

Prospect Hill Cemetery

Our Nation's Capital's German-American Cemetery

Established 1858

(Designated an Historic Landmark by the DC Historic Preservation Board 3/24/2005)

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

Summer

Newsletter

2007

FINAL FALL LOT OWNERS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 20

ATTN: Prospect Hill Cemetery lot owners

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 20, 2007, at 11 a.m. That's the day and time of our annual lot owners meeting, the final annual meeting to be held in the Fall.

Even though the October meetings have coincided with the annual German Totensonntag celebration (Festival of the Dead) your Board of Trustees have decided that reverting back to our own Memorial Day weekend in the Spring would really be the more appropriate time to hold the meeting.

In years past, attendance during the Spring meetings, despite the threats of showers, has been a bit higher than our experience the past couple years with meetings in the Fall.

October's final Fall meeting should last no longer than noon. Lot owners and visitors may then enjoy refreshments, visit graves of loved ones, socialize, or explore the cemetery grounds on their own until the Totensonntag service starts at approximately 1:30 p.m. It will be highlighted by the Washington Sängerbund choral group singing favorite German hymns. The service shouldn't last more than an hour.

Please join us, meet some of your "fellow" lot owners and enjoy the service and refreshments. In case of inclement weather the service will be cancelled.

See you there!

PLAQUE TO HONOR PROSPECT HILL'S HISTORIC STATUS

Folks entering Prospect Hill Cemetery in the near future should be impressed by a new, large plaque to be erected in the center of the flag circle at the entrance of our cemetery. It will signify Prospect Hill an Historic Landmark by the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Board.

This honor was bestowed upon our cemetery on March 24, 2005. Your Board of Trustees decided the honor and prestige it brings were too great to keep to themselves so they voted unanimously for the plaque to let those entering our cemetery realize they are treading on historic grounds.

The Historic Landmark application took months of preparation by our historian Jean Crabill. Our Board feels that being so honored indicates our ancestors made significant contributions to the establishment of our Nation's Capital. In addition, due to the historic status, our cemetery is now protected against being taken over for any other use.

The plaque is in the designing stage and will be completed and erected soon.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE T-MOBILE TOWER; SEVERAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS POSTPONED

In this issue, and in future newsletters, Rudy Becker, president of our/your Board of Trustees, will give overall reports on the status of the cemetery.

During the ensuing months since the last newsletter, your Board of Trustees has re-evaluated the several major improvements projects at the cemetery mentioned in the last President's Message and decided to postpone action on all but the most pressing ones.

Stopgap measures have been put in place in the superintendent's house to prevent rainwater from seeping into the ceilings of the upper rooms, and they seem to be working well. We will continue to observe this and may repair rather than replace the roof during the next year.

Further investigation into the state of the stone walls along Lincoln Road, V Street, and North Capitol Street revealed they appear to be structurally sound and, although repointing of joints should be done, that can also be deferred. We do plan to repair the walls along roadways on cemetery grounds.

Superintendent Joe Connell is working with one of our contractors to upright fallen tombstones and expects to make good progress during the dry summer months.

Many of you may have noticed the T-Mobile tower on the cemetery grounds and wondered how it came to be located there. In early 2005, we were approached by T-Mobile USA about locating an 80-foot tower at the northeast portion of the cemetery near the storage building. T-Mobile offered to lease 2000 square feet of land to house the tower and its appurtenant equipment, and pay the cemetery \$800/month.

T-Mobile USA is a national provider of wireless voice, messaging, and data services capable of reaching over 268 million Americans where they live, work, and play. The firm is headquartered in Bellevue, Washington, and employs 29,000 people nationwide. It is the mobile communications subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom AG & Co. K.G, which is one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world, with more than 80 million customers worldwide.

In order to protect the best interests of the cemetery, then president Carol Holler engaged the law firm of Holland & Knight to review the proposed lease. After incorporating recommended changes, the Board of Trustees approved the 5-year lease, which was signed in August 2005. The lease renews automatically every 5 years with a 10% increase in rent.

T-Mobile started work on the installation in November 2005 and the tower was placed in operation in February 2006. The site was powered initially by a portable generator until permanent electrical service could be installed. Due to the high cost of installing a dedicated electrical service by PEPCO, T-Mobile approached the Board about tapping into the service supporting the superintendent's house and paying \$150 per month. After review by our in-house electrician, Al Reitz, the Board approved this approach and service was installed during November 2006 from the house to the tower site, all at T-Mobile's cost.

T-Mobile has been a welcome and most reliable tenant. We are fortunate and thankful to receive the additional income from T-Mobile's monthly rent and electrical service to support the ongoing task and expenses of preserving our historic and beautiful Prospect Hill Cemetery.

We appreciate your continued support.

Rudy Becker
President, Board of Trustees

HAVE YOU TRIED PROSPECT HILL'S UPDATED WEBSITE?

Here's an invitation for you folks who are "internet rovers." Let your mouse roam to Prospect Hill Cemetery's newly updated website now in operation and be surprised at what you'll see.

You'll find a map of the area, photos, the history of Prospect Hill Cemetery, biographies, a recent newsletter, an updated list of Civil War military personnel. Check it out: www.geocities.com/prospecthillcem

Our thanks go to Al Wenzel for his work in creating our updated website.

Other facts and figures will be added in the future. Keep informed of your cemetery by checking out its website periodically.

MOWING, TRIMMING, COLLAPSED TREES KEEP OUR SUPERINTENDENT BUSY

Superintendent Connell has been having a busy summer. With off-and-on showers earlier this summer grass cutting and trimming were constant chores.

Connell has trimmed the North Capitol Street slopes and around many head and foot stones; he and Board member Al Reitz have uprighted four tombstones; he's trimmed grass along the sidewalks with a weed wacker, and removed the climbing ivy from the front entrance wall next to the gate.

Two more large, ageless, rotted out trees have split from high winds and collapsed. Luckily little damage was done. Both trees are located high on the left side of the cemetery near the baby burial sites. One tree trunk measured about three feet in diameter at its base. The interior of both trees was rotted throughout. Connell sawed and disposed of most branches and arranged for the disposal of the large trunks.

Another dead tree near the chapel circle in the rear of the cemetery is also about to fall. Connell says he'll cut off branches as they die to prevent them from causing damage when the tree finally splits and falls.

Several other trees must be cared for before they cause additional problems. Remember, many were planted in the 1800s, some existed before that.

VETERANS HONORED WITH FLAGS ON MEMORIAL DAY

The day before Memorial Day (May 28) Superintendent Connell and board member Al Reitz placed more than 100 American flags on graves of known veterans of military service buried at Prospect Hill. Many placements were requested by lot owners.

The flags are the same type as those placed in national cemeteries. They were purchased from the American Legion. Prospect Hill was a most impressive sight for our Memorial Day visitors. The flags remained on the graves until after July 4.

Many of the decorated graves are of Civil War veterans. Their small, curved-top government issue gravestones reveal only the names, ranks and companies they served with. Over the years, many of the stones have sunk into the earth and the inscriptions hardly legible. Historian Crabill, who is currently at work identifying Civil War veterans buried at Prospect Hill, tells us that only half (110 out of about 200) of these men have Civil War gravestones.

THREE CREMATION BURIALS PERFORMED IN JUNE

Herbert and Henrietta Wheeler spent their last days in St. Petersburg, Florida, with their son Donald. After they died they were cremated and buried in a Florida cemetery.

Recently, son Donald thought it more appropriate to return their ashes to Prospect Hill among sites of other family members. So he purchased a plot near them and had his parents' ashes reinterred at Prospect Hill on June 1, 2007.

Another recent burial at Prospect Hill was that of Ernest T. Eschinger, Jr. He was also cremated and his ashes interred in his family plot on June 21.

HELP BEAUTIFY A “BARE SPOT” BY PURCHASING PERENNIAL PLANTS

Superintendent Connell mentioned to the board members at a recent meeting that something should be done about a “bare spot” in the cemetery. It is up near the T-Mobile tower and the fence separating Prospect Hill and Glenwood cemeteries.

Because roots of several large trees in that area prevent graves from being dug, and shade and leaves make grass difficult to grow, he suggested we fill the area with perennial plants and shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons to add to the beauty of the cemetery.

Your Board of Trustees thought this a splendid idea and suggested you, the lot owners, participate in this beautification project by individually purchasing these plants for \$25 (azaleas) and \$40 (rhododendrons) as memorial gifts. Connell will purchase the perennials and plant them.

We hope you will join in on this exceptional project. To do so, please fill out the order form on page 5.

GARDEN CLUB BEAUTIFIES CHAPEL CIRCLE AGAIN

For the third straight year Christine Hambach and her Goddard Garden Club of Lanham, Maryland, have chosen as their special project to clean up, weed and beautify the middle of the circle at the top of the cemetery once occupied by our beautiful little chapel.

A special dedication plaque stands in the middle of this chapel circle. It is surrounded by colorful flowers and plants donated and planted by members of the club.

Mrs. Hambach, president of the club and a member of the Saengerbund German choir, returns periodically to the circle to keep it weeded and looking nice.

Our heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Hambach and her club members for their continual interest and kind gesture in helping make Prospect Hill a showplace cemetery in the Nation’s Capital.

PROSPECT HILL BURIAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE WITHOUT CHARGE

Much information contained in cemetery records about those buried at Prospect Hill is now available without charge. If you have questions about those interred here, please contact Jean Crabill at 513-895-0205 or jbcraill@aol.com.

But if you want to know more about our cemetery’s history and some of the families buried here, two books by Ms. Crabill are available: “The Immigrants and Their Cemetery: The Story of Prospect Hill” is priced at \$30, and “Families of Prospect Hill,” consisting of biographical sketches and photos, cost \$20 (reduced price).

Crabill and board treasurer Carol Holler collaborated to write the latest book, “Prospect Hill Cemetery Adult Burial List.” It details adult burials of persons 14 years of age or older, giving to the extent of our knowledge age, birth place and death place with dates, etc. The price is \$35.

By the end of the year we hope to have a listing of children buried at Prospect Hill.

For those wishing to have books mailed to them, there is an additional fee of \$5 each to cover the cost of mailing.

LET’S HEAR FROM YOU

Have any ideas or suggestions (or complaints) concerning the upkeep, expenses, fund raising or beautification of our cemetery? We’d like to hear from you. Write us at the cemetery’s address or e-mail us at rbecker2004@yahoo.com. All messages will be considered. Some worthwhile ones may be published and answered in our newsletter. Donations are always welcome!

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

Your gifts are very important to the operation of the cemetery. Each donation, no matter how large or small, makes a difference. We will work to keep expenses down, and with your help we'll continue to have a beautiful historic cemetery. One of the nicest things you can give to your ancestors is a donation to Prospect Hill Cemetery for the maintenance and upkeep of their final resting place. Thank you for your love and concern.

My donation for the maintenance and operation of the cemetery \$ _____

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* (\$20 plus \$5 postage each) \$ _____

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

Plants donation:

Number of plants

_____ azaleas (\$25) \$ _____

_____ rhododendruns (\$40) \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Please pay for your books and plants with a separate check (they are not tax deductible). Please make all checks payable to Prospect Hill Cemetery, and mail this full sheet with your donation or order 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.