



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY
F O U N D A T I O N

SPRING 2015

Cemetrail and Arboretum Ribbon Cutting Held

Thanks to the aptly named *Operation Greenspace!* grant made by the JM McDonald Foundation at the close of 2013, the Cortland Rural Cemetery spent much of 2014 working diligently to improve the cemetery grounds – and, indirectly, its financial circumstances – by transforming the CRC from a “single-use” institution (memorialization) to a “multi-use” institution (historic site, cultural asset, and natural resource).

On May 7th, 2015, the cemetery officially announced and opened its new, public “cemetrail” and nascent arboretum – developed in cooperation with students and professors at SUNY Cortland and featuring 20 educational interpretive signs, tree-species

markers, and a centrally located, first-ever cemetery “map kiosk.” The event included a ribbon-cutting; a tour of some of the trail’s first educational stops; and remarks from Dr. Erik Bitterbaum, President of SUNY Cortland; Sophie Louise Jackson, who was one of the project’s student collaborators; City of Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin; and CRC Board of Trustees President, John Hoeschele.

Thanks to all who participated in this seminal project: Certainly a sign of progress and with our friends help, also a sign of things to come.



THESE PHOTOS ARE COMPLIMENTS
OF SUNY CORTLAND'S PR DEPARTMENT
AND GENEROUSLY MADE AVAILABLE
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RURAL CEMETERY
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First Angel Society Meeting Held

On May 17, 2015 – the inaugural gathering of the newly formed CRC Angel Society was held at the Gibson Memorial Chapel on the cemetery grounds. The event recognized the society's first members (listed below); featured remarks from Foundation Board President Bob Howe, society inductee Dr. James Clark, and President of the CRC Trustees, John Hoeschele; and featured entertainment from Cortland High School's Dynamic Paws a cappella group. Thank you to all who participated, planned, or attended this lovely event – and, of course, thanks to our Angels!

Donald "Bud" & Diane Ames
William S. Brewer Sr. (deceased)

Kathryn & Michael Cincotta

James & Patricia Clark

Louise Conley

Cortland Community Foundation

*Fenstermacher Fund/
CNY Community Foundation*

Douglas & Carol Brewer Fenton

Deborah & Stephen Geibel

Charles Gibson (deceased)

Margaret Gibson (deceased)

Homer (deceased) & Martha Gutches

Dr. R. Paul Higgins Jr. (deceased)

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John & Lisa Hoeschele

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James & Christine Place

Stephen & Dianne Robinson

Barbara Brewer Rogers (deceased)

Charles & Elizabeth Spaulding

Ralph Wilkins Foundation



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER, JOHN FINN

Those interested in learning more about the Angel Society (e.g. mission, benefits, criteria for membership, ways to donate to the cemetery, etc.) should visit the CRC website (www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com) or contact the cemetery office at 607.756.6022 for a copy of our *Angel Society* brochure.

United Presbyterian Church Makes Grant to Cemetery

A special note of appreciation to the congregation and leadership of Cortland's United Presbyterian Church for their \$5,000 grant to the cemetery – paid in \$1000 increments over five years. Hearing the challenges facing the CRC, as conveyed in a presentation made to the Church in 2013, the UPC rose to the occasion with Christian generosity. As of this writing, the grant has funded a casket-lowering device (shown in this funeral service photo), which adds dignity and an added measure of safety to outdoor funerals.



Dr. James M. Clark, Board Member Extraordinaire

Dr. James M. Clark joined the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation Board in July of 2002. He wasted no time getting involved, immediately volunteering to contact a professional about a long range financial plan for the Foundation. Fast forward a few months and Jim volunteered to meet with the Board of trustees to plan Memorial Day activities at the Cemetery. Next he led the committee that developed a mission statement for the Foundation and led a committee on strategic planning. And in 2004 he agreed to become the Secretary for the CRCF and for the first time we actually had an agenda before a meeting.

Thereafter, Jim continued to volunteer in any capacity in which he was needed. For example, in 2008, he agreed to lead the Foundation's first ever Endowment Campaign; under his leadership, the Foundation raised over \$312,000.00 and Jim alone was responsible for a single bequest of \$50,000.00...all of this in very challenging economic times. (The value of the Endowment/Trust account is now over \$415,000.00.) Speaking of raising funds, he was also the Foundation's grant writer and as such, he wrote dozens of grant requests and was personally responsible for securing many

thousands of dollars in grants for the cemetery.

In addition to inspiring others to give, Jim and his wife, Pat (shown at right), were also generous donors — joining one other donor in financing the repair of the eastward facing stained glass window in the Gibson Chapel.



JIM AND PAT CLARK

AND, last but not least, those of you who have enjoyed our semi-annual newsletters over the years also have Jim to thank for that — as he chaired that committee and was responsible for the layout of the end product up until he left our Board this last April.

Thank you, Jim, for many years of giving to the Cemetery, both financially and physically. You will be missed!

Your donations at work!

At our April 2015 meeting, the Foundation made the following grants to the cemetery from our discretionary funds in answer to the Trustees' annual request and priorities. We hope and trust you will take pride in seeing your gifts being put to these good uses!

- Up to \$8000 toward the removal, re-venting, and re-slatting of the massive brick chimney at the cemetery office, which was leaking and deteriorating at a dangerous rate.
- \$4000 toward spring staffing, which enables the cemetery to ramp-up, make payroll, and tackle the new growing/mowing season, after winter's scarce revenues from operations.
- \$500 for the purchase of a professional-grade chain saw — and up to \$4500 for a stump remover/grinder. Both of these tools will enable the cemetery to maintain trees, and to remove dead or overgrown bushes that are judged to be unsightly or dangerous.

As fund levels allow in 2014, we also expect to begin investing in sorely needed improvements to the modest Sands Street home owned by the cemetery, which is used to house — and augment the compensation of — staff.



Spring clean-ups!

The Trustees held their third annual Cemetery Sweep-out Day in April, wherein more than three dozen members of the community (including several Foundation Board members) donated time and energy raking and cleaning up the grounds for spring. Only a week later, the cemetery hosted another large group of volunteers, this time SUNY Cortland students participating in their Big Event community volunteering event. We thank members of both communities for helping to beautify the cemetery!

What's new & next at the CRC?

In addition to months full of mowing and maintenance, supporters of the cemetery can expect to see the following activities this year:

- Our first bird boxes will be installed (thanks to one, kind donor!), in hopes of attracting Bluebirds and other species to our grounds.
- A fall "Song in the Cemetery" concert series will be held in the Gibson Memorial Chapel, spearheaded by Trustees Scott Gay and Mark Suben.
- The cemetery will apply to, and hopefully secure funds from, New York State's Division of Cemeteries for the repair of approximately 30 of our fallen or presently precarious markers.
- New cemetery rules and water-station signs will be erected, as will be a new "smoke free environment" sign made possible through the efforts of Trustee Adrienne Traub.
- A new committee is forming to continue the planning and development of our newly launched arboretum; the team will focus on identifying needed species, potential locations for new plantings, and 'best practices' for maintaining our tree stock.

With thanks to just-retired Foundation Board Member, Dr. Jim Clark, for his years of editorial leadership and newsletter designs — we hope you will enjoy this 'new' newsletter format, developed by local freelance graphic designer, Jerome Natoli, who will likewise be donating his time and talents to our cause!



Tax-deductible gifts to preserve and enhance the Cemetery may be made to the Foundation. Checks should be made out to the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED