

# Douglas County Cemetery Association Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2017 Volume 7, Issue 1

## Greetings From Our President



Now that we have gotten through the worst of winter, we can start to think about our spring duties. Seems there is plenty to do with less time this time of year, and with a little determination we can accomplish a lot. Keeping up with changes can be challenging.

The Douglas County Cemetery Association will hold our annual meeting on Thursday, April 27, 2017, 7:00 P.M. in the lower level of the First Congregational Church in Alexandria located at 7<sup>th</sup> and Elm Street. This is just one block west of Broadway with parking on the east and north sides so you can enter the church at the east door. All cemeteries are invited, even if you are not a member.

One thing our meeting will include is the annual election of board members. Currently we have eight members and one Ex-Officio. As we have openings I ask that if you know someone interested in or someone you can recommend for the nomination, please let me know so that we may have a ballot to vote on. Contact me at [joel.blank@gmail.com](mailto:joel.blank@gmail.com) or 320-270-4011. Hope to hear from you.

I ask this as we have three directors with terms expiring this year, each having served 2 three year terms: Gene Rasmusen, Secretary, Julie Kirscht, and Vice President John Chlian. I want, at this time, to thank them for their leadership and dedication to the Douglas county Cemetery Association Board for the past 6 years.

As we plan our spring clean ups of our cemeteries and remove winter's debris, know that your work is very much appreciated by many. I thank you for your dedication to cleaning and preserving your cemetery. My cemetery has our annual meeting the first Monday in May, then a joint clean-up day two weeks after when all get together to prepare for Memorial Day. I know we all honor the departed who came before us.

In conclusion, I thank you for allowing me to serve as President of the Douglas County Cemetery Association. If you have any thoughts or ideas for our annual meetings, let someone on the board know. We have a website: [www.dccamn.com](http://www.dccamn.com) where you can connect if desired. I encourage all to attend the annual meeting and appreciate your support. Hope to see you there.

Joel B. Blank  
President

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	PAGE
President's Greeting	1
4 <sup>th</sup> Annual Essay Contest April 27 <sup>th</sup> - Save the Date	2
Memorial Day Spotlight Your Cemetery A Record-keeping Note	3
Cemetery Clean-up Day	4
Join Us! Mission Stmt./Meetings	5
Board of Directors Our Member Cemeteries Contact Us	6

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Essay Contest- What Stories Can the Stones Tell?



President Joel Blank with awarded Brandon-Evansville 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students

Forty-six fifth grade students from Douglas County schools responded to our 4<sup>th</sup> annual contest. We thank this year's sponsors: Alexandria VFW Post 936, REA's Operation Round-Up, Katalyst Communications, and of course, you our members.

Total awards of \$1050 were presented to students from St. Agnes School of Osakis, Lincoln Elementary, Osakis Elementary and Brandon-Evansville Elementary. The contest information was available on our website and all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were emailed and asked to invite their students to participate. The contest information was also sent to the Echo Press, the Osakis Review, The Lakeland Shopper, the Parkers Prairie Independent, the Hoffman Tribune and the Senior Perspective. The majority of the essays were emailed back to us and the board met to score the entries based on a set of agreed upon criteria. Gold, Silver and Bronze certificates, as well as the cash awards, were determined based on sliding scale using each student's score and the dollars we had available to give.

We hope to be able to continue this annual contest and are seeking the best approach to increase participation and involve more of our county's schools. Your suggestions are welcome!



### **Douglas County Cemetery Association**

**21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, Thursday, April 27, 2017 – 7:00 PM**, at the First Congregational UCC, in Alexandria. Join us for a program and refreshments. This year we have three retiring Board Members, John Chlian, Julie Kirscht and Gene Rasmusen. An election will be held to fill these positions. A brief organizational meeting for our 2017-2018 Board will follow the Annual Meeting.



## **Memorial Day...America's most solemn occasion**

Memorial Day, an American holiday observed on the last Monday of May, honors men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades.

### **Taps** © Pennsylvania Military College

*Day is done, gone the sun,  
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.*

*Fading light, dims the sight,  
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.  
From afar, drawing nigh, falls the night.*

*While the light fades from sight,  
And the stars gleaming rays softly send,  
To thy hands we our souls, Lord, commend*

*Thanks and praise, for our days,  
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky;  
As we go, this we know, God is nigh.*

*Sun has set, shadows come,  
Time has fled, Scouts must go to their beds  
Always true to the promise that they made.*



## **Spotlight Your Cemetery in our newsletter!**

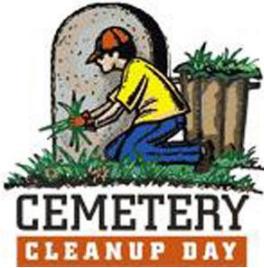
We would like our members to get involved! Please tell us about your cemetery and submit a current photo. Things like a brief history, current cemetery projects, current or past challenges or struggles, and special people connected to the cemetery either by deed or in death. Please submit by email at [dccamn@gmail.com](mailto:dccamn@gmail.com).

## **Douglas County Historical Society**

The Douglas County Historical Society has compiled histories of the Cemeteries of Douglas County. These are wonderful tributes to those who have gone before us. Keeping things up to date is a never ending job. Your help is both needed and welcome! Stop in and take a look at how your cemetery's information is presented at the Douglas County Historical Society Research Library (lower level). We think you'll be pleased. These special books are a great aid to family researchers and anyone interested in Douglas County history.

Please help remember those who have gone before us by timely submission of burial records. Sadly, some of the burial records have not been updated since 2012. Contact the historical society (320-762-0382) if you are in need of additional burial registration forms.





## **Tips for Cemetery Clean Up Day** (see [www.oregonheritage.org](http://www.oregonheritage.org) for these and more great tips!)

**Plan in advance** - Schedule the date taking into account any local events that might interfere.

**Get the word out!** Publicize your event by posting flyers that will easily be seen. Placing notices in relevant bulletins, newsletters or posting with a community calendar may be helpful as well.

Include things like the date and time of the clean-up, where volunteers are to meet and what tools volunteers should bring in your notice. You could also mention to bring gloves, hats, sun screen and comfortable clothes and shoes. Don't forget an alternative date and time in case of inclement weather or other circumstances affect your event.

Be sure to have a first aid kit on site as well as trash bags. Arrange for debris removal if necessary. Think about whether or not you want to provide bottled water and snacks for your volunteers.

**A week or so before the clean-up day** walk the cemetery grounds. Determine the equipment needed for the work you want done. You really don't know how many volunteers will show up so have a couple of action plans ready. You need to be ready to assign jobs as volunteers show up. The last thing you want is to have volunteers hanging around waiting to be told what to do or feeling unappreciated. If you anticipate large numbers of volunteers or the work is spread out over a large area, consider recruiting team leaders who are familiar with the site, the cemetery rules and the work. You may want to have name tags or coordinated clothing for the team leaders.

This is also a good time to note any possible safety issues, such as loose or leaning markers, rodent holes, bee hives, poison oak, etc. These areas could be marked with yellow caution tape or flags and discussed with volunteers on clean-up day.

**Clean up day!** Try to have everything set up at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time. Many volunteers tend to show up early and are ready to get started. Here are some things to consider as you welcome volunteers:

- Thank your volunteers for coming!
- Make introductions, if needed
- If you don't know all your volunteers ask for names and contact information for emergencies, and thank yous
- Explain what needs to be done and where you need your volunteers to work.
- Make sure all volunteers have the proper equipment and know how to use it safely.
- Be sure to inform volunteers of any safety issues as noted above
- If you have dos and don'ts – mention them
- Explain how to work around the monuments, curbing, fencing and other features and highlight the importance of care for their preservation. Explain that volunteers should leave any misplaced monuments or features right where they were found.

- Point out where they should place the debris for removal.
- Be available for any questions or additional directions as necessary. Walk around and talk with the volunteers and extend your appreciation for all their help. Take pictures of the volunteers and the work in progress.
- After everyone has departed, check the grounds for items that may have been left behind and that everything has been put away and secured.

**Follow up** - Take time to thank volunteers and anyone else who helped to make your clean up a success. Either in person or publicly in the local paper or organizational newsletter (use a photo or two from your clean-up day!). This will make planning your next clean-up day more successful. Be sure to take down any flyers and notices about the clean-up.

Good luck with your clean up!

JOIN US

### **Join us! Our Board of Directors**

Since its founding in 1996, the Douglas County Cemetery Association has become recognized as an effective provider of support to local cemeteries, having real impact within the community. We invite you to become a part of this tradition. Our board meets three to four times a year. Activities include:

- Serving as a resource for member cemeteries in dealing with the operational problems that arise (maintain relationship with Minnesota Association of Cemeteries, local funeral homes and to be available for an issues that may arise with member cemeteries)
- Promoting our county cemeteries locally through social and printed media (website, newsletter, local newspapers, Essay Contest, findagrave.com)
- Fostering mutually beneficial communications between our member cemeteries and other local organizations (historical societies, veteran's organizations, etc...)
- We work with the Douglas County Historical Society to maintain cemetery records.

For more information contact us at: [dccamn@gmail.com](mailto:dccamn@gmail.com) or through our website: [www.dccaamn.com](http://www.dccaamn.com)

### **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 before us.

### **Annual meetings:**

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

## 2016 Directors and Officers

Joel Blank, **President**  
Carlos Prairie

Gary Adamson  
*Finnish Apostolic*

John Chlian, **Vice President**  
*Hudson Cemetery*

Ralph Gunderson  
*First Lutheran Church Cemetery*

Julie Kirscht, **Secretary**  
*Lake Charley Cemetery*

Gene Rasmusen  
*Gordon Pleasant Hill*

Sue Tvrdik, **Treasurer/Membership Secretary**  
*Bohemian Ind. Cemetery*

Kristi Wussow  
*Ebenezer Cemetery*

## Douglas County Cemetery Association—2016 Membership

**Bohemian Independent Cemetery**, Brandon Cemetery, **Calvary Catholic Cemetery**, Carlos Prairie Cemetery, **Christian Union Cemetery**, East Moe Lutheran Church Cemetery, **Ebenezer Cemetery**, English Grove Cemetery, East Moe Lutheran Church Cemetery **Evergreen Cemetery**, Fahlun Cemetery, **Faith Lutheran Cemetery**, First Lutheran Church Cemetery, Kensington, **Fryksande Cemetery**, Gordon Pleasant Hill Cemetery, **Holmes City Lake Finnish Independent Apostolic Lutheran Cemetery**, Hudson Cemetery, **Kinkead Cemetery**, Lake Charley Cemetery, **Lake Ida Cemetery**, Lake Mary Cemetery, **Moe Heights Cemetery**, Mound Grove Cemetery, **Nelson Cemetery**, Oscar Lake Lutheran Cemetery, **Rose City Evangelical Free Church Cemetery**, Rose Hill-Trinity Cemetery, **Sauk Valley Lutheran Cemetery**, Seven Dolores Catholic Cemetery, **Solem Lutheran Church Cemetery**, Spruce Hill Cemetery, **St. Ann's Catholic Church Cemetery**, St. John's Lutheran Cemetery, **St. Luke's Church Cemetery**, St. Mary's Catholic Church Cemetery, **St. Nicholas Catholic Church Cemetery**, St. Paul's Cemetery, Moe Township, **St. Petri Cemetery**, Trinity Lutheran Church Carlos and Zunker Cemetery, **Trysil Bethesda Lutheran Cemetery**, Van Loon Cemetery, **Wennersborg Cemetery**, West Moe Cemetery, **White Garden Cemetery**, Zionsborg Cemetery



DOUGLAS COUNTY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION  
C/O DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1219 SOUTH NOKOMIS STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, MN 56308  
PHONE: 320-762-0382

Email: [dccamn@gmail.com](mailto:dccamn@gmail.com), website: [www.dccamn.com](http://www.dccamn.com)

*Please contact us with any newsletter suggestions*