "She really embodied the African-American experience that she knew," Swann-Wright said.

Richard Fowler, of Lynchburg, said he was pleased with the exhibit, partly because he recognized some of the artifacts, down to ice tongs and a corn shovel, from his own childhood. "A lot of it brings back memories to people," he said, adding he appreciated the history it teaches from a perspective some don't understand. "It makes you think," he said.

The exhibit was set to open at the end of June, before the derecho took out power to the museum, along with much of the city. The museum plans to keep this display up for two years.

## Announcements

### Candlelight Tour Tickets On Sale

Tickets for last year's Candlelight Tours quickly sold out, so be sure to get yours today. Candlelight Tour dates are October 18th, 19th, 20th, 25th, 26th, and 27th. Tours last approximately 1 and 1/2 hours and start at 6:10 p.m. and run every 20 minutes until 7:50 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and children under 18.

You may purchase tickets at [www.lynchburgtickets.com](http://www.lynchburgtickets.com) or by contacting the Cemetery Center. For more information, please call 434-847-1465 or email [occ@gravegarden.org](mailto:occ@gravegarden.org).



SMA/Ted Delaney

### 2012 is Half Over...

#### Have You Taken Your Pictures for the Four Seasons Photo Contest?

We don't want you to forget to continue taking great pictures for the first ever Old City Cemetery "Four Seasons of the Gravegarden" Photo Contest! Top prize is \$500, with lots of other monetary prizes to be awarded as well, so it is definitely worth the \$25 entry fee! For more information, complete rules, and to download an entry form, visit our website at [www.gravegarden.org](http://www.gravegarden.org).



Spiron Photography

*This great picture of a dogwood in bloom near the Cemetery's Lotus Pond was taken by K.C. Spiron, one of the many "regular" photographers we have visit the grounds.*

## Upcoming Events

**September 23rd**

Bawdy Ladies of 19th-Century  
Lynchburg Walking Tour

3:00 p.m.

**October 7th**

Blessing of the Animals

3:00—5:00 p.m.

**October 18th, 19th, 20th,  
25th, 26th, 27th**

Candlelight Tours

Tours start at 6:10—7:50 p.m.

**October 21st**

Autumn Afternoon

3:00 p.m.

**October 31st**

All Hallows Eve

5:00 p.m.



*Construction on the Cemetery's new road began on August 14th. The entrance gates on Taylor Street will be closed for about three weeks as the road is repaved and new curbs are installed from the gates down to the Confederate Section. The Cemetery is still open from dawn to dusk as usual—just use the Wise Street entrance to drive into the Cemetery.*

All photos: SMA/Ted Delaney

**Old City Cemetery**  
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Lynchburg, VA 24501

