

Austin Chronicle

Date Received: Tue., Oct. 18, 11:59AM

'BEST OF' ALLOWS WRITE-IN VOTES

Dear Editor,

While not making either the Critics Picks or Readers Poll in the Architecture & Lodging section of "Best of Austin" [Oct. 14], I would like to offer a suggestion for next year. It is what is now used as an office area at Oakwood Cemetery. Up until two months ago this structure was as anonymous and forgotten as some of the grave sites at Oakwood. Through the work of Save Austin's Cemeteries association, the building's past history is being restored. Research through microfilm of Austin newspapers has revealed that what was then called a mortuary chapel was built in 1914. It was financed through a joint venture of the city and the Austin Cemetery Association, which was primarily a women's organization. At a cost of \$5,000, it was opened with much pride in November of that same year. Among its multiple uses and functions: a city sexton office, storage facilities, it was a public chapel, and several holding faults for temporary interment. Until rediscovered by Save Austin's Cemeteries, even the name of the architect had become lost to time. He was Charles H. Page, still considered one of the pre-eminent architects in Texas history. Mr. Page donated the plans to the Cemetery Association of Austin and agreed to superintend the construction for free. As with much of Oakwood Cemetery, the building is in much need of repair. It is the hopes of SAC to get historic designation for the site and apply for grants for restoration. This miniature jewel box building deserves to be restored to the recognition of the community. It is hoped to some day be used as a visitors center and focal point for the restoration and maintenance of the rest of Oakwood Cemetery.

Danny Camacho