

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

WINTER 2010 E-NEWSLETTER

News Items

October Tour Highlights

Fall was a busy time for tours at our historic City cemeteries. On Friday October 29th, SAC and the Texas Historical Commission teamed up to host a tour of Plummers Cemetery and Oakwood Cemetery for the National Trust for Historic Preservation annual conference. Representing communities from around the country, the twelve attendees learned about SAC's mapping and outreach efforts at Plummers, and about the Chapel restoration and public education efforts at Oakwood.

The following day, Oakwood Cemetery was the venue for SAC's fourth annual "Murder, Mayhem and Misadventure" tour. Twelve spooky stories were used to highlight Section 3 (the northwest corner) of the cemetery. This also marks our inaugural year of teaming with drama students from Austin High School and McCallum Academy. The students did a fantastic job of developing their own dramatic interpretation of the provided historical narratives. We look forward to improving and expanding upon this partnership in future years!

On November 11th, the Texas Art Educators Association held an event at Oakwood Cemetery. SAC volunteer Sally Victor gave a presentation on cemetery symbolism, which was followed by a sketch session in the cemetery. Leslie is working with the TAEA event coordinator to explore the possibility of compiling the teachers' sketches for publication. Around the last turn and down the final stretch... the draft report was recently reviewed by the Austin Parks & Recreation Department (PARD) and sent back for minor clarification on some points. The report is heavy with statistics about current market trends related to cemetery management. The director of the study, Dr. Tom Longoria, categorizes the Austin city cemeteries in terms of their total acreage, number of employees, and employee salaries then compares these factors to other similar cemetery markets. Austin Memorial & Burial Information Society (AMBIS) data was used to compare COA pricing and services. Most notably, Dr. Longoria has recommended that the City follow the lead of San Marcos and New Braunfels and create a cemetery commission which will allow citizens a voice in the management process. The study also points out the need for a computerized cemetery information management system.

Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Restoration

At the request of the City's historic preservation officer, Steve Sadowsky, SAC's president Leslie Wolfenden made a presentation to the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission on September 27 about our Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Restoration Project. This presentation was to let the commissioners know that

SAC is working on the chapel project, so that when SAC is ready to file for approval permits the council already knows about the project. This presentation followed meetings with Mayor Leffingwell (9/14) and City Preservation Officer Steve Sadowsky (9/20). All of these entities are on board with the project and have offered to assist as they can.

Announcements

SAC Calendars are perfect for last-minute gift giving! Check out our website for these and other gift ideas.

Speaking of calendars . . . be sure to mark yours with SAC's 2011 events!

12/4/10 Photo-documentation session at Oakwood Cemetery 1:00

1/8/11 Guest speaker Dale Flatt on Mapping Plummers Cemetery at Carver Library 1:00

2/5/11 Photo-documentation session at Oakwood Cemetery 1:00

3/5/11 Austin Parks Foundation It's My Park Day

4/2/11 Texas Historical Commission annual conference cemetery event at Oakwood Cemetery

4/9/11 Guest speaker Phoebe Allen at Oakwood Cemetery

5/7/11 Photo-documentation session at Oakwood Cemetery 1:00

7/9/11 Guest speaker Phil Baum on Jewish death and burial customs at Austin History Center 1:00

10/8/11 SAC elections and volunteer appreciation