



It's here, 2012, and a Happy New Year! Lets make this the best VOCA New Year Ever!!

Hurricane Irene certainly made this year very difficult for many cemeteries in southern Vermont. But the work continues onward. VOCA membership continues to grow in size at a reasonable pace. We hope some of the new members will relieve some of our long time members of their duties. Fresh ideas are healthy for any organization.

We have an account called the Dean Permanent Fund. This is in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 range. Only the interest can be used for projects, some may feel we should be spending that portion now, but this is a small amount of money to be thinking of that at this point. Perhaps ideas on how to add to it would better serve VOCA. The problem VOCA had in the past is when they had several thousand dollars in the Permanent Account, they spent it. Some still ask what happened to *all the money?* Well the answer is, *you spent it.* Where do you think all the VOCA dollars came from when you were involved in the Youth Core Program? Much of the money for those projects was eaten up by the Youth Core operation fees and not spent on the actual task at hand. Far more good has come from the program introduced to VOCA by our president Tom Giffin through the Department of Corrections,

with many towns reaping the benefit. Some may feel that the little money we do have should be moved to a more aggressive account. I caution you with this mindset. We are not making a large return on our money, but I ask you, look at the thousands of dollars the so many have lost in their investments in the past few years. Ask them if they wish they could just have a small return rather than have a loss of half or more of their account. Preserving the principal and being content with a small return in this economic atmosphere is not such a bad thing. The economy is not very healthy. The money that is in the Dean Permanent Fund was not easy to come by. It represents donations by people who felt that it would be important to preserve their hard earned dollars and put them to good use with a minimum of risk. Some of the donations were small; some were large. Out of respect to all who donated, it is our duty not to get greedy with this money, but to be prudent. There may be a time when these funds should be invested differently, but, until the overall economy improves, we should beware of advisers that tell us how much more we could be making. Will they make up the loss if they are wrong? I think not.

Well it's time to get to that favorite chair, and hope it's a day that will allow the warm rays of sunshine to come through the window to keep us comfy so that we may sit with our favorite beverage and see what's in store for us in this issue.

We will see what president Tom Giffin has to say, some items on work being done in our Vermont cemeteries, a look in the Vault, some trivia, and a reminder that the VOCA meetings are held on the first Saturday in May and the first Saturday in October each year. Information on the up coming meeting will be found in the Vault. If you have a cemetery in mind to do some work in, take some photos of the project in question, contact your county representative, complete the necessary paperwork to apply for a VOCA grant to get some help with your project. Do you have an interest in helping to expand the information in the VOCA website? If so go to page 11 in this issue and contact the webmaster. He would love to hear from you. Do you, or do you know of someone who has proficiency in grant

writing? If so please contact the editor or President Tom Giffin. Contact info for both can be found on page 11 of this issue.

**Trivia:** You can visit the grave of William McKinley in the same city you find the Professional Football Hall of Fame. What city is it?  
Answer #3 on page 10

**Trivia:** Which President was the first of two to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, VA? Answer #4 on page 10

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### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT WINTER 2011-2012**

Winter has given Vermont a slight reprieve as I am typing this newsletter. The temperature is above normal which allowed me to pick the last 25 pounds of beets out of my garden on Thanksgiving Day. The day before the holiday, however, much of Vermont received a foot of new wet snow. Tropical storm Irene altered the landscape of the state and much of Vermont will be changed forever. The Rochester Cemetery that was reported in the last newsletter is still missing remains and the disposition of the recovered is yet to be determined. There are so many issues that Vermont is currently facing, that I encourage all members who are planning a project this spring to start early to line up funding and volunteers to make your cemetery project a priority for your community.

I spent a wonderful October day working with volunteers from the Rutland Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, restoring Pittsford, Vermont's Old Baptist Cemetery. This burial ground which dates from 1789 was listed in "poor" condition in VOCA's *Burial Grounds of Vermont* . The volunteers ranged in age from the over-55 crowd (including myself) to young school-age children. The crew did an outstanding job with chainsaws, shovels, 5 gallon pails of water and just old-fashioned "elbow grease" to bring this neglected burial ground to light. Every monument was cleaned and documented;

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downed trees were cut and removed; stones were straightened and long lost gravestone were found and up righted. Lunch was also provided by the church. I was quite sore and stiff the next day.

If anyone is interested how a group of volunteers can make a difference in restoring a cemetery, I would suggest you take a ride to this Pittsford burial ground.

Last fall, the Vermont Department of Correction work crew, supervised by DOC work crew leader and VOCA member, David Bellini, took on the task of cleaning up the Saint Joseph Cemetery in Burlington.

Bellini reported that the cemetery had become overgrown with brush and trees. Many headstones were totally covered with overgrowth and could not be viewed by visitors to the cemetery. In addition, so many discarded used, hypodermic needles were present that a needle recover specialist was called in several times to removed and dispose of them. According to Bellini, the cemetery had become an illegal campground for transients and his crew removed mattresses, sleeping bags, tarps, old clothes, a couch, and piles of trash to help bring this cemetery back into shape. Thanks to Dave and his crew for their efforts in this important Chittenden County Cemetery. If you are interested in the DOC work crew program, contact Rutland Field Office Director, Keith Tallon at 802-786-5099.

The Diocese of Burlington has recently appointed Robert Brown as the new Diocesan Cemetery Director for the 86 Catholic cemeteries in Vermont. He can be reached at 802-658-6110, ext.1315 or email [rbrown@vermontcatholic.org](mailto:rbrown@vermontcatholic.org).

I do have a couple of presentations for VOCA scheduled for the coming year. If you are aware of an organization that would be interested in a presentation, please have them contact me. We are still looking for a VOCA Editor. Harry Fisher continues to do the newsletter, but is looking to retire. He will help anyone interested in

taking it over so it will not be such a daunting task. Please contact Harry or me if interested.

There was some confusion on the date and time on the spring and fall meetings. VOCA meetings, per the bylaws, are always the first Saturday in May and the first Saturday in October. The membership

meetings start at 10:00 with coffee hour at 9:00. The spring meeting will be in Wardsboro on May 5<sup>th</sup> and I look forward to seeing many of you there. Details will follow in the spring newsletter. If you plan on attending and need information, please contact me. If you have agenda items for the newsletter, please send me an email or give a call.

Please check your expiration date on your newsletter and keep your membership updated. We always need new members to keep our organization active, so consider signing up a friend. I hope everyone has a great new 2012!!!

TOM GIFFIN  
VOCA President

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**Trivia:** James Garfield is buried in a city that shares its name with another president. Where is he buried? Answer #1 on page 10

**Trivia:** The Toughest Town in Vermont according to the July 29<sup>th</sup> 1931 issue of the Boston Evening Post was Lyndonville, Vermont. The town moved to rid its self of Gangsters. Prohibition was at its height with two more years to go before its repeal by the Twenty First Amendment. The newspaper reported that gangsters lolled on Depot Street in Lyndonville, Vermont, parked their rum running cars in plain sight and sometimes gave local teenagers high speed rides on their back road get away routes.

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**Students Clean Up Historic City Cemetery:** VOCA President Tom Giffin and VOCA Treasurer Chris Book, who are also Rutland Cemetery Commissioners responsible for the four city owned cemeteries – The West Street Cemetery, the Old Congregational Cemetery, the Poor Farm Cemetery, and the Old Reformatory Cemetery. The four cemeteries share a budget of \$2500 and are always in need of maintenance help. Tom Giffin recently approached

Mount Saint Joseph Academy Coach Jeff Cassarino looking for help. Cassarino, in conjunction with the other coaches thought it would be a good idea to get the football team involved in a community service project. So the team spent Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> working in the West Street Cemetery.

Tom Giffin takes his responsibility seriously and he feels that since there are so many historic Rutlanders in the cemeteries, it would be a great idea to have students research the lives of the individuals buried in one of the cemeteries for a program to be offered to the public. People would be given a tour of the cemetery and the students could stand on that burial site of the deceased they had researched and talk about their life and history. He said in the other communities that have a similar type program the students even dress in period clothing to make it more interesting. (Story from Sam's Good News 10/19/2011)

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**Trivia:** If you find yourself in a certain state capital, you can visit the graves of both Andrew Jackson and James K Polk. Which state capital is it? Answer #2 on page 10.

**Trivia:** The first U S Supreme Court judge is buried in Rye, New York.

What well known Vermont town was named after him? Answer #5 on page 10

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**Loomis Hill Cemetery Reclamation Process**

Tucked away on Loomis Hill in Waterbury Center, hidden by trees and accessible only via a narrow dirt road, a cemetery more than two centuries old is coming back to life. Only a few dozen people were buried there, and no one has been buried there for more than 100 years. Described as “needy” and “neglected,” Loomis Hill Cemetery had brush so thick it was hard to see the headstones, some of which had been broken by fallen trees. The cemetery’s rebirth is due in a large part to Waterbury Center residents Barbara Walton, Jack Carter, and Diane Gardner. Walton, a counselor with the Relief Society of the Montpelier Stake of the Mormon Church, came up with the idea for the project more than a year ago. Walton had visited several cemeteries while researching her family’s history, cleaning off the gravestones, and clearing out the areas that surrounded them. At the Fellow Cemetery in Topsham, Vermont, Walton cleaned stone, cleared brush, took photos, and recorded the inscriptions on all the stones. She prepared a report that was presented to the Topsham Town Clerk and the local historical society. The leadership of the Montpelier Vermont Stake Relief Society decided that cemetery projects would be a great way to serve the community, and, last fall, families, friends and other interested people gathered to start the Loomis Hill Cemetery reclamation project.

Barbara and Diane reached out to Waterbury Town Commissioners and formed a working committee comprised of Jack Carter, a Cemetery Commissioner, Barbara Walton, and Diane Carter. As they continued on this process, the committee worked with VOCA (Vermont Old Cemetery Association) to receive grant help with the restoration of many broken headstones. The Waterbury Town Commissioners also agreed to cut down some of the trees that had compromised the integrity of the headstones. Several volunteer groups have helped in the clean up. One such group was from Ben and Jerry’s in Waterbury, Vermont, supervised by Blair Austin Bradley. The group spent approximately 8 hours clearing debris off the rock walls surrounding some of the cemetery, raking up brush, clearing weeds, and finding some missing headstone pieces. Many stones had

been broken into jiggered fragments; a few literally had to be excavated. Nearly a year later, Loomis Hill Cemetery is starting to take shape again. The brush has been cleared, weeds whacked, and gravestones unearthed. "It looks 100 percent better," Carter said. "It's totally transformed from what it was before."

Research has been done on the known individuals buried in the cemetery. The Waterbury Historical Society gave the committee a 1940 handwritten map of the individuals buried in the cemetery known as of that date, as well as pictures of the cemetery taken many decades ago. We compared this with the Town Clerk's information and realized that many stones may have been buried after falling over. We were able to discover many of those which are in need of repair. One gravestone that has been restored is that of Silas Loomis, for whom the cemetery and Loomis Hill were named. He was one of the early settlers in Waterbury, emigrating from Connecticut in the late 1700s. He built a log cabin in the forest about 2 miles from Waterbury Center, walking distance from where he is now buried, and lived there with his wife and two children. Loomis eventually bought 400 acres in the area, fought in the War of 1812, and died on March 2, 1853 at the age of 82. His gravestone, broken in several places when Walton's cleanup crew found it, now stands tall in front of the graveyard. Earlier this month, volunteers spent six hours reassembling Loomis' stone, using epoxy adhesive, and cementing it to the ground. Faded lettering at the bottom of his gravestone reads, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave."

Other gravestones show that Sarah and Solomon Newcomb died four years apart in the 1840's, their graves are side by side. Sisters Hannah and Content Nelson died 10 days apart in 1803, Hannah age 17, Content age 13. "There must have been some sort of epidemic," Carter thought. "Every day at the cemetery is a history lesson," Walton said. Once the job is done she plans to compile a report for the Waterbury Town Clerk's office. Some names on the graves may come as a surprise to town officials.

The town clerk’s office thought there might be 27 to 30 people buried there. “We’ve found maybe 50,” Walton said. Tropical Storm Irene put a halt to the reclamation process, but Walton hopes to have all the gravestones back in the ground and the entire project finished by next summer. She, Carter, and Gardner have received plenty of help from their families and from a few able bodied Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream employees.

Gardener’s children enjoy spending time at the cemetery, and have been very helpful. But, the volunteers could always use a few extra hands. “We like people who like to bend and get some back into it,” Walton said. “We could always use more materials as well.” Anyone interested in helping out can call Walton at 802-244-5514. Gardner says the communal effort put into reviving a place that no longer has a connection to anyone still living speaks volumes about Waterbury’s civic pride. “You can learn a lot about a town by the way it takes care of its cemeteries,” Gardner said. (Some information for this article came from a story by Chris Preston of the Waterbury Record, 8/4/2011)

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**A look in the Vault:** *Spring meeting 9:00 AM, May 5<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the Wardsboro Town Hall, located on Main Street, just off route 100. Cost is \$10.00, morning snacks by donation, for reservations contact Jan Hull, c/o the Wardsboro History Group. What’s the menu? What’s the program? Contact Charlie Marchant at 802-365-7937 for details.*

*Welcome to our new members!* Lisa and Geoffrey Colby, VT; R A Schultz, FL; Rev Donald Pepper, NY; Wilson and Anne Beebe Jr, NJ; Lisa and Charles Wilson, VT; Barbara Butler, VT; and Elizabeth Moore, VT.

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Answers: #1, Cleveland Ohio; #2 Nashville TN; #3 Canton Ohio; #4 William H Taft; #5 John Jay, (Jay Vermont), 12/12/1745 to 5/17/1829, co-authored the Federalist Papers 1788, and a leader against slavery.

## 2011-2012 Headstones

Thomas Giffin, President, 61 East Washington St, Rutland VT, 05701 [tgifvt@msn.com](mailto:tgifvt@msn.com) .....802-773-3253  
 Dianne Leary, 1<sup>st</sup> VP,..... 4670 Greenbush Rd, Charlotte, VT, 05445..... 802-881-2754  
 Chris Book, Treasurer, 44 North Main St, Rutland, VT, 05701 ..... 802-773-6252  
 Dianne Leary, Assistant Grants Administrator ...dleary123@yahoo.com!..... 802-881-2754  
 Arthur Hyde, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP&Grants Admin, 1991 Upper Plain, Bradford, Vt 05033 ..... 802-222-4088  
 Harry Fisher, Membership& Newsletter Ed, P O Box 3282, Nampa, Idaho, 83653..... 800-675-8815  
 Merci Fisher, Assistant Newsletter Ed., PO Box 3282, Nampa, Idaho, 83653.....800-675-8815  
 Justin Giffin, Asst Treas, 61 E Washington St, Rutland, VT justingiff@hotmail.com..... 802-779-1671  
 Charles E Marchant, Sec, P O Box 132, Townshend Vt, 05353 .....cemassoc@svcable.net.....802-365-7937  
 Edmund Wilcox, Exe Board, 4996 Georgia Shore Rd., St Albans Vt, 05478 .....802-524-3318

### WEB MASTER

**Darryl Harris**  
**VOCA Website**

..... [webmaster@voca58.org](mailto:webmaster@voca58.org)  
[www.voca58.org](http://www.voca58.org)

### FOOTSTONES

2013 **Wesly Mowry, P O Box 297, Hartland, VT, 05048** .....802-436-3383  
 2013 **Richard Howrigan, P O Box 16, Fairfield Vt, 05455** .....802-827-6513  
 2014 **Robert Hooper, 44 Charity St, Burlington Vt, 05401** [hooper9999@aol.com](mailto:hooper9999@aol.com) .....802-862-0708  
 2011 **Vacant** .....Are you the one we are looking for?.....  
 2012 **Ruth Barton, P O Box 309, Putney, Vt, 05301** .....802-254-1128  
 2014 **Chris Book, 44 N Main, Rutland, VT, 05701** .....802-773-6252

Vermont Old Cemetery Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1958 to “encourage the restoration and preservation of neglected and abandoned cemeteries in the State of Vermont”. Meetings are held twice yearly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in May and October. The VOCA newsletter is published by the editor four times a year to coincide with the seasons. The IRS granted VOCA tax exempt status 3/21/1969 (Ref BUR EO59-26)

## VOCA Books For Sale

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of “Burial Grounds of Vermont”, lay-flat binding \$35. Addendum to 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> editions \$4.00, “Stones&Bones”, a teacher’s resource packet \$24.00. These prices include shipping costs; we are not required to collect Vt sales tax. Send check made out to “VOCA” and a return address label, if possible, to “ Charles E Marchant, VOCA Secretary, P O Box 132, Townshend, Vermont, 05353”**

### VOCA County Representatives

\*\*\*\*\* These are people who will come help you with your VOCA grant application \*\*\*\*\*

<b>Addison- Betty R Bell 802-453-3947</b>	<b>Grand Isle- vacant</b>
<b>Bennington – Jean Kosche – 802-447-2241</b>	<b>Lamoille- Deanna French 802-888-4537</b>
<b>Orange- Arthur Hyde 802-222-4088</b>	<b>Orleans- Wanda Webster 802-525-3550</b>
<b>Caledonia – vacant</b>	<b>Rutland- Cliff Giffin 802-773-3743</b>
<b>Chittenden- Robert Hooper- 802-862-0708</b>	<b>Washington- Vacant</b>
<b>Essex- Richard Colburn- 802-723-4833</b>	<b>Windham- Charles Marchant 802-365-7937</b>
<b>Franklin- Edmund Wilcox- 802-524-3318</b>	
<b>Windsor- Ken Barrett- 802-875-2941</b>	

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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: Chris Book, VOCA Treasurer, 44 North Main Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701**

Vermont Old Cemetery Association