

# Notes from the Gravegarden

NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD CITY CEMETERY  
*Lynchburg, Virginia*

Since the last newsletter was released in January, activity of all kinds has accelerated here in the Cemetery. Bloom cycles have come and gone and new blooms take their place. Right now the photographers, high school prom students, and art class students are using the dogwoods and azaleas as their back drop.

The spring tour season is in full swing! Local schools and community groups are keeping staff and volunteer docents busy. The Cemetery just finished a series of three Saturday morning Nature Walks. Next week we look forward to our next archaeological dig beginning on Lynchburg's Garden Day, April 29.

The Piedmont Beekeepers Association has several of their members coming on board to help with the maintenance and education component of our bee hives. On Tuesday, April 29,

at 5:30, they are having a bee installation demo. This is open to the public!

As I write this we are finalizing our Rose Festival activities, including the pick up of the roses. Our caravan will drive to get the roses the first week of May and the pre-sale will begin here on May 3. The 19th Annual Antique Rose Festival is on May 10 and the following day is our Mother's Day Rose Walk. We are expecting our usual variety of roses and as always, we are all looking forward to seeing old friends as well as our new ones.

The Cemetery hosts two more events in the month of May. The Confederate Memorial Day Service is on the 25th and the Annual Bird Walk and Count is the following day, May 26. The Calendar of Events for the rest of the summer is on our website. In particular, please note that

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Azaleas and dogwood bloom in the sassafras grove near the Cemetery Center.

*Photo by Karen Bracco*

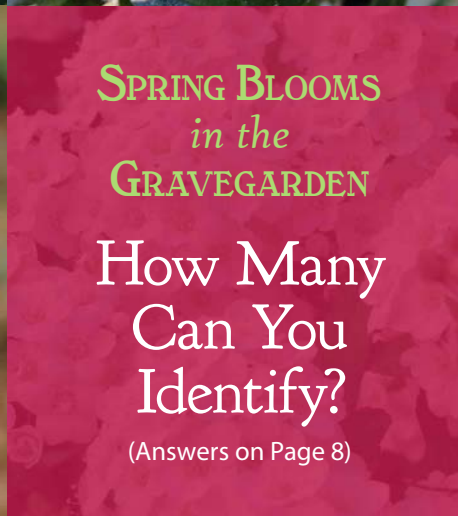
**April  
Comes like an  
idiot, babbling, and  
strewing flowers.”**

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

Endstation Theatre will be hosting the play “Our Town” in June and July in the Cemetery. Our staff and Endstation Theatre Company are very excited about this partnership. Please come and join us!

If you do not have time to walk the grounds in the next couple of months, please make the point to drive through as often as you can. Our appearance is changing weekly. Enjoy the Spring!

—Karen Bracco



# From the Executive Director

By Bruce Christian

As I was reading an article on Great Places to Work recently, it made me consider what makes a workplace special. Location? Generous benefits? Work environment? People? Company culture? While it may be difficult to define, we know it when we see it. For me, Old City Cemetery is a Great Place to Work.

Most of you have probably heard by now I am leaving the Cemetery at the end of June. I became Executive Director of Old City Cemetery July 1, 2007. My path to this august position was not so much winding as it was swift, unexpected, and a bit overwhelming. Like most things around here, it had Jane White's handprints all over it! But much as anyone who comes through the gates, I love it. I mean, what could be better than to spend the middle part of one's workday here in these 27 acres? What I have learned, those whom I have met, and what we have done have made these last seven years simply magical.

First, I was blessed with a remarkably talented and imaginative staff. Ted, Kathy, and Dawn welcomed me warmly and made my transition so smooth. (Hey, they were the ones who knew what to do!) Adding Karen to our family simply continued the fun we have. Now there are times each probably wanted to cast me into the trash heap...but as you can see their southern charm held them in check.

The City has been an unbelievably wonderful partner. Laurie McMinn started as the Historic Grounds Supervisor just about the same time as I. Her experience and willingness to make



OCC shine have helped make our grounds a showplace. Her staff never hesitates to work with Southern Memorial Association and our

horticulturists to bring out the best in the graveyard. From City Council to Kim Payne to Lynn Dodge to Gaynelle Hart, our City's leadership has shown its commitment to recognizing how special the Cemetery is.

Our volunteers are the backbone of OCC. I cannot say enough about you. We love you! Whether you are here once a day, once a week, once a month, or once a year, your presence and gifts of time and thoughtfulness are priceless. We are only able to do all we do with your help.

The SMA Board has provided unqualified support and wisdom. Trust me, I know a good board. It has been an honor to serve with such engaged and enthusiastic people as we strive to "keep Old City Cemetery alive." I have been blessed to work so closely with Cham Light, Sandra Weigand, Betty Brown, and Nancy Young as presidents of SMA.

All of you who so generously contribute to Old City Cemetery with your gifts, the visitors you bring, and your kind (and at times corrective) words along the way mean so much to me.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my wife Spas and all my family for their encouragement, understanding, and patience. While I may

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only be part-time at the Cemetery, some of that part-time bit into family time on more occasions than I can count.

Now it is time for Ted to take the reins and make his mark. He is an incredibly gifted young man who knows more about OCC than all the rest of us put together. He will take the Cemetery to new heights and I am excited to see what lies beyond.

Please know each one of you helps to make a difference here in the heart of Lynchburg. Each one of you has made a difference in my life. Thank you.

SMA's Board of Directors will plant a new *Zéphirine Drouhin* rose in the Cemetery to honor Bruce and his years of volunteer service.

## Board of Directors Corner

*By Nancy K. Young, Board Chair*

By definition of the bylaws, the Southern Memorial Association Board of Directors meets quarterly which enables committee members to use that in-between time for addressing their responsibilities. During the months since the last publication of Notes From The Gravegarden the Board's committees have accomplished much as evidenced by the agenda of our April 15th board meeting.

We were pleased to learn of a recent success experienced by our Tinbridge Hill neighbors— passage by both the Lynchburg Planning Commission and City Council of Growing Tinbridge Hill: A Sustainable Neighborhood Plan for Tinbridge Hill. Members of the Community Relations Committee, led by Sandra Weigand, regularly attend meetings held by the Friends of Tinbridge Hill and have been supportive of their work on developing a neighborhood plan.

In a different vein, Catherine Madden and the Nominating Committee reluctantly accepted the resignation of Bob Blevins, John Hoskins,

and Ann Mitchell. These individuals have given many hours to the work of the Board of Directors and activities at Old City Cemetery; they will be missed. As we officially thanked them for their efforts, we did not say good-bye for we know they will continue to be strong supporters in other ways.



SMA's Quarterly Board Meeting, April 15, 2014

*Photo by DuBois Miller*

The Executive Committee, assisted by staff and other board members, awarded a HUGE thank you to Bruce Christian, an exceptional individual, who for seven years has served the Southern Memorial

Association as executive director. Working in this capacity as a volunteer, he has strengthened Old City Cemetery's reputation as a unique historic landmark in Lynchburg. His administrative leadership ends June 30, but we are confident that his time as a volunteer in other capacities will continue. Old City Cemetery is a magical place and affiliations, once formed, tend to continue forever.

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# Curator's Corner

By Ted Delaney, Assistant Director

In addition to recognizing the work done by those leaving us, we confirmed our board and staff rosters for 2014-2015. The Board enthusiastically voted in the affirmative on the proposal from the Personnel Committee, chaired by Lisa Cresson, to hire Ted Delaney as executive director beginning July 1, 2014. From the recommendation by the Nominating Committee we accepted Daniel Dixon, Rachel Shenigo, and Wayne Trent as new board members. Also, we elected officers, each to serve for two years: Nancy Young, President; Lisa Cresson, Vice-President, Sandra Weigand, Secretary; and Wayne Trent, Treasurer.

A continuation here of a list of all the current activities of the SMA Board of Directors would consume more space than allowed for this column. So, as is sometimes said, stay "tuned in," and look for this column in the next issue of the Notes from the Gravegarden. In the meantime, come to the many events scheduled to occur on our 27 acres this spring and summer. To mention a few, there are festivals, concerts, tours, walks, a play, and special observations that you do not want to miss.

Thanks to the help of two outstanding high school students, we have just completed our first comprehensive inventory of Old City Cemetery's grave markers in almost 15 years.

Since late February two interns from the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology, Tristan Harrison and Chelsea Cereghino, have spent two and a half hours each Friday morning surveying our

grounds, inspecting each one of the 2,000+ gravestones outside the Confederate Section, and assessing their condition. Our primary goal was to create a list of damaged or endangered grave markers, which we could then prioritize for repair and professional conservation.

Tristan and Chelsea identified 79 grave markers with significant condition issues, ranging from multiple fractures to missing pieces. Some are completely displaced and lying on the ground; some are leaning badly and in imminent danger of breaking.

We are now in the process of separating out which markers can be repaired by our own staff and volunteers, and which ones need professional expertise. One thing is for sure: our work is cut out for us!



High school interns Tristan Harrison and Chelsea Cereghino have been assessing grave marker damage and prioritizing repair work.

Photo by Ted Delaney

# Around the Grounds

By Laurie McMinn, Historic Grounds Supervisor



Born on Easter Sunday, 1893, Easter Hendrick was buried near this maple tree in 1920.

*Photo by Ted Delaney*

This is my seventh spring in OCC, and I wondered what could possibly be new and exciting to write about. As any of you who have been here one time, or 100 times, the hidden treasures are abundant, and even Ted has been surprised by new finds. One of those items turns out to be city employee Willie Lyle, who has recently been assigned to the Cemetery Grounds Crew this season! Willie has already taken ownership of this assignment, validated by bringing his family here to share the history and fun after only one week on the job. Willie did confess his daughters' favorite features were the goats and the famous Pecan tree swing...and his wife was not surprised he remembered about the Langley Ladies!!



Easter Virginia Hendrick  
1893-1920

Easter has just passed, but Easter is still in the Cemetery. Along the imaginary Third Street "path" between Taylor and Wise, and near an older sugar maple tree, the Wednesday morning volunteer tombstone repair crew has installed a stone marker that reads in part, "In This Vicinity Lies Easter Virginia." As for the marker, I had been careful last fall not to come near it while mulching the trillions of leaves the deep-rooted maple continuously dropped for weeks on end, hiding any trace of the new stone. For

some strange reason, the name 'Easter' on that marker hadn't grabbed my attention; maybe at a quick glance from the mower, 'Esther' seemed more normal and the stone mason had made an error.

But Easter Virginia Hendrick was the perfect name for a baby

girl born on April 2, 1893, and her birth was actually on Easter Sunday that year. I was mowing past this area on Easter Monday and as she caught my attention so did a blue plastic egg I spied that some eager children had overlooked from a treasure hunt held on the grounds. Or was it intentionally placed there beside Easter's grave over Easter weekend? What a coincidence: Willie's daughter was also celebrating her birthday Easter Sunday!

I have to confess, I get a little excited to find a birth or death date on a marker that mirrors that same exact day as I pass, while mowing or walking the grounds. I acknowledge the permanent resident's special day in hushed, inaudible tones as I go by. I think about their waking days and if anyone ever wondered if someone would even care about them 50, 100 or 200 years later. The impetus of the SMA, and the exposure the 27 acres of resting grounds receives day in and day out is a momentous memorial to the thousands of lives that have become eternalized here over the past 208 years.

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Julio Uchimura & Mary Stewart

Where do you begin when you discuss the contributions of two volunteers that began over 10 years ago? Julio Uchimura and Mary Stewart discovered the Cemetery soon after buying a home in Lynchburg. As California residents, Julio happened upon an Historic Preservation magazine in the alley behind their home. When he saw the prices of homes here, they bought a home on Federal Street--sight unseen. They spent time here as vacations allowed so when Mary

announced she was retiring and moving permanently to Lynchburg, Julio started packing up their belongings!

While exploring the city, they began their continuous relationship with the Cemetery and the critters that call it home here. Julio remembers over 10 years ago when he and Jane White "discovered" Arthur hanging around by the pond. The two cats that hitched a ride on the construction equipment that built the Chapel

eight years ago also have been tended to by Julio and Mary. Their continuous pet care is sometimes twice a day, weekends, and on snow days when staff cannot even get here! (This also includes feeding the goats.)

We appreciate all these "behind the scenes" contributions that they continue to do for us. I also thank them on behalf of our staff for being such loyal and dependable volunteers!

—Karen Bracco



# Horticultural Highlights

By Kaye Moomaw, Horticulture Coordinator

Spring! What a feast for our senses! Particularly this year when a lot of us were starting to wonder if winter would ever break here in Central Virginia.

One of my favorite spring blooming plants is one that may be overlooked by many. The Clematis Armandii Snowdrift clings to the wall and covers it so gracefully. It is accompanied by a showy companion, Clematis Anemone. The "Snowdrift" has elongated, glossy, evergreen leaves that are pretty most of the year.

The thing about it that stops me in my tracks is its splendidly scented white blooms. They are as heavily scented as any rose on the property I believe. We have been taught to "stop, and smell the roses" since childhood. Yet, how many visitors stop to notice this lovely clematis? I am encouraging you to take the short walk from your car to the base of the "Old Brick Wall" and enjoy

this clematis personally. You won't be disappointed. I confess I stop multiple times a day to enjoy the fragrance while working in the gardens. It is a sensory treat that lifts the heart and reminds us again to rejoice in Spring and all its beauty.

Clematis may thrive for 50 years if planted in the ideal spot. Plant



Snowdrift about two inches below the soil line to keep the roots moist. Place your pot at a 45 degree angle to encourage new shoots. Snowdrift doesn't need pruning often.

If it does need to be trimmed, do so after it blooms because it flowers on last year's growth. Trimming will encourage more branching. Like most plants you can remove dead vines anytime.

*Cultivation information from  
Brushwood Nursery website*

# News & Notes

## Welcome Back Kaye!

After a short retirement, Kaye Moomaw has returned to OCC as SMA's new "Horticulture Coordinator." Kaye will work closely with the Historic Grounds Supervisor to coordinate horticulture activities with Public Works and SMA.

## Welcome Willie!

Willie Lyle is the newest member of the Public Works crew assigned to Old City Cemetery. He's only been here a few weeks, but he's already doing a great job!



## Roses Are Coming

Antique roses go on sale Saturday, May 3. The Festival begins a week later, Saturday, May 10.



## National Public Gardens Day

Friday, May 9, is National Public Gardens Day. OCC will be having gift shop specials and some other unique activities that day. Follow us on Facebook to get the specific details.



## Thank You Volunteers!

The Cemetery has new volunteers this season doing both research and gardening. Special thanks to all our volunteers who make the staff's jobs easier!

## Donut Day

Don't forget, Friday, June 6, is National Donut Day. Stop by the Cemetery's Station House Museum to learn about the connection between World War I and donuts—and get a free donut!

## Guided Tours and Weddings

Would you like to schedule a private tour? Tours are \$5 per person (\$30 minimum). We require two weeks notice and are able to give a tour tailored to your specific interests. Are you looking for a wedding venue? For \$400, OCC is one of the best values in the greater Lynchburg area. Please call 847-1465 for further information.



## SPRING BLOOMS in the GRAVEGARDEN

(Photos on Page 2)

- A. Hellebore/Lenten Rose
- B. American Boxwood
- C. Japanese Flowering Crabapple
- D. Wild Hyacinth
- E. Red Buckeye/Horse-chesnut
- F. Vanhoutte Spirea
- G. Lilac
- H. Dogwood

# Parting Shots



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We Welcome Suggestions for Future  
Newsletter Articles and Images.  
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Ron Boehmer's  
*plein air* painting  
class is spending  
Tuesday mornings in  
Old City Cemetery  
this spring.

Photos by Ted Delaney