

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Fall 2012 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

Beth Pickett, President
Kay Boyd, Vice President
Leslie Wolfenden, Secretary
Barbara Surles, Treasurer
Danny Camacho
Dale Flatt
Megan Spencer
Bob Ward

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6th Annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Halloween Walking Tours by Beth Pickett

Nearly 400 seekers of grisly tales for Halloween, as well as tragic stories in Austin's early history, converged on Oakwood Cemetery for our 6th annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure tours throughout the day on October 27th. Tours proceeded through the oldest section of the cemetery, stopping at various gravesites, where, as in recent years, costumed actors vividly recounted the stories of those buried at each one. A variety of treats and beverages were available at the chapel. The day was a bit chilly, so it was nice to have some autumn for our Halloween event.

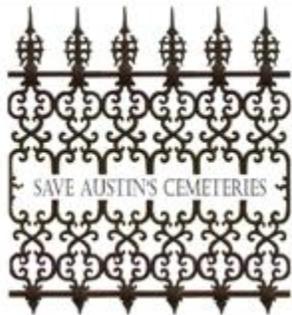
The tours were guided by Dale Flatt, Danny Camacho, Megan Spencer, and Beth Pickett. Visitors comment each year that the tours are better and better, and that's primarily due to the superb performances donated by our actors and scriptwriting provided by Paulette McDougal. This year's cast included:

Hopkins: Kevin McKenzie (a.m.); Austin Covington (p.m.)
Ben Thompson: Dave Sullivan (a.m.); Billy Brookshire (p.m.)
Susanna Dickinson: Mary Baughman (a.m.); Laura Luna (p.m.)
Joseph Hannig: Warren Friedrich
Ms. Olenick: Peggy Schott (a.m.); Madi Ward (p.m.)
Ms. Bell: Rae Peterson

Over 370 people attended this year, fewer than last year's 530; however, in terms of fundraising, we netted \$1,440, our second highest MMM take to date. Proceeds from the event benefit the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel rehabilitation project. We hope this event raises awareness about the chapel project and inspires the public participate.

Big kudos and many thanks to everyone who volunteered or provided food: Alan Wolfenden, Angie Ward, Barbara Surles, Beverly Soucy, Bob Ward, Cathy Brigham, Jan Root, Kathleen Wolfenden, Katie Long, Kay Boyd, Leslie Wolfenden, Loretta Holland, and Sally Victor. MMM competed with a lot of events happening in town that weekend, so we especially appreciate your time.





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3rd Annual Photo Contest and 2013 Calendar by Leslie Wolfenden

Save Austin's Cemeteries held its 3rd annual photo contest in September and received 95 entries. Some 1,450 votes later, the overall winner was Harrison Saunders with his eerie "Gathering Storm" photo. The other top 11 entries were won by Angela Stipe, Stephanie Sharif, Jacquie Wilson, Beth Pickett, W'Mina Myers, and Christina Wilson. The terrific photos have been compiled into the 2013 SAC calendar, now available through the SAC website for just \$17.99 each

(<http://www.sachome.org/shop/store.html>). These make great holiday presents for your family and friends, as well as a treat for yourself! Enjoy 2013 with a beautiful scenic shot each month of Austin's historic cemeteries. Proceeds benefit cemetery preservation projects.



Austin Museum Day by Barbara Surles

The Austin Museum Partnership celebrated its 15th annual Austin Museum Day on Sunday, September 23rd. AMP promotes the day as a free, community-wide rediscovery of Austin Museums. For the 2nd year in a row, Save Austin's Cemeteries joined the day of fun and enjoyed a small but nice turnout of curious visitors to Oakwood Cemetery. SAC held guided tours and answered questions, and the Oakwood Chapel was also open for visitors to see. Several newcomers were excited to return for our MMM tour in October.



Speaker Event: Cemetery Stones by Kay Boyd

Our speaker on Saturday, October 13th was Earle F. McBride, Professor Emeritus, assisted by Fred McDowell, Research Scientist Emeritus, both retired from the Geology Department at the University of Texas. About 25 people attended to hear about the geology and weathering of the headstones in Oakwood Cemetery.

An hour-long tour of the oldest section revealed a variety of materials, all affected differently by weather and biological organisms. By observing cracks and worn inscriptions, we've all noted the effects of water on the headstones, but have you ever wondered what causes the orange color on many of the monuments? Prof. McBride enlightened us with the information that it's orange lichen and that it loves to cling to rough surfaces, such as fine-grained marble and



information that it's orange lichen and that it loves to cling to rough surfaces, such as fine-grained marble and

unpolished granite. And did you know that headstones in Oakwood are made not only of granite, marble, and limestone? They're also made of other rocks, such as diabase (a dark, fine-grained igneous rock), larvikite (an igneous rock of various colors from near Larvik, Norway), and granodiorite, which is similar to granite but is composed of different minerals.

It happened that Prof. McBride, although he appeared to feel fine otherwise, was suffering from laryngitis that day, so Dr. McDowell accompanied him to be his voice. They certainly gave us a new perspective on the history we see in Oakwood—we're grateful that they found a way around Dr. McBride's laryngitis to share their knowledge.

Historic Oakwood Cemetery Book Project by Kay Boyd

We are continuing to gather information on the people, their tombstones and their lives in Austin, as we work to publish our first book titled *HISTORIC OAKWOOD, Austin's First City Cemetery*. The book will focus on the history of Austin through the people buried in Oakwood. There are pioneers who were in Austin before statehood as well as people still alive today whose names can be found around town on streets, parks, and schools. Over 500 photographs have been taken and a list of 385 individuals has been compiled of people of interest. The hard part of the project will now be how to pare this information down to make interesting reading for families and those interested in Oakwood Cemetery. We will keep you up to date on our progress.

Texas Heritage Day: Six Degrees of Connection by Leslie Wolfenden

SAVE THE DATE!! March 23, 2013.

Plans are underway for our second annual Texas Heritage Day event on Saturday, March 23 at Oakwood Cemetery, so mark your calendars! This event showcases central Texas heritage organizations, craftspersons demonstrating their various skills, guest speakers, story tellers, silent auction, music, walking tours, and more.

If you are interested in helping to make this event happen by being a sponsor or a volunteer, please contact info@sachome.org. If your organization is interested in participating as an exhibitor or demonstrator, contact as the same email address.



More details to come in the upcoming months. Keep an eye out for our emails and our FaceBook page updates.

2013 Membership Drive by Leslie Wolfenden

This summer we altered our membership year to begin in January rather than May to make it easier to folks to remember when our membership year starts. So starting off this January for our new membership year, we have added a few new levels of membership, including Student (with copy of ID \$25), Family (\$50), and Seniors (over 60 years of age \$25), in addition to our Regular (\$35) and Lifetime (\$500) membership levels. As we ramp up the 2013 Membership Drive, we encourage you to renew if you're already an SAC member or join Save Austin's Cemeteries. With your support, Save Austin's Cemeteries carries out the projects that help preserve the historic cemeteries in Austin through documentation and education, and promoting historic cemeteries of Austin as cultural resources.

With Member support during 2012, Save Austin's Cemeteries has actively supported the following programs, among others:

- **Cemetery Preservation:** SAC has teamed with the City of Austin's Parks & Recreation Department and were awarded a Certified Local Government grant for the repair of the roof on the small building at Oakwood Cemetery Annex. SAC has pledged \$5,055 toward the project. PARD is wrapping up the bureaucratic red tape and the work should begin in the new year. Many thanks to COA staff Kim McKnight and Alyson McGee for walking this project through the logistics!
- **Public Education:** Every year, SAC hosts several walking tours that educate the public about Austin's past citizens and cemetery preservation, incorporate our youth by having them actively participate as storytellers, and raise money for cemetery projects. In March 2012, SAC added a Texas Heritage Day event at Oakwood Cemetery, featuring multiple non-profit history groups, guest speakers, walking tours, craft demonstrations, storytelling, and more to raise awareness of Austin and Texas history.
- **Advocacy for Local Cemetery Issues:** SAC raises public awareness of Austin's historic cemeteries by attending City meetings relating to cemetery issues, helping other local cemetery groups get started with their own cemetery programs, giving presentations to other organizations about historic cemeteries, keeping the City aware of issues – such as vandalism or storm damage, and letting its members know about the latest cemetery events.
- **Guest Speaker Series:** SAC invites expert speakers to present at SAC's quarterly meetings. Past speakers have talked about cemetery geology, local cemetery histories, symbolism, Jewish burial customs, notable Texans, and ethnic heritage, to name a few.

Please help us continue to serve the preservation needs of Austin's historic cemeteries. Let's work together to preserve these important cultural resources. Go to the SAC website for more details and to sign up as a member. <http://www.sachome.org/join/join.html>

City of Austin Cemetery Operations Update by Dale Flatt

After several years of public meetings with concerned citizens wanting to address items not covered within the current cemetery operations contract, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) and InterCare Corporation (ICC) could not find middle ground within the funds available for operations, so it was determined to end the current contract and start from scratch, so as of April 1, 2013, the current contract will end.

The City of Austin is currently putting together Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and are looking to break the operations responsibilities into three separate contracts: administrative and office duties, gravesite services, and cemetery grounds maintenance. If the City cannot find outside contractors to assume the outlined duties within the time frame and price range, then the City of Austin will need to acquire equipment and personnel in order to provide continued cemetery services. The proposed changes should be available for public review and input soon, so keep an eye out for an update in your emails or visit the City of Austin website (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/cemeteries>).

Networking in Arkansas by Dale Flatt

SAC board members Danny Camacho and Dale Flatt went to Little Rock, AR, on November 17 to participate in a cemetery workshop hosted by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Danny and Dale were able to network with others within the preservation community and pass along their combined knowledge and experience as well as gather some great tips and common hurdles that other cities and independent cemeteries are facing. This information and materials will be passed along to PARD and other SAC board members. If on your travels, you visit a cemetery and discover something new, please share your experience and photos.

Submit an Article to the SAC E-newsletter

If you would like to submit an article to the SAC e-newsletter, please send your article or idea to info@sachome.org.

Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events!

Dec. 1	Photo Documentation Session Oakwood Cemetery 1:00
Jan. 5	Photo Documentation Session Oakwood Cemetery 1:00
Jan. 12	Guest Speaker Session: Ralph Yznaga on Living Witness: Historic Trees of Texas Yarbrough Public Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 10:30 a.m.
Jan. 23	Special Meeting for proposed bylaw changes and Appreciation Party TBA
Feb. 2	Photo Documentation Session Oakwood Cemetery 1:00
March 23	Photo Documentation Session Oakwood Cemetery 1:00
March 23	Texas Heritage Day: Six Degrees of Connection Oakwood Cemetery

If you would like to stop receiving SAC emails, or if you have updated contact information, please send an email to info@sachome.org.