

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Winter 2013 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

Beth Pickett, President
Kay Boyd, Vice President
Leslie Wolfenden, Secretary
Barbara Surlles, Treasurer
Danny Camacho
Dale Flatt
Megan Spencer
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Guest Speaker: Living Witness: Historic Trees of Texas by Megan Spencer

Who doesn't love a beautiful old tree? But what if that tree had a specific story to tell of early life in Texas? I would consider such a tree a national monument. On January 12 at Yarbrough Library, a packed house listened as Ralph Yznaga shared stories of his journey through Texas rediscovering our state through its historic trees.

The idea for his journey began with an old book he found at a garage sale.

Famous Trees of Texas

published by the Texas Forest Service captivated him and he decided to find each tree. He wanted to see if the trees were still standing and how the

environment had changed. Sadly, some of the trees are gone, but the trees that remain provided irresistible stories that Ralph decided to collect and publish in his book, Living Witness: Historic Trees of Texas. The book includes photographs, stories, maps, and driving directions.



Ralph will be a speaker at Oakwood Cemetery's Texas Heritage Day event on Saturday, March 23. You are sure to enjoy learning about these natural wonders. For more information about Ralph's book, you can visit his website: <http://livingwitness.net/>

Historic Oakwood Cemetery Book Project by Kay Boyd

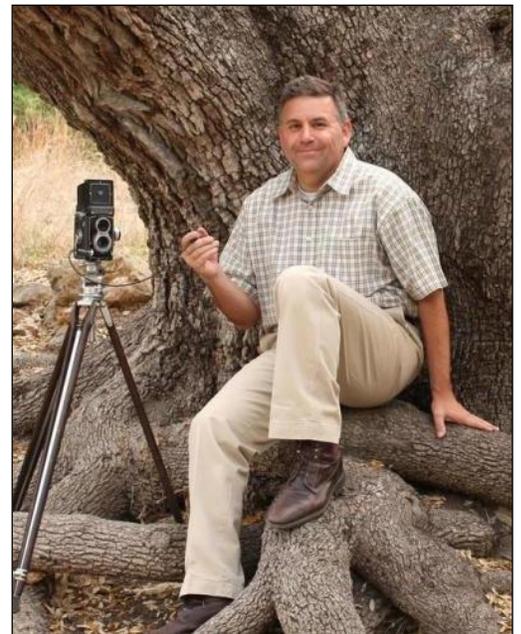
We are continuing to gather information on the people, their tombstones and their lives in Austin, as we work to publish our first book titled *HISTORIC OAKWOOD, Austin's First City Cemetery*. The book will focus on the history of Austin through the people buried in Oakwood. There are pioneers who were 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 is paring 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.

Our speaker sessions are now scheduled with Ed Miller back by popular demand. He will be singing and talking his way across bonnie Scotland and tying that into the immigration of Scots to Texas. We also have author David Bowles set to talk about his extensive knowledge of pioneer Texas and his family history. Rounding out the trio is author Ralph Yznaga to talk about our heritage trees of Texas. Though we just heard him at the last guest speaker session in January, he was so engaging and entertaining, we just had to have him come back for an encore at Heritage Day. Each speaker will be having a book/CD signing session afterwards. These sessions are the only ticketed event at Heritage Day, so go to our website at www.sachome.org to sign up today. Tickets are \$5 each and seating is limited.



In addition to the great lineup of speakers, various craftspeople will be making appearances showcasing their talents in carpentry, blacksmithing, flint knapping, basket weaving, quilting, and lacemaking.

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 us at the same email address.

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

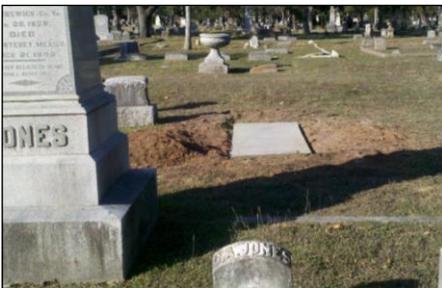


Fannie Harris Tomb Project by Dale Flatt

Miss Fannie Harris was born December 25, 1837. She was laid to rest on January 31, 1867 and a brick box tomb was erected. A box tomb is a rectangular-shaped space that is topped by a large flat ledger stone that is engraved. Several box tombs have been documented at Oakwood Cemetery. Some have suffered damage due to vandalism in past years.

The Fannie Harris box tomb was damaged by a pecan tree that grew next to it, displacing the south wall and the ledger stone. When this pecan tree died during the drought, it placed the stone at even higher risk for damage from falling limbs. SAC contacted descendants to obtain permission to restore the box tomb and the work started last winter.

The stabilization work was carried out by SAC volunteers, InterCare Corporation staff, and the Parks Department. First, the ledger stone and the original brickwork were removed for cleaning and storage. The dead tree was removed and the stump was ground below grade. A concrete slab was poured and an inner wall of cinder block was erected to support the original bricks that form the outer wall. The ledger slab will soon be re-installed. All stages for the work were photo-documented. We all hope that these efforts will preserve Miss Harris's box tomb for the next 146 years.



Bylaw Amendments by Beth Pickett

Some time ago, the board recognized the need for bylaws that reflect the way our organization actually functions now. The bylaws in place for the past several years have served well, but it was time for a major update. Bylaws should be dynamic and change appropriately as the organization grows, and we are happy that we are growing.

Our primary goal was to simplify the bylaws. We also improved the language, added items that seemed necessary and deleted items that seemed unnecessary. We drew from the bylaws of several other organizations. We think we have ended up with bylaws that accurately reflect the current operation of SAC. We admit that a little legalese persists, but it is difficult to remove all of it entirely.

To adopt this new version of the bylaws, the current bylaws required the approval of the membership by a vote, which we held preceding the board meeting on February 9th. We are happy to report that the new bylaws passed with a unanimous vote. Onward and upward!

2013 Membership Drive by Leslie Wolfenden

We are wrapping up the 2013 membership drive, so if you haven't already sent in your dues, please do so. The membership year runs from January to December. Starting this 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. 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, such as the one you just read about above for Fannie Harris.

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>

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!

March 2	It's My Park Day and Volunteer Appreciation Party Time TBA Oakwood Cemetery
March 23	Texas Heritage Day: Six Degrees of Connection 10:00-4:00 Oakwood Cemetery
April 6	Photo-documentation Day 9:00 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.