

Old cemeteries may benefit from U.S. housing funds

1967

Some \$75,000 in federal funds may be used to renovate and restore two 19th Century cemeteries in Palatine Township.

Staples and Old Plum Grove cemeteries may be upgraded through U.S. Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 funds appropriated to the county.

Avery V. Wolfrum, a Palatine township resident who serves on the County Cemetery Board, said the county has agreed to accept responsibility for the two cemeteries. They were deeded to the county in the 1880s, but it was not until last year that the county realized it owns the cemeteries.

Wolfrum said any work on renovating the cemeteries has been held up until funds are available.

TERRY HANSEN of County Board Pres. George Dunne's staff said he proposed using some of the federal money for the work because the cemeteries could be restored initially and then any leftover money could be invested to provide for maintenance.

The county will receive some \$3.2 million in Housing and Community Development funds. Most of the money is expected to go for social service projects in connection with a county court complex in Markham or for housing projects.

Some \$500,000 has been proposed for use in such diverse ways as demolishing abandoned buildings or building sidewalks in unincorporated areas where they are needed for children walking to school.

Decisions on how the money will be spent will be made by the county in connection with an advisory council of 15



mayors being appointed by the county.

THE MAYORS WILL come from communities that decided to let their populations be counted to qualify the county for the grant, Hansen said.

Hansen said the appointment of the advisory council creates "a whole new era of intergovernmental relations" between the counties and municipalities.

He said Dunne is committed to seeing that the municipalities which allowed their populations to be added to the county population so the county could get the community development money "should receive something more than just plaudits."

ALMOST ALL of the municipalities in the county allowed their populations to be added to the county's. Of the 14 communities that have decided to seek the discretionary community development funding themselves instead of joining

with the county, Hoffman Estates, Mount Prospect, Elk Grove Village, Inverness and Buffalo Grove are on the list.

COMMUNITIES with populations exceeding 50,000 including Arlington Heights and Des Plaines, are automatically excluded from being included in the county's population total and therefore will not participate in spending decisions or receive any of the county's money. Both communities decided against seeking funds on their own.

Hansen said the mayors would be appointed this week and a meeting would be set to discuss holding hearings on how to spend the \$3.2 million the county expects under the community development grants.

In his proposal sent to county board members, he called for the money to be spent in varied areas around the county for housing programs, recreational facilities in blighted areas and other projects.



Jennie Rosencrans Hawes (portrayed by Diane Carmody) shared the story of her life in Elgin at the turn of the century during a past Historic Cemetery Walk.

Daily Herald photo/Theresa Norton Masek

Cemetery resurrects stories of pioneers

BY THERESA NORTON MASEK
Daily Herald staff writer

Luther Bartlett, the farmer who gave 40 acres and his name to a town springing up alongside a new railroad, will come back to life this weekend, more than 109 years after his death.

He'll stand next to his gravestone in the old Bluff City Cemetery on Elgin's east side. But old Luther has no intention of frightening anyone. He simply wants to tell his story as part of a unique theater event staged to bring alive the rich history of the area.

Bartlett and seven other local pioneers will be portrayed Sunday during the Fourth Annual Historic Elgin Cemetery Walk. Actors have researched the lives of the people buried in Bluff City Cemetery and during the walk become these people and share their stories. The actors — some with community theater experience, others just local history buffs — wear period clothing and tell the stories of their character's life while standing next to their subject's headstone or family memorial. Visitors are guided in groups through the hilly, tree-filled cemetery.

The cemetery walk is from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday at Bluff City Cemetery, 945 Bluff City Blvd. Admission is \$3.50 for adults and \$1 for children under 14. Tours last about one hour and begin every 10 minutes.

The cemetery walk, the brainchild of Elgin teacher and history buff Jerry Turnquist, has quickly become popular, last year attracting 800 people. That's gratifying for Turnquist, who thinks cemeteries are fascinating places.

"Until people go to the cemetery walk, they don't always understand what we're doing out there," Turnquist said. "There is an immediate connotation that the cemetery is full of ghosts and spooks. That's unfortunate.

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The cemetery walk not only attempts to demonstrate that cemeteries are not scary places, it aims to spark an interest in local history.

"History is brought alive to people. By seeing these live presentations, they get a tiny bit of Elgin area history," Turnquist said. "Hopefully it -- curiosity to learn --"

HISTORY: Local pioneers resurrected

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tion is sketchy. While there was a good bit known about Luther Bartlett, no one could find a photo of him.

But organizers will never run out of subjects for the cemetery walk.

"The Elgin area has a very interesting historical past and pretty much everyone is buried in this one cemetery," Turnquist said. "There's a real cast of characters in this community."

Luther Bartlett, for instance, donated land for a new railroad and depot back in 1873. The new railroad, the Chicago and Pacific, was started by Col. Roselle M. Hough to compete with the Chicago & North Western. Well, a few years later, Hough's railroad was rescued by what is known today as the Milwaukee Road. It greatly contributed to the growth of Bartlett and Elgin.

And though the growing town bore his name, Luther Bartlett raised sheep and grew pears on his DuPage County farm that wasn't even in the village, said David Reinhardt, who will portray Luther Bartlett on Sunday. Those quirks of history make the cemetery walk fascinating, he said.

"I don't claim to be a historian and I don't claim to be an actor," Reinhardt said. "I do believe it's important for young people to have a sense of where they came from and



Organizer Jerry Turnquist and his wife, Kathy, wore old-fashioned clothing at last year's Historic Elgin Cemetery Walk.

Daily Herald photo/Theresa Norton Masek

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Other people to be portrayed in Sunday's cemetery walk include an 1880s fire chief and Civil War hero, an Elgin woman who was the first female to drive a car from Chicago to New York in 1908, a music teacher

and composer who recorded in the 1930s, a physician who battled smallpox and typhoid epidemics, the first president of the Elgin National Bank, a school principal who pioneered art and music programs, and a slave who escaped during the Civil War and became a patriarch of Elgin's black community.

Turnquist hopes their stories will move people.

"When I go to the cemetery, there's just a feeling I get about my life," Turnquist said. "You try to make sure your life has meaning and live life to the fullest, because eventually you'll be there, too."

Vandals Desecrate

By DAN BAUMANN,
NEWS EDITOR

One of the village's most historic spots — the Arlington Heights Wheeling Township Cemetery — has been the target for several attacks of vandalism.

Seventeen gravestones were overturned and smashed in the third of a series of vandalism strikes cited in a letter in today's *Post-Tribune* from the cemetery trustees.

Most recent desecration was in July; cemetery trustees preferred no publicity at the time in case police might catch the vandals' reasoning.

VANDALS HAVE chosen as popular targets some of the oldest and frailest stones in the cemetery, which originated in 1841. Newer stones, however, have not escaped damage.

Cemetery trustees have asked police to arrest anyone found in the cemetery after closing at sundown on a charge of trespassing. They have decided to padlock the gates during closed hours and run a high wire fence around the north, east and west borders.

The cemetery's lanes, along Euclid, is enclosed by a wrought iron fence. It is lo-



STONE OF Ellen M. Dunton Baker, damaged in earlier vandalism and permanently defaced. Dunton family is credited with plotting out and founding what is now Arlington Heights. (Staff photo)

Historic Cemetery

1965

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THE CEMETERY contains such historic names as Dighton, Gould, Santa, Muller, Klehm and Kennicott. It apparently started as a family burial plot for the Kennicotts, who the first burial for Jane Kennicott.

The 150 Cemetery Association was organized in 1853 to operate the cemetery for the benefit of residents of the town of Danton, as Arlington Heights was known. In 1875, it became the Dunton Cemetery Association and later the

Arlington Heights Cemetery Association.

Its operation subsequently has been turned over to Wheeling Township. There are still lots open in the four-acre, elm shaded tract.

Among the bank of Dunton family markers is a stone for William H. Dunton, credited as the village's founder. The cemetery also holds a Brian Lee marker. Lee, one of only two Negroes known to have lived in Arlington Heights, was a former slave who came to the village with a returning Civil War veteran and worked on the Klehm farms.

NEITHER THE Dunton nor the Lee markers were disturbed by vandals.

But some older tablets, whose markings have nearly weathered off, were smashed, overturned or loosened. According to one trustee, Elmer Crane, some of the tablets cannot be repaired.

They will be laid flat on the ground. Others will be patched as well as possible.

The *Post-Tribune* letter, from Trustees Crane, Henry Schuetler and Claude Williams, urges residents who see vandalism at the cemetery to report it and promises to keep their names confidential.



ONE OF 17 GRAVE markers smashed, overturned and defaced in Arlington Heights Wheeling Township Cemetery in recent vandalism. Cemetery holds many historic names. (Staff photo)

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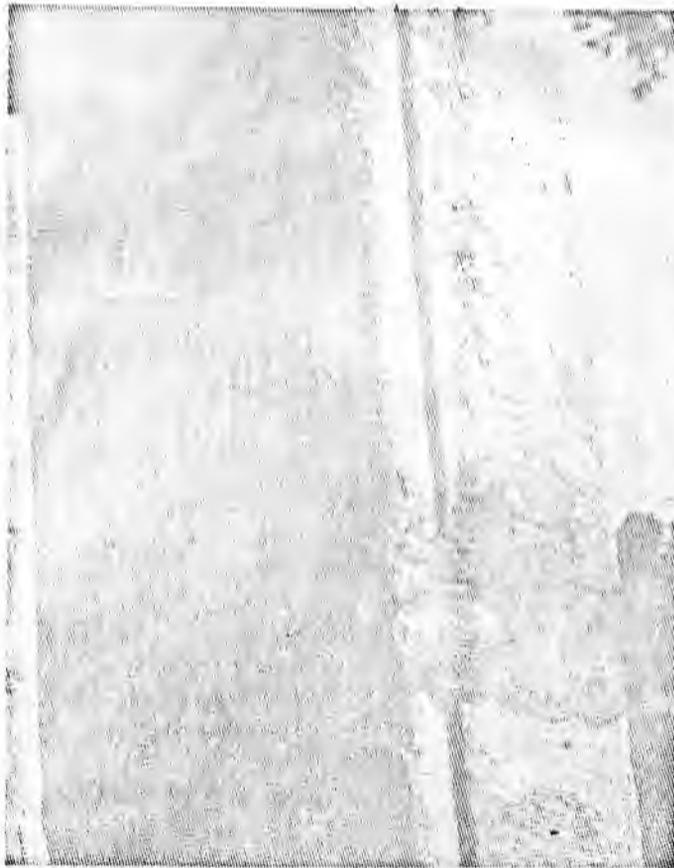
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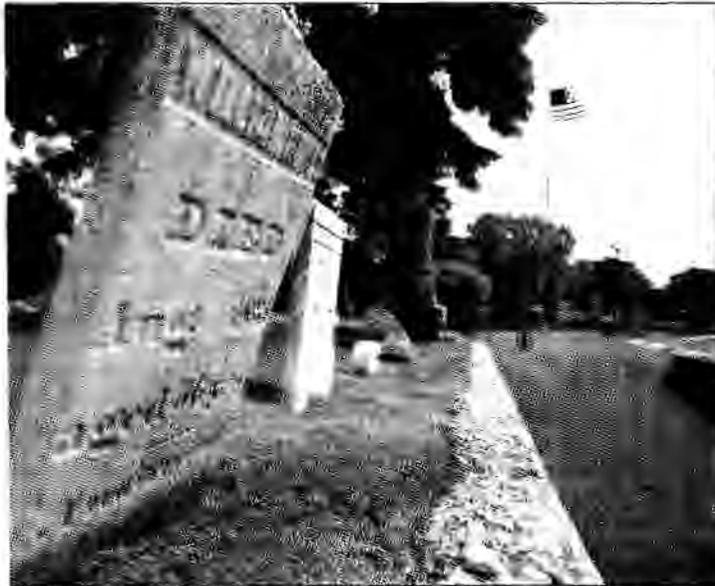
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Wheeling tries to fill holes in cemetery's records

July 8, 2009

By Gray Megan

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE



g Cemetery costs \$8,000 a year to maintain, but no plot has been
e the village took over in 1976. DAVE SHIELDS/PHOTO FOR THE TRIBUNE

A few monuments have fallen. Some markers are cracked, tilted or sunk in the ground they have occupied since before the Civil War.

But the grass is carefully mowed, the trees are trimmed and Wheeling Cemetery looks ready to receive its next burial.

Ready, that is, if Wheeling officials knew how many plots are available, their exact location and how much they cost.

Assistant Village Manager Jon Sfondilis is working to answer those questions so the village can put to use the cemetery it spends roughly \$8,000 a year to maintain in working condition. "It's an active project, but I can't say when it will be completed," he said.

The cemetery, south of Dundee Road and just east of Wolf Road, was

established in the 1800s and marble markers from the early 1840s are still visible.

Village Manager J. Mark Rooney told trustees at a recent workshop that although Wheeling took over care and operation of the cemetery in 1976, it has never sold a plot there.

Estimates on available plots range from 12 to 40, although some of those may belong to families who plan to use them, officials said.

"Our concern is that there may be burials not marked," Sfondilis said.

The cemetery was run by the Wheeling Cemetery Association until 1976, when the cemetery and about \$10,000 in association funds were transferred to the village. Local funeral home owner Louis Kolssak II has been involved in the cemetery on an informal basis but says the village has all the records.

"I turned everything over to them," Kolssak said. "We've had

one burial [there] in the last four or five years."

Kolssak said the records show who is buried there and where; the village isn't sure those records are complete and is working to update them, officials said.

Wheeling is not the only town in the cemetery business. "We have two we took over," said Paul Risinger, general operations superintendent for neighboring Northbrook. Risinger said the village took over the North Northfield Cemetery in 2004 and the Northfield Union Cemetery in 2006. "Both date back to the 1830s," he said.

In Wheeling, a number of former village residents and family members of some of those buried in the cemetery have called with information, Sfondilis said. He's hopeful more people with information about plots come forward to help sort out things out.

Wheeling
sold since

Honoring our fallen heroes

By MATT HANLEY
STAFF INTERN

Robert Stahl was a fighter.

A Prairie View native and a former Barrington resident before his death, Air Force Sgt. Stahl paid the ultimate sacrifice for his country while flying over Romania during World War II. His body was laid to rest in the Nettuno Cemetery in Rome, a cemetery for American World War II soldiers.

Although Stahl's body was buried in Italy, a family marker was placed in Buffalo Grove's Knopf Cemetery.

This Monday, as the country observes Memorial Day, local residents will honor Stahl and other veterans of American wars who fought to defend the rights the rest of us enjoy each day.

Locally, community members from Buffalo Grove and Wheeling are finding their own way to remember the holiday, including the traditional parade and cemetery remembrances.

According to Rich Payne of Am-Vets Post 66, Wheeling will be having a parade that includes the Boy Scouts and color guard. The parade will kick off at 10 a.m. in the Kmart parking lot on Dundee and Elmhurst roads.

The parade, which is expected to include 150 participants, leaves the parking lot and proceeds north on Route 83, which will be closed by local police. Local politicians will watch the parade from a viewing stand located along the route.

Payne said it should take about an hour for the parade to make its way to Am-Vets Post 255 on McHenry Road. There, spectators can get an up-close look at an Army tank that saw action in Korea.

Over in Buffalo Grove, the Memorial Day ceremony at the historic Knopf Cemetery will begin at 11 a.m. Those who gather there will honor fallen soldiers like Stahl.

Stahl was a bank teller living in Deerfield when he joined the army. He saw his main service as an aerial gunner and radioman on a bomber plane.

But shortly after enlisting in June of 1943, Stahl's plane was shot down over Romania. Of the 16 members of that plane's crew, Stahl was the only man killed. With two engines shot out, he tried to abandon the wounded plane when his parachute malfunctioned.



Joel Lerner/Pioneer Press

Debbie Fandrei (left) listens to Blanche Kloman describe some of the history of Knopf Cemetery, which will be the scene Monday of a Memorial Day event.

Stahl was 23 years old when his body was recovered in a tiny peasant village. His parents received a letter from the war department about his death, but the family, including his widow Janice Grabenkort Stahl, never saw the body before it was buried.

Most countries have a tradition of honoring these soldiers, like Sgt. Stahl, who have fought for their country. In the United States, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, a holiday that was started as a way to honor the soldiers that died during the Civil War.

War widows from the North and the South began to place wreaths at the graves of their husbands who died during this country's bloodiest conflict. The practice soon spread, with people of all walks of life recognizing fallen soldiers.

The day of remembrance was commonly called "Declaration Day" up to 1971, when the federal government officially recognized "Memorial Day."

This year, Buffalo Grove's ceremonies will begin with an invocation, a flag raising by the Boy Scouts and a rifle volley by Am-Vets.

This year's guest speaker, Deborah Fandrei, will also speak about preserving the memories of veterans.

At the end of the ceremonies, two trumpeters will play taps to honor the veterans buried in Knopf — Stahl and Marine Pvt. James Ritzenthaler, who was killed over Iwo Jima at the age of 21.

The cover of this year's Memorial Day program will be dedicated to those combat troops who died during action. In the past, cemetery officials have remembered nurses and the European church where many soldiers worshiped on the cover of their program.

Blanche Kloman, a member of the Knopf Cemetery Committee, hopes that those who attend the ceremony recognize the importance of honoring our fallen vets. This will be the 14th consecutive Knopf ceremony, Kloman said, with this year's focus on preserving the significance of the past. She especially hopes that teenagers and the younger crowd will hear the message shared Monday and make the connection between the present and past.

"Preservation is what Knopf Cemetery is all about," said Kloman. "It's something this generation is not likely to understand. It's sort of a revelation (to younger people) that there is such a feeling."

Cemeteries host Memorial Day masses, tributes

Many local cemeteries are planning ceremonies to remember veterans who are buried in the area. Here are some of the cemeteries' plans for the Memorial Day holiday.

■ **Memory Gardens and Mausoleums**, 2501 E. Euclid Avenue, Arlington Heights. At approximately 11 a.m. Monday, the cemetery will have a service to conclude the day's activities. The concluding service will include taps and the Pledge of Allegiance performed by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. The cemetery also will be placing flags on the graves of the veterans buried there.

■ **Randhill Park Cemetery**, 1700 West Rand Road, Arlington Heights. At 11 a.m. Monday, an outdoor service will be held to remember the Jewish war veterans of Illinois. The service will take place at Shalom Memorial Park and

includes a color guard presentation and guest speaker.

■ **St. Michael the Archangel Cemetery**, 1185 West Algonquin Road, Palatine. An outdoor mass will held at 10:30 a.m. Monday. The Most Reverend John R. Gorman, an auxiliary bishop from Chicago, will be celebrating a mass to honor war veterans. Representatives from the local American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Knights of Columbus will be participating in the ceremony.

■ **Ridgewood Cemetery**, 9900 North Milwaukee, Des Plaines. Local Veterans of Foreign Wars posts will be making dedications at Veterans Gardens throughout the morning. The cemetery also will be placing flags on all the veteran's graves and handing out American flags to veterans who attend the ceremony.