

## **2011 CEMETERY COMMITTEE REPORT TO NEW YORK QUARTERLY MEETING, July, 2011**

### **ACHIEVEMENT OF 2010 GOALS**

1. A website has been developed and a brochure, "Use of Friends Cemetery in Prospect Park" has been printed and distributed to meetings.
2. An accurate database has been developed.
3. Written confirmation of site reservations and collection of reservation fees have been completed. A total of \$39,500 has been collected over two and a half years.

### **MANAGEMENT AND CARE OF THE CEMETERY PROPERTY**

Most of the maintenance is carried out by the Prospect Park Alliance staff and the sexton, Bob Wilber. Committee members actively oversee their work and develop plans for improvement by meeting with them monthly in the cemetery. In 2011 new trees and shrubs have been planted along the road from the cemetery crypt up to the top of the hill in the Hicksite area. Ten large trees, which were either dead or dying, have been removed. In response to many requests, PPA staff and committee members have identified and are making labels for twenty trees. As a result, visitors will be able to know more about the various species of the trees in the cemetery.

2010-2011 was a year of many severe snow storms, high winds and even a tornado. Fortunately, the cemetery experienced much less damage than Prospect Park in general. Fallen trees have been removed. Some of the larger log pieces are being used as benches. A huge branch fell from the magnificent black oak in the Hicksite area but no gravestones were damaged. There was extensive damage to two different areas of fencing caused by falling trees located outside the fence. It cost \$4775 to repair the fencing. Applications for reimbursement from the NYC Parks Department have been submitted, but not acknowledged.

Four new benches made of oak and iron have been purchased and located around the Hicksite and Orthodox areas. They are of a design called horse hoof and are historically appropriate for a cemetery established in 1849.

The first phase of building a ramp into the Mott area, in order to provide easier accessibility, has been completed. Volunteers moved earth, which was donated by PPA. Winter storms delayed extending the ramp and creating a less steep grade.

A new road is being installed between the cemetery gate and the shed. The Ravine Construction Company re-graded the roadway and installed two strips of charcoal colored concrete, five inches deep, on top of crushed stone. More earth needs to be distributed between the concrete strips, and then grass and wildflowers will be planted. Approximately \$20,000 of the budgeted \$40,000 has been spent. The remaining money will be used to complete the new road and to repair several parts of the road in the upper area of the cemetery.

Ravine Construction Company prepared the road area by removing the existing uneven broken pieces of stone and concrete at no charge, instead of charging the estimated cost of \$10,000.

The Cemetery Committee has instituted a new policy for gravesite plantings and the planting of new trees, and will include it in future publications and on the website.

The policy is as follows:

*In order to avoid maintenance problems and obscuring gravestones, families are encouraged not to plant in their burial sites. Those wishing to plant anything other than ephemeral spring bulbs are asked to consult the Cemetery Committee in advance.*

*Daffodils have done well over the years, however, tulips have usually been eaten by resident creatures.*

*Anyone interested in contributing to the planting of trees throughout the cemetery to begin to replace some for the mature ones expected to be lost over the next decade can contribute to a special tree fund. Some possible choices for new trees are : witch hazel, dogwood and sourwood.*

#### SUPPORTING FAMILIES AT THE TIME OF DEATH

During the past year Cemetery Committee members have responded to seven families who have lost love ones. There has been one full body burial, four burials of ashes and three scatterings of ashes. Committee members and the sexton have supported families through listening and advising, helping with gravesite services and providing information about funeral homes and memorial stones. The follow individuals were buried:

Joseph Levenson, 7/7/10, member of 15<sup>th</sup> Street MM

Karen Donchian, 9/25/10/, non member spouse of member of 15<sup>th</sup> Street MM

Gladys Alesi, 10/21/10, member of Brooklyn MM

Sarah Leuze, 12/9/10, member of Morningside MM

The following individuals had their ashes scattered in the cemetery:

Anne Steinacher, 9/7/10, non member daughter of Florence and William Waldenburg

Dee Dee Eisenberg, 10/17/10, attender at Flushing MM

Melvin Dennis, 5/7/11, attender at 15<sup>th</sup> Street MM

#### WORK DAYS, VISITING DAYS AND HISTORY TOURS

For many years the Cemetery Committee has organized volunteer workdays. During this past year the three Quaker Schools brought tremendous energy and accomplishment to our workdays. 100 people from BFS. 75 from Mary McDowell and 80 from Friends Seminary came to rake leaves, plant bulbs, pick up fallen branches, pull up weeds and build a ramp. Participation by NYQM members has declined, averaging only 5-15 people. The Committee welcomes suggestions from NYQM on how the workdays can be made more attractive to members.

In 2010 the Committee expanded the scope of the spring and fall workdays by adding opportunities for Friends to visit gravesites and giving history tours to the volunteers and to the general public. By adding visiting days in April and November, we no longer have

complaints that the cemetery is inaccessible to families. Arrangements for individual visits can still be made with the sexton.

The history tours have been a great success. We do not advertise the tours, but when people wander by and see the open gate and ask to come in we tell them the times of the tour and invite them to come then. Everyone on the tour signs a release form.

#### RESERVATIONS FOR GRAVESITES

Over the past two and a half years the Cemetery Committee has contacted all individuals with gravesite reservations and requested confirmation and payment for the sites. Fifteen reservations have been released at the request of the people who had held them; forty one other sites were released because of death and burial elsewhere, or because of a lack of response, after receiving three letters from the committee. Several new reservations also have been made. We now have a total of 80 reservations instead of 132. If an individual has a family member already buried in the cemetery, but never responded to our letters, the reservation remains intact, in case the individual decides at a later date to request burial.

#### BUDGET, EXPENSES AND INCOME

The budget for 2011 is \$80,050.

The total expenses for 2010 were \$61,228 out of a budget of \$80,525. \$20,000 was allocated for the new road in both 2010 and 2011.

Salary expenses were higher than usual last year because of many burials and much storm damage, requiring the sexton to work extra hours. Income from reservations and burial as well as contributions was \$19,050. Unsolicited contributions came to \$2,250.

In Friendship,

Mary Doty, Clerk

JoAnne Dally, Recording Clerk

Mary Eberhardt

Elizabeth Gilmore

Betsy Wilson