



Keith Schaffer, American Society of Dowsers: "These people started this country, they should be honored, not neglected".



Spring is springing! Soon we all will be able to return to our labor of love, the care of our cemeteries. Yes..... it's time to return to that favorite chair, could it be that the sun will be warming the window for you by now? Get your favorite beverage in hand, maybe a snack as well. Ahead of you are some ideas on how to stretch your dollars so that you can get your cemetery chores accomplished, also the presidents report, and a little information on Keith Schaffer, our speaker for the spring meeting, who you see in the photo on the front page, actively practicing his expertise in the art of dowsing grave sites. Some trivia, a view from the VOCA camera, and a look in the vault.

~~ IDEAS ON HOW TO GET HELP WITH YOUR CEMETERY WORK ~~

Here in Vermont, one way to get more work done, and keep cost under control, is to make use of the program provided by the Vermont Department of Corrections. Check with the department of corrections in your state to see what's available. I also would like to suggest that another avenue you may look into is to contact the local girl or boy scout troop in your area. I have spoken with the scout headquarters in Waterbury, Vermont awhile ago and they indicated they would be receptive to the idea. Scouts are always looking for worthwhile projects and would appreciate a donation to their troop for services rendered. This is an excellent way to get some of your projects completed. You may consider providing lunch for the group, or if you have a campground nearby, you may put them up for the night! You could plan work for the afternoon of the first day, and the morning of the second day. This is good way to support the scouts, and keep the money in your local economy. This is not only a low cost way to get the work done, but can be a fun project. Last summer the Weston Cemetery Commission made use of the Vermont Department of Corrections program. The workers are supervised and we made lunch arrangements with the deli department at the Weston Market Place. The crew was very dependable. We were also able to have more work completed and saved a significant amount of money.

~~ FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT: SPRING 2009 ~~

As I am writing this "Spring" report, another weather system has targeted Vermont for another dumping of 5 to 9 inches of snow. I do believe, despite the latest nor'easter to hit Rutland, that spring will be here by the time you receive this news letter. I did see that the maple sugar taps are out and the sugar makers are anticipating a sap run soon. VOCA Secretary and sugar maker, Charlie Marchant, did inform me that he does not put out his taps until after Vermont's Town Meeting Day on March 3rd.

There is a bill pending in the Vermont Legislature, **H.0281**. This is a bill that **"proposes to expand the list of persons who can object to the removal of bodily remains and to create new provisions for the removal of remains from historical burial sites."**

Currently, Vermont has no laws to protect these old historic burial grounds. As Representative Richard Marek recently stated, "He could petition to have Ethan Allen's body removed and buried in his back yard as a pay for view event and there is no law to prevent this". VOCA officers have met with legislators on this bill and support it as a needed regulation to protect Vermont's historic burial sites. Several VOCA officers have been asked if they would be willing to testify on the bill and they are planning on being under the "golden dome" on March 20th at 10 am.

Please contact your local legislators to support this bill. You can leave a message for any legislator at the Sergeant of Arms Office, toll free at (800)-322-5616. You can also contact your legislators through the Vermont Legislation Web site, www.leg.state.vt.us. Special thanks go to Representative Alison Clarkson of Woodstock, VT., and Representative Richard Marek of Newfane for introducing this needed bill and the support of 28 other legislators, including VOCA members Rep Terry Macaig of Williston, and Rep and VOCA officer, Richard Howrigan of Fairfield.

I have received many phone calls on the status and history of the Haven Hill orchard Cemetery, in Clarendon, VT. (Including one from a

member who winters in Los Angeles and summers in Vermont on property that borders this cemetery) Thanks to all for the information. If someone is aware of an unknown burial ground and would like to know more about it, please send the information to our editor, Harry Fisher, and we could profile it in an upcoming newsletter.

Members have been inquiring about the status of the Aldrich/Kendall Cemetery removal issue. The landowner has again petitioned the town to move several additional remains and contacted an archeological organization, which has a connection to the University of Vermont, to see if they would carry out the unprecedented disinterment of this historical site. I also have been told that there is an act 250 hearing on the property that still needs to be heard before anything can be done to the burial ground. As of this writing no remains have been removed. If you have further questions regarding the latest developments in this precedent setting case, please contact the Hartland Historical Society at 802-436-1703, or the UVM Archaeology Department at 802-656-4310.

(It is ironic that UVM would be involved in the disinterment of remains when our founder, Prof Leon Dean, who taught at UVM believed so strongly in graveyard preservation).

I know many individuals have contacted the Department of Corrections, (DOC) Rutland District Manager, Michael O'Malley regarding utilizing DOC work crews to do cemetery maintenance this coming year. Mike is still willing to receive calls on the availability of these programs and can be reached at 802-786-5808 during weekdays. Several communities are planning cemetery work this summer through this successful DOC work program. Please keep me posted on what projects you are planning in your area and what was accomplished by the work crews. Before and after pictures would also be appreciated. Our May meeting is right around the corner and I hope many members attend for what should be an interesting agenda. I always look forward to seeing old and new members. If anyone has ideas for future meetings or questions regarding VOCA, I can be reached at 802-773-3253, or tgifvt@msn.com

~~ Keith Schaffer ~~

When Keith isn't working with stonewalls, fireplaces, buildings etc. or working on old cemeteries as an officer of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation, he is dowsing. As a member of the board of trustees of the American Society of Dowsers, he is always looking for new ways to encourage both young and old to learn the art of dowsing. Keith has been performing dowsing demonstrations, group talks, and has now started the Berks Chapter of Dowsers, which will meet in Kurtztown, PA at the historic one room schoolhouse near the heritage center. Dowsing isn't just for finding water with the old standard "Y" rod, you can use a variety of tools including pendulums, "L" rods, and bobbars.

On the front page you see Keith using a dowsing rod at the Levan Family Graveyard in Maxatawny Township, PA. Schaffer and volunteers from the Berks County Graveyard Association have restored this 245 year old cemetery where veterans from the American Revolution and the French and Indian War are buried.

Keith was able to locate more than 30 unmarked graves at this cemetery.

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Trivia: Honey doesn't spoil, and it's a good preservative and antibiotic. That's because it draws moisture out of anything it touches, including bacteria.

Trivia: Forty six percent of Americans die during the three month period following their birthday. Only six percent die during the three month period leading up to their birthday.

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*Your tombstone stands among the rest  
 Neglected and alone  
 The name and date are chiseled out  
 On polished, marble stone  
 It reaches out to all who care  
 It is too late to mourn  
 You did not know that I exist  
 You died and I was born  
 Yet each of us are cells of you  
 In flesh, in blood, in bone  
 Our blood contracts and beats a pulse  
 Entirely not our own  
 Dear Ancestor, the place you filled  
 One hundred years ago  
 Spreads out among the ones you left  
 Who would have loved you so  
 I wonder if you lived and loved  
 I wonder if you knew  
 That someday I would find this spot  
 And come to visit you*

*Author unknown.....*

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Trivia: You may remember Necco Wafers, the mild, pastel colored, dusty, hard candy disks that came in a roll. Almost certainly, any of your relatives that served in WW II remember them too. The Army bought almost all the Necco Wafers that the New England Confectionary Co. could produce for shipment to the troops overseas, since this perfect food didn't melt and was almost indestructible in shipment.

Trivia: Percy Spencer, a Raytheon engineer, was doing some radar related research when a candy bar in his pocket melted. Curious, he put some popcorn kernels near the device he was testing, and they popped, the first food ever cooked by what would become the *microwave oven*. Spencer, by the way, eventually held 150 patents, but he never finished high school.

~~ Solar powered video headstones! ~~

While nothing ever replaces the gift of life, memories can now come one step closer to forever being remembered and not forgotten.

Tasteless you say? A magnet for vandals? On the contrary, says inventor Sergio Aguirre. His soothingly named *Serenity Panel* is all about helping families celebrate the life of a lost loved one. The video headstone concept has been around for years, but previous inventors ambitions have been laid to rest. One gave up for lack of demand and out of concerns his invention wouldn't be able to withstand years of harsh weather. Aguirre says his device will play a 5 to 7 minute video featuring special moments from someone's life that would be compiled by friends or family members. The *Serenity Panel's* screen is covered by a solar panel which can be flipped open by visitors. Once opened, the video starts. The device includes two standard headphone jacks to listen to the audio. The solar panel protects the screen from sun damage and charges a battery inside. Four hours of sun provides enough juice to play the video continuously for up to 90 minutes. The 7 inch shatter resistant LCD screen is designed to last for 15 years, when it can be replaced with a newer device or covered with a bronze plaque. It will come with a one year warranty, extended coverage for 10 years is about another \$200.00. The unit will function between 32 F degrees and 120 F. The cost of the unit is about \$1,500.00, including the use of video making software.

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Trivia: A mature oak tree can draw more than 50 gallons of water from the ground each day. Some oaks are 50 years old before they produce their first acorn.

~ What's in the Vault! ~

1- Welcome our new members! Since October 2008 we gained 26 new members.

Andrea Mott, Corey Kennedy, Carol Adams, Martin Bursque, Craig Curless, John Spaulding, Molly Hill Hodgdon, Jeff Taylor, Randy Roberts, William & Joyce Cook, Barbara & Barry Griffith, Fairfield Cemetery Association, William & Susan Flemming, Dorothy Morey, Julian & Elizabeth Strauss, Beth Bloomberg, Maxine Blew, Darryl & Hope Harris, Elizabeth Santore, Keith Schaffer, Alice & Earl Adams, Edward & Gail Kelly, Bill Hoyt, David Johnson, Dewin Norse, and Randy Merrow.

2- **Spring meeting!** May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 at the Summit #104 Masonic Lodge located at 111 Brush Road in Williamstown, VT. Doors are open at 9 am, meeting at 10 am. The noon meal will be prepared by the culinary expertise of the ladies of Charity Chapter #57 of the Order of the Eastern Star. Baked chicken breast and all the fixins that go with it. Send \$10.00 per person to Nadine Martin, (802-479-9664), 84 Washington St, Barre, VT. 05641. Make payable to "*Charity Chapter #57*"

**Directions:** From the north, I-89 to exit 5. Left on rt 64, about 4 miles to Brush Hill Rd. (*This is a sharp left off rt 64*) If you have gone to the junction of rts 64&14, you have missed the turn. Turn around and go back just a little way, Brush Hill Rd will now be on your right. Once on Brush Hill Rd the lodge is on the left behind a white ranch house. (*This will be across from the Williamstown Elementary School*). From the south take a right off exit#5 and proceed as above. Exit #5 is the Northfield exit. Come and learn first hand about dowsing by our speaker, Keith Schaffer. Bring a friend or two!

3- Still looking for a member with expertise in grant writing.

4- Does anyone have a small local cemetery they are willing to adopt for the new season? This could involve just keeping it mowed, or doing minor cleaning up. Let me know so that we can get before and after photos and as the year goes on we will run an article with photos of your work in the newsletter.

~~ A Promise in Passing ~~



Nancy Norfleet keeps an eye on her niece's 7 month old daughter Daisy Norfleet-Mendoza, while cleaning around her mother's and

father in-law's graves at Aripeka Community Cemetery, Aripeka, Florida. We see her brother in-law, John, mowing grass, helped out during the November cleanup at the cemetery, which is tended to monthly by the community. Aripeka is a small village of about 200 houses surrounded by salt marsh on the Pasco-Hernando county line.

In a time when populations are transient and burial is an industry, the people of Aripeka maintain a true community cemetery and a living relationship with the dead. If the residents of Aripeka are not rich, they sometimes sound as though they are. They have the same sense of privilege, as though just by living there they got lucky, that they have been granted an unusual gift. That's certainly true of the cemetery, which was deeded to the town in 1906, after the drowning of a young girl. When word spread that her family could not find a place to bury her in the low, wet ground near town, a couple living a few miles away donated 5 acres for a graveyard on the bank above Hunter's Lake in what is now Spring Hill. Every Aripeka resident has the right to be buried there regardless of religious affiliations or belief.

The only payment expected is in labor to help keep up the graveyard as residents have for over 100 years. "We don't have a family tree, we have a family bush", as she paused at the grave of her grandparents, Aripeka pioneers James and Amanda Kolb. Family inevitably comes to mind while you work in the cemetery, said Wayne Norfleet, who stood and talked while the rest of the crew fired up tractors and trimmers or began picking up sticks. The person he finds himself thinking most about, he said, is his uncle Fred Wayland Kolb, born May 1913, died January 1998. He remembered helping his usually law-abiding uncle spotlight and shoot a deer that had been raiding his pea patch. That was highly illegal of course, and Uncle Fred was very honest, but eating your peas!!!!!! "I like the seamlessness of it, one generation following the other," Wayne Norfleet said. When my father, (J Leverne Norfleet), started using a cane, he said: "After the cane comes the crutches, after the crutches comes the wheelchair, after the wheelchair comes Hunter's lake." So I am sliding down that same path behind him." .....



Circle One

Renewal + member number / Change of address / New member

Name \_\_\_\_\_ member # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are for calendar year: 1 year \$10.00, 5 years \$40.00, and lifetime is \$140.00

**\*\* A new member joining in Oct or Nov or Dec will have dues applied to the following year \*\***

**Make check payable to VOCA, mail to: Harry Fisher, VOCA Treasurer, P O Box 266  
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