



# Cornerstones

A Newsletter From Oak Grove Cemetery

Winter ♦ 2004 ♦ Vol. 3 ♦ No. 3



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Val Reinke

## Letter from Val Executive Director

### Dedicating a Wall and remembering a friend on Veteran's Day

As you may know, Oak Grove Cemetery has recently completed the Wall of Honor for Veterans in our Garden Mausoleum. This special section is a final resting place for veterans and their families — a place that honors the contribution that they have made to our country. The Wall of Honor includes niches, for people choosing cremation, and crypts for people who prefer a full body interment. **The Wall will be formally dedicated on Veteran's Day this year at 11 a.m., and everyone is invited.**

This ceremony will be especially meaningful to those of us at Oak Grove Cemetery Association, as we will also be celebrating the life of someone close to us. A long-time trustee, Louis Robinson was instrumental in getting the concept of the Wall of Honor off the ground. A veteran himself — Louis served in the 14th Armored Division, Battery B of the 501st Artillery in WWII — he not only supported this project on the board level, he went above and beyond the call of duty. Louis donated the flagpole and lighting so that we can fly the American flag next to the Wall.

On August 13, Louis died at his home. On November 11, we will not only dedicate the Wall of Honor, but also will honor Louis and his contributions to Oak Grove.

I have so many fond memories of Louis. I appreciated his:

- ♦ Dedication to the cemetery, which started early. As a young man he watered the flowers here.
- ♦ Professional advice — he was very helpful in sharing his knowledge of insurance with me.
- ♦ Service as a board member — he was able to ask tough questions and make hard decisions.

- ♦ Love for his family — It was always such a pleasure to hear him talk about his grandchildren and great grandchildren, who gave him great enjoyment.

**I asked some of my colleagues to share their memories about Louis. Here's what they said:**

*"Louis was the person who asked me to be on the board. He said that I would be the first board member that was not a native of La Crosse. He said he would stand behind in all that the board wanted to do...and he did!"*

~ Jerry Miller, Trustee

*"I will always remember the many times he stopped in just to have a cup of coffee and 'harass' the staff. If it was a bad day, he made it better, just by walking in the door."*

~ Glenda Lee, Sales Counselor

*"Louis was one of the first board members that I met after I started working here. He was sincerely very interested in finding out about my previous business background and my personal history. He definitely made me feel very welcome. He always displayed a genuine interest in the success of the cemetery and its operations. I always enjoyed the times he would come in the office for a cup of coffee and some conversation. He is truly missed."*

~John Stuber, Accounting Clerk

Yes, he will be missed. But the flag flying next to the Wall of Honor is a fitting tribute, and a constant reminder, of a very special person.

*Val*

Valerie Reinke  
Executive Director

## Wall of Honor for Veterans



**Dedication Ceremony  
Veteran's Day**

**November 11, 2004 at 11 a.m.**

**Oak Grove Cemetery  
Garden Mausoleum**

**Everyone is welcome!**

## Meet Your Local Funeral Director

*Editor's note: Oak Grove Cemetery works closely with area funeral directors to assist families in making final plans. We thought it would be helpful to introduce our readers to some of our colleagues.*

This issue features Darrell Dickinson of Dickinson Family Funeral Homes in La Crosse, Onalaska and Holmen.

### **How long have you been a funeral director?**

I have been a funeral director for 32 years. Each time I make funeral arrangements with a family, I am reminded of a quote from William Gladstone, the former Prime Minister of Britain, who said, "Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure exactly the sympathies of its people, the respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

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

My professional world certainly has changed over the last three decades. Today families are more involved in making decisions regarding funeral arrangements. They have several more options to personalize the experience. Some people make plans for their own funerals and select their casket, vault, place of service, music, pallbearers — and pay in advance for their own final expenses.

As a funeral director, I work to offer the options that people are looking for. Every year, more people choose cremation, and we offer an onsite crematorium. Cremation

means that there are many other choices as to how the service takes place. For example, the family may still want to have an open casket visitation at night, and request to bury the cremated remains the following morning.

Another change is how families today are more spread out. Loved ones may need to travel across the country — or across the world — to attend a funeral. This means that funeral services may be delayed for a week or longer.

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

Dickinson Family Funeral Homes provides a pastoral care service in order to be of greater assistance of our families. Fran Browning, our Pastoral Care Coordinator, follows up with our families to be sure all their questions are answered, most importantly, to be a good listener.

The numbers of people we serve who are not affiliated with a church have increased. We are often asked to provide meaningful services to non-traditional families. And it is our responsibility to provide those services. But, as much as some things may have changed, I am constantly reminded by the families I serve of the importance of closure, to allow the beginning of the grief process. Over the years I am even more convinced at the importance of having a visitation and funeral service. The healing power of people gathering to grieve together has remained constant. The need to formally recognize the importance of life and the significance of death has remained throughout the ages.

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### **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.*

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## Superintendent's Corner

### **Winter Decorations**

Families occasionally ask me for clarification of the rules at Oak Grove for winter decorations, so I'd like to take this opportunity to let everyone know what the rules and regulations state.

Winter decorations include any Christmas items, including poinsettias, anything on an easel, shepherd's hooks, or anything on the ground. Winter decor may be tied to a monument, attached to a vase stand or easel from November 1 until April 1.

After April 1, in order for us to begin our spring maintenance of the grounds, we need to remove any winter decorations that remain. April is when the grounds crew starts their mowing cycle. These items can make



**Adam Casper  
Superintendent**

mowing difficult and could cause injury to the grounds crew and machinery. For this reason, I urge families to retrieve any winter décor items you want to keep before April 1st.

If you have any questions regarding this, or any other rules, please feel free to call me at (608) 782-6956 ext 13.

## Kerck Kelsey Visit

# Great-great-grandson of Cadwallader C. Washburn visits Oak Grove



**Kerck Kelsey**

**K**erck Kelsey, the great-great-grandson of Cadwallader C. Washburn, was in La Crosse in June to visit the Washburn Monument in Oak Grove Cemetery and deliver a lecture at the Pump House and the Island Girl. Val Reinke, executive director of the cemetery, was able to meet Kelsey and give him a tour of the cemetery. "It was such a delight meeting a relative of Washburn's," she said. "He was very interested in seeing where his great-great-grandfather was buried and memorialized. I think he really enjoyed his time in La Crosse."

Cadwallader C. Washburn is one of La Crosse's most famous — and most colorful — sons. Among other things, he:

- ♦ Was a distinguished resident of La Crosse
- ♦ Made his fortune and timber, minerals and milling
- ♦ Formed a cavalry regiment in the Civil War and rose to rank of Major General
- ♦ Founded Gold Medal Flour company, which became General Mills
- ♦ Served as congressman from Wisconsin, 1855-1861 and 1867-1871
- ♦ Was governor of Wisconsin, 1872-1874

Washburn is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, where he is memorialized with the impressive 22-ton, 45-foot tall granite obelisk monument.

Kerck Kelsey graduated from Princeton University in 1955. After military service, his career took many paths; from selling schoolbooks, to bank trust officer and trainer, to small business owner. At the age of 69, Kelsey earned a master's degree in history from Harvard. His thesis was a biography of Cadwallader's nephew - Israel Washburn, Jr.



*A very visible tribute, the Washburn Monument stands an impressive 45 feet tall and weighs 22 tons.*

## Please Send Me:

- General information about Oak Grove Cemetery
- A 2004 price list for Oak Grove Cemetery
- Oak Grove Planning Guide     Wall of Honor for Veterans information

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**



Trust ♦ Compassion ♦ Respect





# Oak Grove Cemetery New briefs

### Thank you, Ron!

Oak Grove Cemetery thanks Ron Frey for his donation of trees. The trees have planted throughout the cemetery.

### Dedication of Veterans Area

You are cordially invited  
Dedication Ceremony  
Wall of Honor for Veterans  
Veteran's Day  
Thursday, November 11, 2004, 11:00 a.m.  
Oak Grove Cemetery Garden Mausoleum

Live music by the  
Grumpy Old Men

Lunch following  
dedication

Open house  
until 2 p.m.



### A Light to Remember is December 12

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 12. This is your opportunity to create an ornament for your 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!

### Thank you to our friends at the La Crosse County Historical Society!

Oak Grove Cemetery thanks the Society for the book, *A History of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1841-1900*. The book is displayed on our coffee table in the lobby.

### Wreath Reminder

Will you be ordering a wreath for a loved one's grave this year? Just a reminder — orders are due November 9.

## Silent City 2004

The annual Discover the Silent City event was held Saturday, September 18. The event features local actors portraying residents from the city's past — at the actual site of where that person is interred. Approximately 200 people attended and enjoyed the event, which Oak Grove co-sponsors with the La Crosse County Historical Society. The Thursday before the public event, middle school children from the area experienced the Silent City.



Larry Green portrays Jason Eastman at the 2004 Silent City event.



Above: Robert Gaumer and Jeannie Pope portray Mills and Lillie Tourtellotte.



Right: James Dewar and Sue Hoffman portray Giles and Jennie Montague.



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