

Open Letter American Cemeteries Are Being Forgotten

Wisconsin has many small local cemeteries and graveyards that are in very bad condition and a danger to visit with little respect given. Forgotten cemeteries pushed out of the way by our ever changing communities. This should Not Be! Your cemetery is your public record of pilgrimage where descendants can return to their roots, a permanent post of honor to remember and celebrate.

Surely, when you visit a grave, it is to remember your loved one, to commemorate even. To once again feel close, if just for that brief instant.

Be Proud Of It! Let Not Be Forgotten!

I see far to many cemetery associations that have no idea what their cemetery mission is, or what the associations should be about. Most Board members have never looked at their bylaws, don't have a clue what it says, let alone have ever updated they're bylaws, or has ever had any policy and procedure laws to follow. Nor have they ever seen or understand current state cemetery laws. When the biggest achievement of the association is trying to maintain an uneven number of trustees, and keeping the grass cut, by hook or crook, trying to pinch out money from past plot fees with very low interest on moneys in trust, We Have a Problem.

Now days, small town cemetery associations can not maintain their cemetery funding, mostly because they are not familiar with state and local laws. They have never did a desk audit or marketing plan or updated cemetery Plot & Lot prices relevant with up keeping cost in todays market. No effort by small cemetery associations to promote the local public cemeteries to the people, new or old living in the area. Making welcome the cemetery to the community and showing culture past is importance to the life and care of any cemetery. Your cemetery is just as important as the town hall and business. It well deserves the respect and support of the community.

Board members are usually local willing very senior members of an conservative group that are only there to protect their family interest at the cemetery, making sure no shenanigans are going on. The board officers are elected by trustee board vote, but the real board leader is one or two board members, who would never want to hold a responsible position, that steers the board and usually makes all the final decisions of the associations, with trustees blessings. Any board member that does not go along with the group will eventually be voted out when their time is up or made to feel very useless and unwanted.

When a cemetery is dying it's the failure of someone who is responsible for that inaction. And the reasons(excuses) are many, it is someones offense, of duty or requirement.

Is it not true. Cemeteries must be the responsibility of someone, someplace!

There are long held customs, believes, rules and laws that seek to defend or justify the actions to build, maintain and care for Cemeteries. Respect for the past long into the future of the living. Big Shame to those who Do Not!

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So let's talk Reasons for Failure:

#1. Careless duties of caretakers.

They accept the duty but do not have the knowledge or willingness to learn. Nor does the authority who appointed that duty take any responsibility for it.

#2. Careless acceptance from higher authority. (Township, Village, City, County, State)

Inaction of higher authority to accept cemetery care responsibility and knowledge of current rules and law.

#3. Careless administration, commission actions. (State, USA)

Applied rule, laws and foresight to impose responsibility and oversight.

Well, now its your turn! Just when will all our many Cemeteries be Cared For?