

OWLS HEAD CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Despite the Covid Pandemic, the Cemetery Committee had a couple of good things happen in the name of two new Committee Members: Jesse Ellis and Lea Carver. Jesse, who by day is a Sweetser Clinician, a Girl Scout Leader of Troup #191, and is the caretaker of her family's cemeteries. Lea's interests are in genealogy and cruising cemeteries with her husband, Dick, and is familiar with, among others, the Find-a-Grave website. Both Jesse and Lea bring enthusiasm, optimism, and fresh outlooks to our Committee.

Back to 2020 Pandemic reality:

- The scheduled restoration of Rose Hill Cemetery was postponed for Covid safety reasons and rescheduled for September 2021.
- Black Locust seedlings took over a good chunk of MacPhail Cemetery and required Bill and Michael to spend a few days cutting them down. Jesse, with her tree knowledge, identified the seedlings for us and killed the stumps.
- During the 2020 spring walkthrough, we noticed a couple of the headstones in Hall Cemetery, that were restored just a few years ago, needed repair. Not surprising, but still disappointing.
- Unfortunately, some trash barrels, placed in the cemeteries for visitor's convenience, were being used to dump personal trash. Those barrels were removed. It only takes a few souls to ruin it for everyone else.
- Various problems arose in the Town (aka Airport) Cemetery that took Bill a considerable amount of time to resolve. Some of these issues were surprising considering that cemetery is the most documented of all the town's cemeteries.
- Questions arose about a burial in Ash Point Cemetery that had us doing some ordinance research. Additionally, there was a question about veterans' headstone standards, which we found the Cemetery Ordinances covered, but it also brought up ordinance changes for the Committee to consider.
- These incidents, and others, made the Committee take another look at the idea of the Town having a Sexton. We presented a proposal to the Selectmen in mid-March and were tasked with finding one. Anyone interested in being a Sexton? Please contact the Town Office.
- Last, but not least, the Committee found out this fall that, because of a budget error, we did not receive last year's annual budget of \$1,500, however, we spent as if we did! Unfortunately, that \$1,800+ spending spree came out of our Capital Reserve Account, which was meant only for cemetery restoration. Additionally, in the last few years, the Selectmen have made the Committee responsible for tree maintenance expenses which have taken up most of our annual budget, leaving the Committee little, if any, money for projects, etc.

We are hoping that 2021 will be a better year in every way. As always, a special thank you to Terry Morang for keeping our cemeteries looking so nice and for those, like Steve Cook, Bobbi Gay, Dick Carver, and others, who unselfishly volunteer their time to help.

Respectfully submitted,

William Gay Michael Voncannon Walter Guptill Jessie Ellis Lea Carver

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