



# Cornerstones

A Newsletter From Oak Grove Cemetery

Fall ♦ 2003 ♦ Vol 2 ♦ No. 3



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## New laser technology enhances images on memorial stones

If you haven't strolled in and around cemeteries in La Crosse lately, you may be in for a surprise. More than a few visitors are awestruck the first time they witness the astonishingly realistic images of the deceased on memorials.

Credit increasingly sophisticated laser technology. Because of it, photos of loved ones can be reproduced on monuments in almost carbon-copy detail. Just a few years ago, that was impossible.

Smiles. Twinkling eyes. These and other distinguishing characteristics of the departed are faithfully reproduced on the polished black granite. Lasers can easily etch 200 lines per inch on the durable stone, offering an image similar in quality to good black-and-white newspaper photographs.

The technology also produces lettering about twice as tiny as that allowed by sandblasting, the carving technique popular during the last half century. Many take advantage of this capability by literally etching in stone far more information than just the date of birth and



death and a roster of family members; some feature a brief story of the loved one, including occupation, hobbies, passions and favorite sayings. Some also reproduce poems and Bible verses. Adding a stylish appeal, the wording can be positioned along vertical or diagonal lines or even multi-curved shapes.

"It's almost to the point where you're really only limited by your imagination, as far as what this laser technology allows you to do," says Glenda Lee, sales counselor at Oak Grove Cemetery. Glenda is an authorized sales representative for Sunburst Memorials, a company that fashions distinctive memorials at its St. Cloud, Minn. manufacturing operation.

Glenda says customers can choose from among 40 standardized laser-etched scenes. The more popular renderings from Sunburst depict wildlife, farm, fishing, hunting and golfing scenes, and religious icons like crosses and praying hands. Some memorials even display graphics or logos of the deceased's company and occupation and even favorite sports team.

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## Message from Val

*Executive Director*

I have some exciting news - Oak Grove Cemetery is sponsoring a photo contest - of photos taken in the cemetery.

Why a photo contest? As you may know, we are opening our first new area of the cemetery in many years, and wanted a way to kick off the new section and celebrate our history at the same time. We thought a photo contest would highlight the history and beauty of our grounds.

The new area is called "The Meadow at Oak Grove Cemetery" and includes space for 600 in ground burials. We needed this new space so that large families could be buried together. Although there is plenty of room throughout the cemetery, we did not have the kind of space required for monuments. The Meadow will allow for monuments, which is a very nice feature for a large family plot.

The deadline for photo entries is December 1, 2004. Professional photographers will judge the entries. Winners will be announced during the annual "A Light To Remember" event at the cemetery and winning entries will be posted on Oak Grove's web site. First place will receive \$100, second place \$50 and third place \$25.

A complete list of rules and instructions can be found on our web site at [www.oakgrovecemetery.com](http://www.oakgrovecemetery.com). For more information, call us at (608) 782-6956.

*Val*  
**Val Reinke**  
*Executive Director*

## Meet your local Funeral Directors

**Editor's note: Oak Grove Cemetery works closely with area funeral directors to assist families making final plans. We thought it would be helpful to introduce our readers to some of our colleagues, and will feature area funeral directors in the next several issues of this newsletter. The first story features Steve and Scott Kish of Schumacher-Kish.**



**Steve & Scott Kish**

### **What's the history of your funeral home?**

**Steve:** Schumacher Funeral Home was established in the late 1940s by Ray Schumacher, and later purchased by our father, Don Kish, in 1983. The name change to Schumacher-Kish Funeral Home came in 1979. Following our father's death in 1986, Scott and I purchased the funeral home. We currently have three licensed staff members working with us. We have three locations - La Crosse, Onalaska and La Crescent.

### **What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in your field since you started?**

**Scott:** I think one of the biggest changes I have seen is the move away from what we always thought of as a "traditional" funeral. We as funeral directors have to learn that what we think the family wants or needs isn't necessarily what the family wants or needs. Funeral directors today have to learn to combine the customs and traditions of our parents and grandparents with the wishes of their children and grandchildren.

**Steve:** The biggest change in funeral service that I see right now is that we are dealing with a much more knowledgeable and better informed client family. As funeral directors, we have to be able to provide the families we serve with many more product and service options so that they can select the merchandise and service that suits them best.

### **What's your 'philosophy' about how to help families get through the death of a loved one?**

**Scott:** The best way for me to help families is to provide the best service I can, not just at the time of the funeral, but to be available to families after the funeral to help them deal with their loss and the many questions that arise.

**Steve:** The best way I can assist a family in dealing with the death of a loved one is to provide the most meaningful funeral or memorial ceremony I can for that family. That

means sitting down with that family and listening to their needs, then doing everything I can to meet those needs.

### **Do many people plan ahead, that is, work with you to set up their arrangements before they need your services? What can you tell us about that?**

**Steve:** We assist people with pre-planning almost every day. Some people choose to simply call and ask questions, while others make an appointment to discuss their funeral plans in person. Some people only wish to get a general idea of funeral costs and what is involved in arranging a funeral, while others want to pre-plan every last detail of their funeral.

In addition to pre-planning their funeral, some people wish to also pre-pay their funeral. In most instances, pre-paying is done to meet Medical Assistance eligibility requirements, since pre-funded funeral agreements are excluded assets under Medical Assistance.

### **What are the advantages to doing this?**

**Steve:** The main advantage of pre-planning and pre-paying is having the peace of mind that your wishes will be carried out and that the funds to pay for your funeral will be available when needed.

### **What, if any, are the disadvantages?**

**Steve:** I don't feel that there are any disadvantages to pre-paying your funeral, however, you should have answers to some basic questions before doing so, such as:

- ◆ If the funeral home goes out of business, or if I move away, are the funds still available for my use?
- ◆ Are all of the funds I hand over to the funeral director set aside for my eventual use? Wisconsin has a 100% trusting rule, where all the funds have to be set aside in a trust. Some states do not have such a rule.
- ◆ Where is my money kept until it is needed? How is it invested and is it in a secure investment vehicle, such as a bank account insured by the FDIC?
- ◆ If I choose to dissolve my pre-funded funeral agreement, will I receive all of my money back, or will the funeral home or some other entity retain some of my money as a penalty?
- ◆ Is there any inflation protection or cost guarantees included in my pre-funded funeral agreement?

### **What's one thing you wish everyone would know about planning a funeral?**

**Steve:** The one thing I wish everyone understood about pre-need funeral arrangements, is that pre-planning and pre-funding are two separate aspects of pre-arranging. Pre-planning does not mean you must pre-pay.

**Scott:** Probably the main thing I always tell families is that pre-planning and pre-paying are two completely different things. Pre-planning is something everyone should think about and is usually a simple process for the family to complete.

# term

Of The Issue:

## Inter (in'tur) v.

**Verb meaning to place in a grave or tomb.**  
**Synonyms: bury, entomb, inhume, lay to rest**

Memorials, continued from page 1

"I suspect we're just seeing the beginning of more personalized monuments," says Glenda. "The laser technology is a big reason we're able to offer these customized memorials."

Only a small percentage of U.S. memorial manufacturers use laser technology equipment, which can easily cost \$100,000 and requires specially trained personnel. A computer-controlled conveyor and jacks work in tandem with a precisely guided, high-wattage laser beam to remove the polish from black-colored monuments, exposing a light-gray undersurface. A white-ink coating is then applied to the indentation, making an image or lettering stand out.



For illustrations of personalized, laser-etched monuments, check the Sunburst Memorials web site at [www.sunburstmemorials.com](http://www.sunburstmemorials.com). Glenda also will provide more information at (608) 782-6956.



Glenda Lee

## Welcome Glenda!

Oak Grove Cemetery is pleased to announce the addition of Glenda Lee as sales counselor. Glenda has an extensive background in business management and sales. In her most recent role, she helped customers with insurance and estate issues.

In her new position, Glenda will help individuals and families make plans for their cremation or burial. She can help with monument or marker selection and mausoleum space or gravesite selection, and will assist customers with advanced planning for these services.

Glenda will also be available to speak to community groups on history of the cemetery, pre-arrangement issues/estate planning, and cremation. She can be reached at (608) 782-6956

Glenda lives in La Crosse and is a member of the DaCapo Concert Band.



## Please Send Me:

- Oak Grove Cemetery's Planning Guide
- General information about Oak Grove Cemetery
- A 2003 price list for Oak Grove Cemetery
- Information about direct cremation
- Oak Grove's self-guided walking tour brochure

Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve our services or do you have any concerns that you feel need to be addressed? Please indicate these in the space below:

\_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please have someone at Oak Grove Cemetery call me regarding pre-arrangement counseling or other questions related to the cemetery.

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Oak Grove Cemetery, 1407 La Crosse Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601







## Oak Grove Cemetery News Briefs

### Successful Silent City

In mid-September, Oak Grove again partnered with the La Crosse County Historical Society for the Silent City tour. This is a fun event where actors portray famous people buried in the cemetery. More than 100 school kids and 150 adults participated.



*Peggy & Ed Warner as Louisa & Harmon Miller*

*Kelly Krieg-Sigman & Michael Sigman as Dr. Mary Houck & Dr. Oscar Houck*



### Holiday wreaths - last call

Have you ordered your holiday wreath yet? There's still time - call us today.

### A Light to Remember is December 14

Oak Grove Cemetery will again help people remember their loved ones in a special holiday event. "A Light to Remember" will be held Sunday, December 14 from 3 to 7:30 p.m. This is your opportunity to create an ornament for their loved one, hang it on a Christmas tree, and participate in a non-denominational service. Because of the popularity of this event, we will hold two services, at 3:30 and 5:30.

*Please join us!*

### Planning guide available

Let Oak Grove Cemetery help you organize your important information and articulate your preferences for all kinds of end-of-life issues. The **Oak Grove Planning Guide** is offered free of charge to our readers. Remember, pre-planning is a gift you give to your loved ones. By making the necessary arrangements, gathering your documents and stating your wishes and preferences, you can help ease the burden your loved ones experience when you die. To receive your own copy of the planning guide, please fill out the coupon on page 3.

### Need a speaker?

Does your organization need a speaker? Let Oak Grove help! We can give talks on the history of the cemetery, pre-arrangement issues/estate planning, and cremation. Give us a call at (608) 782-6956.

### Our Mission:

*Oak Grove Cemetery exists to provide a beautiful and serene final resting place. We will provide comprehensive services for clients in an environment of trust, compassion and respect. The cemetery recognizes its importance as a historical resource, and is committed to enhancing public knowledge of that history.*