

## OWL'S HEAD CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Cemetery Committee has been tasked with writing new ordinances that would apply to all of the town's cemeteries, not just the new town cemetery located at the corner of Ash Point Drive and Dublin Road.

Recently all the members of the Cemetery Committee attended a comprehensive four day workshop on cemetery preservation sponsored by the Maine Old Cemetery Association (MOCA) at the Old North Parish Church Cemetery in St. George. The workshop, led by professional gravestone conservator Joe Ferrannini, owner of Grave Stone Matters in New York, taught people how to correctly and safely clean, straighten, reset, and repair gravestones through hands-on experience. Approximately 40 people from all areas of the state, and some from out of state, participated. We were given an overall presentation and some basic instructions regarding cleaning and straightening leaning stones. The rest of the workshop involved hands-on learning while Joe guided each project and demonstrated more advanced techniques. It was intensive and hard work. The Committee also got to meet people from other town cemetery committees, "compare notes", and make valuable contacts with sources that can provide the professional services needed for gravestone repair.

In the future the Cemetery Committee hopes to teach cleaning techniques, but meanwhile, for anyone interested in cleaning their family headstones, a brochure from MOCA is available at the town office. A note of caution: bleach, especially on marble, is the worst thing to use. It will cause yellowing and eat away at the stone causing a condition called "sugaring". So, when in doubt, just use water! It is amazing what a soft brush and plenty of clean water can do.

The Town has established an account for the Cemetery Committee so that tax-deductible donations for gravestone repair and restoration can be received. To donate, please make out a check to "Town of Owl's Head" with a memo or reference to "cemetery restoration".

LD 1662 "An Act to Clarify the Laws Governing the Maintenance of Veterans' Graves" will become state law August 1st. This law sets minimum standards for the care of veteran's graves and expands municipal authority to oversee conditions in ancient burying grounds. It is anticipated a committee comprised of members from Maine Genealogical Society, MOCA, Maine Municipal Association, Maine Veterans Services, and the Maine Cemetery Association will be offering further legislation. In the first step to identifying the veterans in the town's cemeteries, Bill Gay and Kermit Voncannon have started to map Ginn's Point Cemetery.

Terry Morang continues to do a great job keeping the town cemeteries cleaned, mowed, and trimmed. Please know your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kennedy Crane III    William G. Gay    Michael Voncannon*