

Prospect Hill Cemetery

Our Nation's Capital's Historic German-American Cemetery
Established 1858

2201 North Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-1103 --- Phone (202) 667-0676

Holiday Season Newsletter 2006

LET'S NOT FORGET OUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Since 1858 Prospect Hill Cemetery, the final resting place of our family members and other loved ones, has remained practically untouched in a serenely beautiful setting high on a hill just a few blocks from the capitol building of the free world.

Surely, all of us want this beautiful legacy to continue for years to come. That's why this annual appeal goes out to you today. As you know, our Prospect Hill Cemetery is privately owned by its lot owners, and heirs of those buried here.

But sadly, that faithful circle of dedicated folks is dwindling day by day mostly by death or relocating somewhere else. And as you also know, our historic Prospect Hill Cemetery depends primarily on the financial support of those remaining lot owners, family members, heirs and friends.

Much needed voluntary donations, in any form, ensure the continuing existence of our historic Prospect Hill Cemetery by helping finance its daily upkeep and growing operating expenses.

It's nearing that time again, the Holiday Season, when fond memories of our departed loved ones are felt the most. When memories of joyful days gone by keep filling our hearts and minds.

And once again your Board of Trustees invites (and hopes) you will contribute to our annual year-end Memorial Donations Fundraising Campaign this Holiday Season. Let's not forget our own departed loved ones during this time. In good times and bad, we are still counting on you to find it in your hearts to continue to support the historic final resting place of our departed loved ones.

All contributions received from your Holiday Season memorial donations go entirely toward the upkeep, expenses and beautification of our historic cemetery and its old stone house residence.

If you wish to honor your departed loved one(s) with a Holiday Season memorial donation, and we hope you do, please indicate it on the Order Form in the back of this newsletter. A complete list of contributors and the departed loved one(s) they are honoring will be printed in the Spring 2007 issue. (The amount contributed will not be published.)

If you do not wish to contribute a memorial donation please help us with an "End-of-Year" financial support donation, also indicated on the Order Form.

CEMETERY GATES WILL BE OPEN THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND

During Christmas and New Year's weekends, the Cemetery gates will be open the usual times, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Gates ordinarily are open Thursday through Monday but closed on Tuesday and Wednesday.

TOTENSONNTAG SERVICE HELD AT CEMETERY OCTOBER 15

On a delightfully crisp, sunny Sunday afternoon, October 15, our annual Totensonntag memorial service was held on Prospect Hill grounds. Rudy Becker, of our Board of Trustees, was the master of ceremonies. (Totensonntag is an annual German festival of the dead.)

The Washington Saengerbund German choral group sang several beautiful selections in German. Pastorin Heike Miller of The United Church followed with prayer, then later delivered the day's message. Gary Grassl of The German-American Heritage Society and Laetitia Combrinck of The United Church spoke briefly about the history of our cemetery. Pastorin Miller concluded the service with the benediction.

About 40 people attended this service. At its conclusion, all were invited to partake of refreshments donated and set up by lot owner Edith Gill and to remain for the annual Lot Owners Meeting which followed.

LOT OWNERS MEET AFTER TOTENSONNTAG SERVICE

Later in the afternoon on October 15, about 30 people gathered for the cemetery's Annual Meeting. The cemetery looked its best throughout, with well mowed and trimmed grass and with trees beginning to show their fall colors. The circle at the cemetery's highest point looked especially lovely once again because of the work volunteer Christine Hambach and her garden club performed.

The Annual Meeting opened with prayer and saluting of the American flag. Our Board of Trustees President Carol Holler then welcomed the lot owners and friends and thanked them for coming.

As part of the President's report, Holler indicated that the T-Mobile tower is up and working, and that rent is now being received on a monthly basis. Prospect Hill receives \$800 a month, totaling \$9,600 a year, which is a tremendous help in maintaining our beloved Prospect Hill Cemetery.

The treasurer's report later in the meeting tentatively indicated that for the 9-month period January 1, 2006, through September 30, 2006, operations income was \$41,559.06 and operation expenses were \$41,767.71, giving a total deficit of \$208.65.

MEET OUR NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Joe Connell is no stranger to Prospect Hill Cemetery. For the past 13 years, under Dennis Olson's direction, Joe has been cutting our cemetery grass.

Joe loves our cemetery and enjoys the peacefulness of our grounds. He has an avid interest in horticulture; he did landscaping during the summers while he was in college.

He is also an accomplished musician, a percussionist in the National Symphony Orchestra. In addition he teaches music at the George Washington University.

We welcome Joe and feel fortunate in having him at Prospect Hill.

NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEETS

Immediately following the Lot Owners Meeting, the new Board of Trustees met. Rudy Becker was elected president of the Board, Mary Anne Probus secretary, and Carol Holler treasurer.

The motion was then made, seconded, and passed unanimously that Joseph Connell be named our new Prospect Hill Cemetery superintendent.

TWO NEW MEMBERS ELECTED TO BOARD

The final piece of business was the election of officers for the coming year. Two new members were voted to the Board of Trustees—Al Reitz, who had previously served as Property Chairperson, and Sylvia Alspaugh. The meeting concluded at about 4:00 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES LOOKING FOR A USED TRUCK

To help keep our 10-acre cemetery looking well-groomed, we need a truck to haul equipment and debris found on Prospect Hill grounds.

We are looking for a truck that runs. It can be ugly and temperamental. It would not have to pass inspection because it would be used only on cemetery grounds. We are hoping that someone has such a truck to donate. (Such a donation could be used as a charitable deduction on federal income tax.) If you know of anyone who might have a truck to donate, please let us know.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Dear Lot Owners:

I'd like to begin by thanking all the lot owners who were present at the Annual Meeting on October 15, 2006, for the confidence they showed in electing the new Board of Trustees, and I'd like to thank the new Board members for their confidence in me by choosing me as their President.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Carol Holler for her 5 years of service as president and for her willingness to stay involved on the Board in the role of treasurer. During her tenure as president, Carol faced many challenges. Devastating windstorms felled large trees and overturned headstones. Fund raising was destabilized by world events, and costs had to be more tightly managed as a result, although there was no decline in the work that needed to be done to maintain the cemetery.

Carol fostered a close working relationship with T-Mobile to gain a much needed \$800/month lease payment toward preserving the appearance of the cemetery environment. She sought advice on cemetery operations from far and wide, developing a strong relationship with the Director of Congressional Cemetery and fostering the support of the German-American community of greater Washington. During her tenure the cemetery achieved recognition as an historical landmark in the District of Columbia, an event which will forever protect it from efforts to change it. Finally, during this past year, she faced perhaps the most challenging issue for the leader of any organization, the loss of a key team member, in this case Dennis Olson, the cemetery's long-time administrator.

Carol's leadership led to the selection of Joe Connell, the long-time groundskeeper of the cemetery, who has proven to be an excellent choice, as evidenced by the well-tended appearance of the cemetery today. Carol's leadership style of selfless giving and thankful recognition of effort is one to be emulated by every leader.

The cemetery is faced with ongoing maintenance issues. The two most pressing are the uprighting of tombstones and replacement of the roof on the Stone House. Our new superintendent, Joe Connell, feels some of the work with the stones could be done by lot owner volunteers, and feels good progress could be made on several weekend days. Anyone interested in helping, please contact me at (540) 972-4802 or rbecker2004@yahoo.com.

The stone house has the original circa 1927 clay tile roof. It is at the end of its expected life span, and there is evidence of rainwater leaks into the attic. The supporting structure, however, appears sound. The cemetery's status as an historic landmark requires that a new roof have the same appearance as the original; that is, the roof must be replaced with clay tile or a synthetic substitute. We are in the process of soliciting replacement proposals, with early indication of pricing in the \$40,000—\$45,000 range. This is a significant hurdle to overcome, and we will be grateful for your increased support this year.

I look forward to a challenging year for the cemetery, and appreciate your confidence and continued support.

Best regards,

Rudy Becker
President

WE CAN HELP YOU HONOR YOUR LOVED ONES

Rain, sleet, snow — all have taken their toll on the Christmas wreaths we offered you in the past to buy and place on graves. So this year our Board has decided to do something new to honor your loved one(s) with holiday decorations.

This year we plan to buy one very large wreath and hang it on the protected porch of the stone house. If you wish to remember your Prospect Hill loved ones this Christmas, for \$25 you may purchase a Christmas card that will give the names of those honored and also the name of the donor. This card will be attached to the wreath which will remain on the porch until after the first of the year. All proceeds go toward the upkeep of our cemetery.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR CEMETERY'S HISTORY?

You may be surprised at some names for family acquaintances of long ago whom you didn't know personally but are familiar with and didn't realize are buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Prospect Hill Cemetery Adult Burial List, the latest book compiled by Carol Holler and Jean Crabill may rouse your curiosity and make you want to know more. Nearly 300 pages, the book lists all burials of persons 14 years of age or older through year 2002, giving (to the extent of our research and knowledge) the age at time of death, birthplace and date, death place and date, burial date, and other information from tombstones, cemetery records, and various other sources of information about the District of Columbia. It has been a "best seller," having already been reprinted once, and is available for \$35 (plus \$5 postage).

And if you'd like to read many interesting mini-biographies of persons interred in Prospect Hill, another book, *The Families of Prospect Hill*, is also available. Written in collaboration with about 160 lot owners and descendants, the book contains 496 pages with many photographs, and is priced at \$40 plus \$5.

Perhaps the most historic of Crabill's books about our cemetery is her first one, *The Immigrants and Their Cemetery: The Story of Prospect Hill*. This book contains the original history written around 1949 by Catholic University German Professor Dr. Paul Gleis (who worked from the original cemetery Board minutes, written in German until ca. 1920), then from 1950 to the present time, and tells about the early German-American immigrant history in Washington, DC. It contains 194 pages and costs \$30 plus \$5.

All books may be purchased by using the Order Form herein.

The Newsletter is produced by the Board of Trustees of Prospect Hill Cemetery, 2201 North Capitol St., NE, Washington, DC 20002 Henry Fankhauser, Editor

Prospect Hill Cemetery

Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

1. I wish to give a year-end memorial donation in memory of:

Amount of donation \$ _____

2. I wish to make an end-of-year financial support donation of: \$ _____

3. I wish to order _____ Christmas card(s) for the Christmas wreath:

In memory of _____

Donor _____

4. I would like to order the following book(s):

____ copies, *The Immigrants and Their Cemetery: The Story of Prospect Hill* \$ _____
(\$30 plus \$5 postage each)

____ copies, *Families of Prospect Hill* (\$40 plus \$5 postage each) \$ _____

____ copies, *Prospect Hill Cemetery Adult Burial List* (\$35 plus \$5 postage each) \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Please pay for your card(s) and book(s) with a separate check as these purchases are not tax deductible. And please write "card" and/or "book" in the lower left corner of your check.

Please make all checks payable to Prospect Hill Cemetery, and mail this full sheet to:

Prospect Hill Cemetery
c/o Carol Holler, Treasurer
8810 Side Saddle Road
Springfield, VA 22152

Thank you for your support of Prospect Hill Cemetery.