



# Douglas County Cemetery Association Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

## Greetings From the President

We made it through a real Minnesota winter and are looking forward to spring. The sooner the better! I am also looking forward to getting back to the cemetery projects that were not completed last fall. Too many projects ... not enough time. I always feel our cemetery members really do appreciate any improvements we can make.

Sometimes it is okay to remind families that it takes people, effort, and funds to continue to care for and make those improvements to their families' final resting site. The DCCA Board has taken on several projects to hopefully create more awareness about that.

Thanks to several local sponsors, we were able to organize our 1st Annual 5th Grade Essay Contest. We thank the following sponsors: Alexandria VFW Post 936, Osakis VFW Post 7902, REA Operation Round-Up, Nelson Community Center, and we thank you, the members of the DCCA. We received good comments and plans are already made for the 2nd annual contest.

We have worked with the Echo Press and KXRA Radio to ask families to remember their cemeteries by visiting, supporting, or volunteering. Our plans include more newspaper articles as we approach the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War in 2015. This spring we are sponsoring a cemetery tour conducted through Alexandria Community Education, and hope to make it an annual event again.

There have been discussions with the MN Geological Society for a possible state conference in Alexandria next year. We hope all of these efforts will result in more attendance at your annual meetings, more interest .... and more support! We plan on presenting more information on these promotions at our 18th annual meeting, and you are all invited to attend.

**Please join us Thursday, April 24th at 7 pm in the lower level of the First Congregational Church in Alexandria.** The church is located on the corner of 7th and Elm, one block west of Broadway. Use the east

entry which is handicap accessible. There will be an election for expiring 1st term directors, Julie Kirscht, Donna Gunderson, Gene Rasmusen and John Chlian. Our bylaws will be reviewed and planned income/expenses presented. You will notice the Board of Directors has approved an increase in membership dues from the current \$20 per year to \$30 per year. Our promotion efforts mentioned above prompted that increase. We welcome your comments. And finally, Our guest speaker for the evening is David Inman, representing the *MN Genealogical Society*, who will review progress on their "MN Cemeteries Project". It will be a busy and interesting evening! For copies of MAC Newsletters and other helpful information, you are encouraged to log on to the MN Association of Cemeteries site at [www.mncemeteries.org](http://www.mncemeteries.org) and enter "guest" as your password. Our DCCA newsletters are available on the Douglas County Historical Society website at [www.dchsmn.org](http://www.dchsmn.org), under News and Events. Thank you to the staff at the DCHS for their

## Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1
Cemetery Spotlight	2
Essay Contest News/Spotlight	3
Pet Cemeteries	4
Creative Corner	5
DCCA Info.	6



excellent record keeping of burials. *Always make certain you completely fill out the burial forms and return them as soon as possible.* Also, the same request and thank you from our treasurer when filling out your DCCA membership forms ..... *completely* is appreciated! So, please plan to join us on the 24th, stay for refreshments, talk shop, and visit with your neighbors. And, as always, we say THANK YOU for your commitment to our cemeteries and your continued support of the DCCA.

**John Chlian**  
DCCA President

## Douglas County Cemetery Spotlight

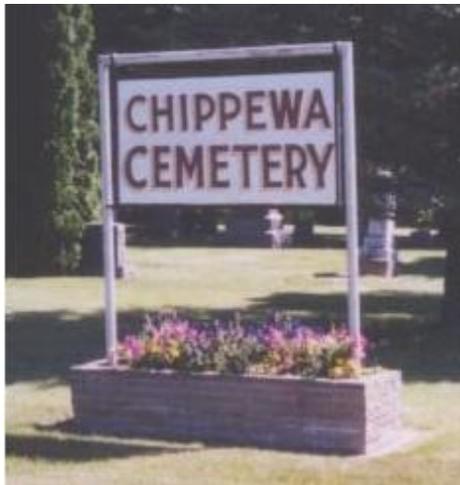
Get on board a charter bus and enjoy an afternoon seeing and learning about various cemeteries on “*The Wonder of our Cemeteries Tour*”. Stops include the **Mound Grove Cemetery** in Evansville, the **Brandon Cemetery** in Brandon Township, **Chippewa Cemetery** and **St. Ann’s Catholic Cemetery** in Brandon. Included in the tour will be the history of the cemeteries, highlights in Douglas County church history and people who bring wonderment to these places of rest, including the graves of veterans of all wars. Bring a notebook and learn how cemeteries can help you begin recording your own family history. Tour guide is Rachel Barduson with representatives from the Douglas County Cemetery Association. Partial funding for this trip is provided by the Douglas County Cemetery Association.

**Tuesday, May 20—1 to 4 pm, Runestone Community Center Parking Lot, \$25**

To sign up or for more information:

Email [mronning@alexandria.k12.mn.us](mailto:mronning@alexandria.k12.mn.us) at District 206 Community Education  
or call: 320-762-3310 x4270 [mronning@alexandria.k12.mn.us](mailto:mronning@alexandria.k12.mn.us)

*Mound Grove and Brandon Cemetery were spotlighted in recent issues of the newsletter.*



### **Chippewa Cemetery**

*One mile south of Brandon, then one mile east on Skrove Road.*

Chippewa Cemetery Association dates back to the years before the church was built. The plot of land was given to the church by Ole Thompson in 1875, with the intention that the church would also be built on the site. Because the railroad had not yet been built, they delayed building the church until the route of the railroad was established. The church was built in Brandon, but the original plot is still used as the church cemetery. In 1966 the cemetery was incorporated and enlarged by an addition to the west of the original plot.

### **St. Ann’s Catholic Cemetery**

St. Ann’s was built in 1902 to serve the 23 Catholic families in the area. Before that time, Catholics in the area attended services in Millerville. The original church was located across the street from the current structure, where a bell memorial is now located. In 2002, St. Ann’s Parish celebrated 100 years.

### **Douglas County Cemetery Association Membership**

Bohemian Independent Cemetery, Brandon Cemetery, Calvary Catholic Cemetery, Carlos Prairie Cemetery, Christian Union Cemetery, Christina Lake Lutheran & Mission Convent Cemetery, Church of Seven Dolor’s Catholic Church Cemetery, East Moe Lutheran Church Cemetery, Ebenezer Cemetery, English Grove Cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, Fahlun Lutheran Church Cemetery, First Lutheran Church Cemetery- Kensington, Fryksande Cemetery, Geneva Cemetery, Gordon Pleasant Cemetery, Holmes City Lake Finnish Independent Apostolic Cemetery, Hudson Cemetery, Kinkead Cemetery, Lake Charley Cemetery, Lake Ida Cemetery, Lake Mary Cemetery, Moe Heights Cemetery, Mound Grove Cemetery, Nelson Cemetery, Oak Hill Cemetery, Oscar Lake Lutheran Church Cemetery, Rose City Free Church Cemetery, Rose Hill-Trinity Cemetery, Sauk Valley Lutheran Church Cemetery, Solem Lutheran Church Cemetery, St. Ann’s Catholic Church Cemetery, St. John’s Lutheran Cemetery, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church Cemetery, St. Mary’s Catholic Church Cemetery, St. Nicholas Catholic Church Cemetery, St. Petri Lutheran Church Cemetery, Trysil-Bethesda Cemetery, Van Loon Cemetery, Wennersborg Cemetery, West Moe Lutheran Church Cemetery, White Garden Cemetery, Zionsborg Cemetery

## What Stories Can the Stones Tell? And the Winners Are .....

Last fall, fifth grade students from Douglas County schools took part in an essay contest titled “*What stories can the stones tell?*”

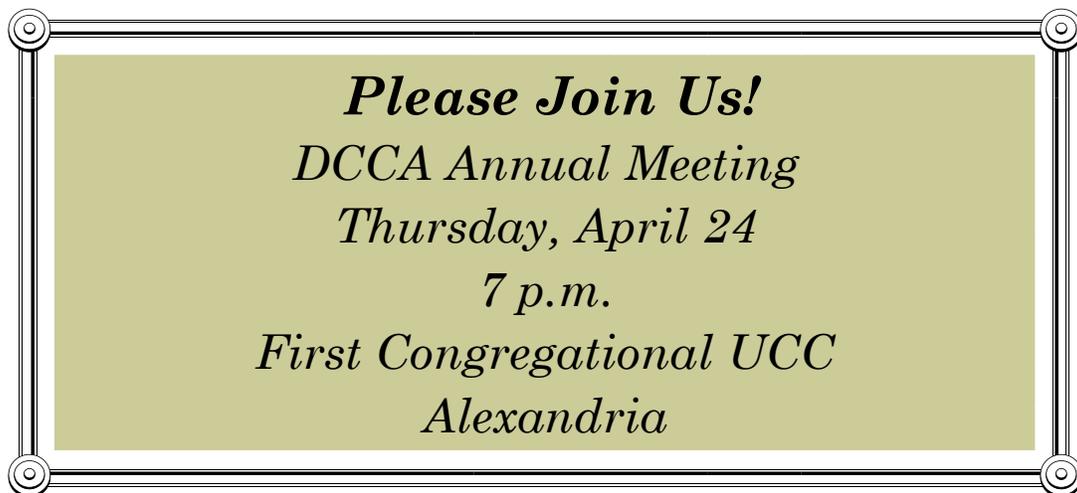
They were encouraged to visit family cemeteries, interview family members, talk with local military veterans or their families, ask questions of local cemetery board members, or review cemetery archives at the DCHS when researching their essays.

The contest was organized and sponsored by the DCCA with assistance from the Alexandra VFW Post 936, Osakis VFW Post 7902, REA;s Operation Round-up and the Nelson Community Center.

On October 30th, awards and \$75 each were presented to winners **Logan Hegg, Rachel Boyden, and Garret Moore** from St. Mary’s School in Alexandria, and **Cooper Skalsky, Brittany Dietrich, Jayden Hensley and Morgan Moore** form Osakis Elementary School.

Several students presented their essays at the annual Veteran’s Day Service on November 11 at Living Waters Church in Alexandria, and all essays are now archived at the Douglas County Historical Society.

*Taken from November Echo Press Article: “Students Discuss the Stories Cemetery Stones can Tell in Essay Contest”.*



## DCCA Board Member Spotlight: Ralph Gunderson

Born and raised in Kensington, Ralph went all 12 of his school years there. The following two years were spent in the army communications system. He married his wife, Georgena during this time and they were blessed with three daughters. Following his stint in the army, Ralph returned home and started working for Hypro Engineering as their Purchasing Director for 20 years.

Ralph and his family spent 40 years living in the Twin Cities area. During this time, he became President of the Twin Cities Purchasing Managers Association as well as the President of the Twin Cities Foundrymens Association. He was a boy scout leader at his church, Incarnation Lutheran, for ten years and belonged to numerous other organizations.

Upon retirement, he moved back to Kensington to get out of the traffic. He has enjoyed working with the Runestone Museum of Alexandria from many different angles, including doing research on what he likes to call “*the rest of the story*” of what happened on the Runestone hill. Other activities Ralph enjoys include, The Lions in Kensington, The American Legion and the veterans group in Alexandria, his church and the county cemetery, and anything to do with his family of which there are four generations living in Kensington. As Ralph describes it, he is “enjoying life like crazy!”

*We thank Ralph for his involvement and dedication.*

## Spring into Action with Tree and Turf Tips

Now that we are finally into spring, we begin thinking about tending to our cherished cemeteries' trees and turf.

Jim Ostvig from *Ostvig Tree*, and Mark Sullivan from *TruGreen Chemlawn*, spoke at the Minnesota Association of Cemeteries Annual Conference last fall. Mark brought everyone up to date about recent studies regarding new grass seed mixtures that may be better suited to withstand our state's colder climate and dry summers. Jim updated the group on the progression of the Emerald Ash Borer. As expected, the infestation continues to multiply. He said cemeteries have four options for dealing with this pest: do nothing and let nature take its course, be proactive (start removing ash trees now), treat infected trees using insecticides or try some of all of the above.

For more information, contact Jim at 952-473-0534, and for more information about new mixes of grass seed, call Mark at 952-895-3460.

*Portions taken from "The MAC Quarterly" Winter, 2014 edition*



## Pet Burial Past and Present

The next time Fluffy does something naughty, it might be comforting to know that cats in ancient Egypt were praised for controlling vermin and their ability to kill snakes, such as cobras. The domesticated cat became a symbol of grace and poise and was a revered animal to Egyptian society. As such, some cats received the same mummification after death as humans.

America's largest and oldest pet cemetery is in Hartsdale, New York. It dates from 1896 when a vet working out of Manhattan offered to let a grieving pet owner bury her dog in his hillside apple orchard. Today it is the final resting place for more than 70,000 animals.



Burial options for pets and other animals currently include burying the animal on their own property or in pet cemeteries which offer single and multiple plot options. A specially designed pet casket or vault may be used. In cremation, several pets are cremated together and can be scattered on the cemetery grounds. In most pet cemeteries there will be a chapel and there will be facilities to hold either a non-denominational, Christian or alternatively, a non-religious ceremony.

*A pet is such a special friend,  
a friend in many ways.  
Sharing love and companionship,  
just looking for your praise.*

## Creative Corner: Memorial Day



As we begin to think about Memorial Day on May 26, it is interesting to know its origins. Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday which occurs every year on the final Monday of May. It is a day of remembering the men and women who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Formerly known as *Decoration Day*, it originated after the American Civil War to commemorate the Union and Confederate soldiers who died in the Civil War. By the 20th Century, Memorial Day had been extended to honor all Americans who died while in the military service, and the general public adopted this event for their loved ones who passed regardless of military service. The preferred name for the holiday changed from Decoration Day to Memorial Day which was first used in 1882. It did not become more common until after WWII and was not declared an official name by federal law until 1967.

“And I’m proud to be an American,  
Where at least I know I’m free.  
And I won’t forget the men who died,  
Who gave that right to me.”

*Lee Greenwood*

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“We who are left how shall we look again  
Happily on the sun or feel the rain  
Without remembering how they who went  
Ungrudgingly and spent  
Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and rain?”

*Wilfred Wilson Gibson*





**Douglas County  
Cemetery Association, Inc.**  
*A Minnesota Non-Profit Corporation*

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Alexandria, MN 56308

Email: [kim.dillon@dchsmn.org](mailto:kim.dillon@dchsmn.org)

## Our Mission



*"The Douglas County Cemetery Association will work hard to fulfill its purpose of being a resource for member cemeteries in dealing with the operational*

*problems that arise, creating mutually beneficial relationships between our members, promoting our cemeteries as the guardians of our county's heritage and as a place of lasting tribute. to the memory of those who have gone on before us."*

## Our Goals

- To work with many other organizations to provide service to those concerned about our heritage.
- To help those working on family genealogy.
- To support efforts to maintain our cemeteries as well-landscaped and comforting places to visit.
- To collect information to identify notable people buried in our cemeteries and historical gravesites.
- To do mundane chores of developing better deed forms for membership and better transfer records.

**Newsletter Editor:**

Kathryn Liesemeyer

*Katalyst Communications, Alexandria, MN*

## Board Members/Officers

President: **John Chlian**

Vice-Pres. **Joel Blank**

Secretary: **Julie Kirscht**

Treasurer/Membership Chair:  
**Sue Tvrdik**

**Gary Adamson**

**Donna Gunderson**

**Ralph Gunderson**

**Gabriel J. Pipo**

**Gene Rasmusen**

**Kevin Sather**

**Kristi Wussow**

**Ann Skoglund, ex-officio**

*Annual membership meetings are held the fourth Thursday of April at: First Congregational UCC, Alexandria, MN.*

*We will work closely with the Douglas County Historical Society to maintain cemetery records.*

For more information about DCCA contact: **John Chlian @ [chlian@gctel.net](mailto:chlian@gctel.net)**